

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

DATE: January 12, 2015

TIME: 4:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Vice Chair Hahn, Commissioners Boettcher, Porter, Buelow, Ballard, M. Olson, Fritz, and L. Olson

ABSENT: Chairperson Davis

STAFF PRESENT: City Planner Mark Moeller; Assistant City Planner Carlos Espinosa

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by Vice Chair Hahn.

Approval of Minutes – December 8, 2014

The minutes for December 8, 2014 were approved without changes upon motion by Commissioner Porter and second by Commissioner L. Olson.

Public Hearing – Proposed Amendments to Floodplain Ordinance (Attachment)

Vice Chair Hahn opened the public hearing and called on Mr. Moeller to present the staff report. Mr. Moeller reviewed the item with the Commission and stated that he checked into the process for the floodplain map updates. According to a representative from the DNR, the following would occur:

1. Maps are distributed in draft form
2. FEMA and DNR hold public open house to review maps
3. Property owners may initiate appeal process (could take a number of months to a number of years depending on nature and number of appeals)
4. After appeal process is complete, FEMA adopts maps
5. City has 6 months to also adopt maps

Following the staff presentation, Vice Chair Hahn asked if there was anyone else who would like to speak for or against the item. There being no one who desired to speak, Vice Chair Hahn closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Porter motioned to approve the proposed amendments as written. The motion was seconded by L. Olson.

Commissioner Boettcher noted that his floodplain insurance statement has gone down in the most recent year and reiterated the importance of participating in the floodplain discussion.

There being no further comments or questions from Commissioners, Vice Chair Hahn called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

Other Business

Mr. Moeller distributed a draft version of the proposed site plan amendments and stated that the City Attorney had few concerns. Those concerns were:

1. The current site plan ordinance does not define who approves site plans
2. The reference to a complete site plan should be changed to a "complete site plan application"
3. The ordinance amendments do not address the level of discretion available to the Planning Commission during site plan review. As such, verbiage should be added stating that if the site plan meets the zoning ordinance standards it must be approved.

Commissioner Fritz stated that he would be concerned about the zoning standards statement because it could limit the Commission's options while the zoning ordinance is being amended. Mr. Fritz stated that there are grey areas in the code that are still up to interpretation.

Mr. Porter stated he supported the current review process for site plans and thought that additional regular review of site plans by the Planning Commission would make the approvals process less predictable.

Mr. Espinosa stated that a definition of the scope of the conditions that may be added to a site plan is one of the potential amendments to be made during the zoning code re-write.

Mr. Moeller stated that he would bring the proposed changes back to the Planning Commission again for review before forwarding them to Council.

Future Action Items – Zoning Ordinance Update

Mr. Espinosa stated that the list of items for the zoning ordinance update represents potential topics to address during the zoning ordinance update over the next couple years. Mr. Espinosa stated that there is \$50,000 in the current City budget, with the intent to allocate another \$50,000 in 2016 to complete the update. Mr. Espinosa stated that funding would be used to hire a consultant to assist with the process.

Commissioner Fritz asked about the process of deciding what is and isn't included in the zoning ordinance update.

Mr. Moeller stated that the process details haven't been determined yet, but the list attached to the Commissioner's agenda was meant as a starting point for discussion of topics to potentially address during the update.

Commissioner Porter stated that the scope of services will be dependent on the project budget.

Commissioner Fritz stated that he doesn't think the code needs a complete overhaul. The basic zoning scheme and framework seems to function well, there are just a number of sections that need updating.

Mr. Espinosa asked what sections or topics Commissioners would like to see updated.

Mr. Moeller stated Commissioners could either mention topics at today's meeting or contact staff with suggestions.

Commissioner Fritz stated that following topics should be examined:

1. Parking requirements related to different unit sizes. For example, both a one-bedroom and a four-bedroom apartment require two parking spaces.
2. Outside storage – i.e. boats and RVs.
3. Property maintenance.
4. Abandoned buildings – requiring tear-down after a certain amount of time

Mr. Moeller stated that one additional topic to examine might be big-box versus small scale commercial parking requirements.

Commissioner Buelow and other commissioners also mentioned the need for sidewalks in new developments.

Commissioner Porter stated that the changes made to the zoning code should be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and that looking to the future, the "landlocked" situation of Winona may influence more redevelopment versus new green field development.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.



Carlos Espinosa
Assistant City Planner