PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

DATE: July 8, 2013

TIME: 4:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Chairperson Porter, Commissioners Boettcher, Buelow, English, Hahn, Olson, Ballard, Davis, and Gromek

ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: City Planner, Mark Moeller and Assistant City Planner, Carlos Espinosa

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The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by Chairperson Porter.

Approval of Minutes – June 24, 2013

The minutes for June 24, 2013, were reviewed and upon motion by Commissioner Olson and second by Commissioner Ballard, were unanimously approved as submitted.

Site Plan Review – 520 Center Street

Chairperson Porter called on Carlos Espinosa, Assistant City Planner, to provide a summary of this item. Mr. Espinosa noted that in accordance with City Code Section 44.06 (d) (1), a reviewing department head or any other party of interest may request Planning Commission review of a site plan. Additionally, such requests must include specific reasons for review. Given this provision, staff has received four site plan review requests for a proposed lodging/boarding establishment to be located at 520 Center Street. The plan has been submitted by Bluff City Properties LLC. He noted that staff review of the proposed site plan had been included in the Commission's agenda package as Attachment C.

Mr. Espinosa noted that lodging and boarding establishments similar to that proposed for 520 Center presently exist at 528 Center and 50 West Mark Street (respectively referenced as Shorty's and Izzy's). These buildings are classified as commercial uses, permitted in the B-1 Zoning District. Given current code requirements, parking for such establishments is required to be provided within 300 feet of the lodging establishment. In the case of Shorty's and Izzy's properties, such parking was provided at a number of other parcels that are currently owned by Bluff City Properties, within the 300 foot radius. Arrangements for these spaces had been created by way of recorded easements.

Mr. Espinosa explained that the City Council is presently reviewing a number of proposed changes to the zoning ordinance, some of which would impact future boarding and lodging house parking requirements. However, it was noted that since the present

site plan submittal preceded any approval of those changes, they may not affect the current project.
In addressing requests for site plan review, Mr. Espinosa stated that all had alluded to problems pertaining to parking demands, noise, devaluation of neighborhood properties, and water runoff. Additionally, following staff's review of the plan, the following deficiencies had been identified:

- The site plan, as submitted, does not provide sufficient information as to where the required 52 off street parking spaces would be provided.
- Greater detail is needed as to how storm water will be directed from the site and to municipal facilities.
- Access to proposed parking at 520 Center Street is proposed to be through an existing driveway at 62 East Mark Street. Given this, it is recommended that the developer provide an easement document for this purpose.
- Provide greater detail on the proposed outdoor refuse area related to screening issues.
- Additional detail as to how adjoining neighbors might be impacted by general lighting conditions of the site.

Mr. Espinosa noted that the previous deficiencies had been provided to the applicant (Bluff City Properties LLC). At a minimum, staff recommends the Planning Commission require these issues be resolved prior to site plan approval.

In concluding, Mr. Espinosa stated that the following options are available to the Planning Commission this afternoon:

1. Recommend approval of the site plan subject to staff's review provided in Attachment C. Under this option, no further action would need to be taken by the Planning Commission.
2. Recommend approval of the site plan subject to staff's review and additional conditions added by the Planning Commission.
3. Recommend denial of the site plan.
4. Table formal action until the next Planning Commission meeting.

At this point, Chairman Porter called on the applicant, or his representative, to provide comment. Scott Hanson, President, of Bluff City Properties LLC, noted that his company is proposing the development of 520 Center Street, and that he currently also lives in the area.

At this point, Mr. Hanson produced a map showing that the plan, related to required off street parking for the facility, would include leasing land from Tom Severson, said land being located southerly of the Mark/Center Street intersection. In addition to this, and in addressing staff concerns, Mr. Hanson further noted that:

- The applicant was willing to address storm water management concerns.

- As the owner of 62 East Mark Street, the applicant would be willing to provide an easement over and across that property in order to provide permanent access to onsite parking at 520 Center Street.
- The applicant was willing to take any action necessary to facilitate screening of outdoor refuse areas.
- Although on-site lighting will be kept to a minimum, necessary lighting for parking lots and other outdoor facilities will be properly shielded from adjoining residential properties.

In short, Mr. Hanson stated that his company was more than willing to work with the City in facilitating this new development. At this point, Mr. Hanson noted that although staff's interpretation of the project was that it would require a total of 53 off street parking spaces, in practice, the project was being designed to accommodate 20 beds (20 persons). Unfortunately, however, the required off street parking standard is based upon a theoretical number of persons that "could" occupy the home. This number is established by Winona County through state licensing requirements.

Following brief discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Gromek and seconded by Commissioner Olson to recommend denial of the site plan as submitted on the basis that deficiencies, as noted by staff, had not been included on the plan.

Commissioner Buelow noted that the project would be heavily dependent upon the Severson property for off street parking. He asked what would happen if this property was sold to others at some point.

Commissioner Hahn noted that the present parking standard for lodging and boarding establishments was 1 space per certified person; and that Council was considering a standard which would reduce this requirement to .65 spaces per person.

Commissioner Davis stated that, as with Commissioner Buelow, she too was curious as where parking would be provided, in the event that the Severson property was sold to someone else for redevelopment purposes.

Kevin Brady, representing Bluff City Properties LLC, responded that, as required by code, he would, at that point, need to provide an alternative. Commissioner Davis asked Mr. Brady if he had a specific plan in mind if that occurs. Mr. Brady responded that he did not. He further noted that, under the present ordinance, he is not required to do so.

Commissioner Olson noted that he had walked the neighborhood on this date and stated that although he understood that units may certify for more than one person, he found it hard to believe that the applicant would be able to rent rooming units to more than one person at a time. However, he did have concerns of the proposed parking plan in that he did not feel students, presuming that these are primary occupants of the building, would be willing to walk almost a City block to access vehicles. Since most will park as close as possible to their residence, public streets will be used before leased

spaces on the Severson property. He further noted that although he understood that Bluff City Properties LLC was not required to consider future alternatives for required off street parking, he questioned whether it was feasible to replace lost spaces from the Severson site within 300 feet of the lodging facility.
In concluding, he stated that it appeared that the development will comply, or will be able to comply, with all other code requirements.

Commissioner Davis stated that she was again greatly concerned of the parking proposal if Mr. Brady does not secure permanent ownership of the Severson site.

Commissioner Gromek noted that the proposed parking plan had been drafted on a drawing that was not to scale. He felt that a scale drawing was needed in order to certify that the Severson property was, in fact, large enough to accommodate the 53 parking spaces required for the project. Along with these, he noted that it was his understanding that the project would also displace parking that had been established for either the Izzy's or Shorty's projects. Again, it was his intent to certify that off street parking requirements for all of these projects were being fulfilled. At present, he was unsure of this.

Chairman Porter noted that the motion to deny appeared to be based upon the fact that the site plan did not include missing items as defined by staff, and that required off street parking arrangements had not yet been formalized. He suggested that, as an alternative, the Commission simply table the application in order to allow the applicant time to provide missing data.

In response to a question from Commissioner Olson, Mr. Brady noted that his company would be taking care of its own snow removal from the site.

In response to a question from Commissioner Davis, Mr. Brady responded that his architect was working on methods of controlling light glare from the project.

In response to a question from Commissioner Davis, Mr. Brady responded that leased parking at the Severson property would be for one year and renewable in one year increments. Chairman Porter stated that he too is concerned of what may happen if Mr. Brady no longer has access to the Severson site for off street parking purposes.

At this point, Chairman Porter recognized Owen Warneke, Architect, who reviewed solutions to some of the problems that had been identified by staff. In these, he stated that off street parking requirements would be met, that storm water issues would be addressed through the City Engineer's Office, that a 6 foot fence would be constructed around any refuse containers, and that lighting issues would be addressed through the submittal of a mitigation plan submitted to Mr. Espinosa.

Commissioner Gromek again affirmed that resolutions to staff concerns had not been put on paper. Further, he did not feel that these requests were insurmountable.

Chairman Porter noted that the motion, if adopted, would deny this site plan.

When the question was called, the vote of the Commission was as follows: Ayes – Commissioner Boettcher, Buelow, English, Hahn, Porter, Ballard, Davis and Gromek; Nayes – Commissioner Olson; Abstaining – None. Chairman Porter declared the motion adopted. Mr. Espinosa stated that staff would be coming back at the Commission's next meeting with a resolution serving to formalize this motion.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned.

Mark Moeller
City Planner