

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

DATE: August 8, 2016

TIME: 4:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Chairperson Hahn, Commissioners Boettcher, Buelow, L. Olson, Shortridge, Paddock, and M. Olson

ABSENT: Commissioners Porter and Ballard

STAFF PRESENT: City Planner Carlos Espinosa, City Planner Mark Moeller, and City Manager Steve Sarvi

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

Approval of Minutes – July 25, 2016

The minutes from the Commission's meeting of July 25, 2016 were reviewed and unanimously approved as submitted.

Discussion – Development Code Update – Use Specific Standards

Chairman Hahn called on Carlos Espinosa, City Planner, to provide a summary of this discussion.

Although Mr. Espinosa noted that they had been tentatively reviewed by the Commission in late June, proposed use specific standards of the draft Unified Development Code had been modified for discussion this afternoon. Although this discussion does not include the consultant team, representatives from Hoisington Koepler, they will be in attendance on September 12th. At that point, it was anticipated that remaining amendments will be presented for discussion. The goal being to complete the draft Unified Development Code in September for public discussion.

In consideration of the use specific standard section of the UDC, Mr. Espinosa initiated discussion by noting that changes have been made to dwelling type definitions. At present, dwelling types are defined under three major categories including single family, two family, and multiple family. As modified, dwellings would be defined as single family, 2-4 family, attached townhouse or row house, apartment, and apartment mixed use. Modifications are designed to provide a better transition from low density to high density dwelling scenarios. In referencing an example as to how the use specific standard section would apply to the principal use summary table, Mr. Espinosa stated that the principal use summary table would permit 2-4 family dwellings within R-1 Zoning Districts (with standards). Given use specific standards being considered today, 2-4 family dwellings with R-1 Districts would only be permitted at corner lots, with access to an arterial or collector street. Mr. Espinosa further presented a map showing arterial or collector streets that interface with R-1 Districts.

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Commissioner L. Olson stated that in his opinion, there was a strong need in the community for small reasonably priced homes. He did not feel that this concept would necessarily promote that need nor would it have a significant impact on R-1 Districts.

Commissioner Shortridge stated that unit homes within certain R-1 Zone locations, he concurred with Mr. Olson in that limiting access to arterial or collector streets would not greatly impact R-1 Districts. He suggested a possible larger application.

Mr. Espinosa noted that the purpose and intent of the R-1 District is to provide for single family detached homes. The purpose of the amendment is to promote some flexibility to the concept without overly impacting the R-1 purpose.

In response to a question from Commissioner Shortridge, Mr. Espinosa explained that all residential units are generally required to provide two off-street parking spaces.

Commissioner L. Olson stated that given that most corner locations within R-1 Districts are currently developed, he did not feel that there would be a significant move to redevelop properties for multiple family purposes simply because that action could be cost prohibitive.

Again, Mr. Espinosa explained that the proposal is simply designed to encourage new concepts at selected locations where the overall intent and purpose of the R-1 District is not compromised. He further explained that under current language, two unit structures are permitted as conditional uses if located within 100 feet of a less restrictive district, or on a lot abutting and with access to a primary or secondary thoroughfare. This current language would be removed in favor of the modification.

In moving forward, Mr. Espinosa explained that modifications had also been made to provide more specific language to the location and use of fraternities and sororities in the City. Although current standards are generally nonexistent, proposed standards would address such items as:

- The use would need to be located within ½ mile of the educational facility served.
- The organization would need to be chartered by a national or local organization officially recognized by the educational facility.
- New construction to the facility would need to be compatible with the scale and character of the surrounding neighborhood.
- The operator would need to submit a management plan for the facility and a floor plan showing sleeping areas, emergency exits, and bathrooms.
- A minimum of one parking space per resident would be required.

The general consensus of the Commission was that the standards were acceptable. In response to a question by Commissioner Buelow, Mr. Espinosa noted that the use would be subject to the 30% Rule.

Mr. Espinosa noted that the principal use summary table provides that automotive fuel stations be treated as conditional within mixed use downtown, fringe, and neighborhood

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districts and permitted with standards in all other nonresidential zoning districts. Given this language, Mr. Espinosa noted that specific mixed use “conditions” had been proposed under the use specific document. As summarized, these include:

- In the mixed use districts, a gas station constructed after June 30, 2017 would be required to be at least a 150’ from any residential zoning district.
- In mixed use districts, a gas station constructed after June 30, 2017 which is open 24 hours a day would need to be located at least 300’ from any residential district. If a gas station is not open 24 hours a day but has gas pumps that are in operation 24 hours a day, the station would not be considered open 24 hours a day.
- Within mixed use districts, a gas station constructed after June 30, 2017 would need to be located on an arterial street.

As designed, Mr. Espinosa explained that these standards would encourage gas service stations to be located within the northwesterly sections of downtown and fringe mixed use districts. He further noted that the use had not yet been defined. However, that would occur within the next month.

In response to this proposal, Commissioner L. Olson stated that he had concerns of any restriction that would limit locations of fuel stations within mixed use districts. He generally had the same concern with restricting other uses.

Commissioner Shortridge stated that in his mind, downtown and fringe mixed use districts are similar. Although he had no problem with encouraging a fuel station at the northwest corner of the defined district area, he would generally encourage that such uses not be permitted at any location within the downtown mixed use district and that they be permitted only within fringe mixed use districts. This application would create nonconformity of the Freedom gas station on west Fifth Street.

In response to a question, Mr. Espinosa stated that the restrictions would apply generally to “any part of” gas stations. As such, 150’ and 300’ setback requirements would pertain to the closest property of the gas station use.

Chairman Hahn stated that, in reality, he did not envision that there would be a significant number of gas stations within the downtown area.

Commissioner Paddock stated that, the provision of multiple use would be desired in meeting future downtown resident needs.

Commissioner L. Olson concurred by noting that the development of a new fuel station could include significant land needs which are difficult to find in proposed downtown and fringe mixed use districts.

Commissioner Shortridge explained that he had been contacted by a resident who was asking whether the proposed UDC would restrict daycare facilities. Mr. Espinosa responded that if daycare centers are free standing as principle uses, they would be

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restricted in some way. However, home daycare centers would generally be unaffected by the proposal.

Commissioner Boettcher noted that the City had hired a consultant to assist the City in realigning and simplifying development code language. Although he was personally not in favor of significant restrictions on new development, he did understand that reasonable requirements are needed to promote reasonable development which then promotes positive community environments.

Commissioner Paddock referred to page 70 which references Commercial Recreation, Outdoor. He asked for examples of such use. In response, it was noted that it could include such uses as non-public ball fields, golf driving ranges, major golf courses, etc. Mr. Espinosa noted that under proposed language, such uses would need to be distant at least 200' from any residential district, except City parks.

In addressing this subject, Commissioner L. Olson asked whether Winona State University and St. Mary's University Athletic Facilities would be considered public or private. Again, in an effort to not over regulate, he suggested that the term be specifically defined.

Commissioner Buelow noted that revisions would require that religious facilities within downtown mixed use districts would be subject to a requirement that limits their frontage to no more than 25'. Mr. Espinosa noted that this could only be exceeded with the approval of a variance.

In response to a question from Commissioner L. Olson, Mr. Espinosa stated that outside of minor clarifications, language pertaining to silica sand processing facilities (page 68) would remain intact.

Commissioner L. Olson noted that in addressing campground uses as found on page 69 and 70, that use along with the term "trailer park" was used interchangeably.

Mr. Espinosa noted that staff had also identified this problem and would be discussing it with consultants.

Upon further discussion, Commissioner L. Olson asked questions regarding animal stables, definitions of structural vs. nonstructural, parking facilities (page 77), and the screening of parking lots within mixed use districts (page 78). He further asked what was happening to language regarding transportation facilities used to ship silica sand (page 78). In response, Mr. Espinosa noted that this language was being transferred to a new section (43.03.15 J). As such, the adopted version of the UDC would continue to include this language.

In response to a question by Commissioner M. Olson, Mr. Espinosa noted that specific standards relative to the construction of billboards and other off premise signs would be more fully addressed during the Commission's meeting of September 12th.

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Commissioner Paddock stated that he felt it would be desirable to impose clearer standards relative to both structures and sites that are not cleaned up/reused following natural disasters. Mr. Espinosa noted that the Building Inspector can certainly push for resolutions of these problems however, what typically happens is that the inspectors will work with the property owner in voluntarily securing conformance with defined City Codes. With regard to discussion, an example was the former YWCA building, a portion of which was destroyed by fire a number of years ago. It was noted that variances to facilitate rental housing of the remaining structure had been secured. However, reuse of the building has yet to occur, and the site has not been fully cleaned up. Commissioner Shortridge suggested that this was an issue that might be investigated more fully in the code update. Mr. Paddock agreed and stated that he was simply trying to find a way to address buildings which become neglected over time.

In addition to the previous, Commissioner Boettcher alluded to the fact that a couple of barges at the Commercial Harbor have not been moved for years and appears to be in disrepair. He asked if there was some way this could be looked at.

In response to a question from Chairman Hahn, Mr. Espinosa noted that the state's air quality monitoring program no longer exists. Mr. Hahn stated that his reason for asking is that he was following a truck at the Commercial Harbor area which appeared to be spreading a significant amount of dust. Commissioner Boettcher noted that this was probably not sand dust but some other form of dust.

There being no further comments related to the draft use specific standard document, Mr. Espinosa explained that the Commission's next meeting would be held on August 22nd at 4:30 pm. He further noted that this meeting would include a Joint Meeting between the Commission and City Council regarding the City's Capital Improvements Program. In years past, this meeting has taken place as a pre-Council meeting. However, this year Council will be attending the Commission meeting. Various City staff will be available to present departmental CIP requests and answer questions that both the Commission and Council might have. Commissioner M. Olson stated that she looked forward to this discussion as that in her attendance of past discussions, the pre-council meeting did allow adequate time for departments to present CIP requests but did not permit time for a great deal of discussion.

Adjournment

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



Mark Moeller
City Planner