

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Cedar Falls Council Chambers

January 18, 2022

The City Council held a special work session at City Hall at 5:10 p.m. on December 6, 2021, with the following persons in attendance: Mayor Rob Green, Gil Schultz, Susan deBuhr, Daryl Kruse, Simon Harding, Dustin Ganfield, Dave Sires, and Kelly Dunn. Staff members attended from all City Departments. Members of the community attended the meeting and teleconferenced in.

Mayor Green introduced the only item on the agenda, Downtown Zoning Changes. Mayor Green introduced Planning and Community Services Manager Karen Howard. Ms. Howard stated items to be discussed include the legislative process for any amendments to the code and referral from Council to discuss: missing middle housing; what is an accessory dwelling unit; vinyl siding; Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z) role and review of site plans; and private parking requirements including shared parking. Ms. Howard provided a brief history of the recent downtown zoning code update history from February of 2021 to present. Ms. Howard reviewed the steps required by P&Z and Council to amend the zoning code. Ms. Howard shared copies and reviewed maps of the previous downtown zoning boundaries and districts and the new zoning boundaries and districts. Ms. Howard discussed “missing middle housing” types including duplexes, townhomes, small apartment buildings, cottage courts, and accessory dwelling units which offer alternative housing options for a variety of household sizes, incomes, and stages of life when appropriate zoning standards can be adopted for size and design to fit existing neighborhoods. Ms. Howard referenced a comparison chart of old and new zoning code prepared by staff regarding residential neighborhood zones and explained the changes. Ms. Howard reviewed the definition in the code for accessory dwelling units as small, one-bedroom units as an accessory to a single-family dwelling in either a garage, at the rear of a lot, or in a daylight basement and they support owner-occupancy of older homes, support multi-generational housing, provide additional income, and provide additional small units close to downtown. Ms. Howard stated concerns have been expressed regarding building material standards from the previous code to the new code, specifically use of vinyl siding; the new code allows vinyl siding on all existing single-family dwellings and any existing buildings with vinyl siding including replacements, repairs, and additions but prohibits it on any new construction; she presented 3 options for Council: leave as P&Z recommended; add an allowance for vinyl siding on any new single-family dwelling; and/or add an allowance for vinyl siding on any new resident building with less than 7 units; she stated her assumption that Council would like to continue the previous code’s prohibition for vinyl siding on commercial and mixed-use buildings. Ms. Howard explained the P&Z review process and the difference from previous code to new code; she gave a brief overview of the powers and duties of P&Z. Ms. Howard presented options for parking requirements in Urban General, Urban General 2, and Storefront zones: leave as P&Z recommended; eliminate shared parking requirements; increase parking requirements for apartments from .5 to .75 per bedroom; and/or add the clause “but not less than 1 space per unit”. Ms. Howard presented options for neighborhood frontages: leave multi-family

requirements as P&Z recommended; eliminate the shared parking requirement; and/or increase parking requirements for multi-family apartments from .75 to 1 per bedroom but no less than 1 space per unit.

Mayor Green opened Council discussion. Councilmember Harding suggested discussing one topic at a time; Councilmembers agreed. Discussion was held regarding private shared parking requirements. Councilmember deBuhr recommended eliminating the requirement. Councilmember Harding stated the parking study recommended shared parking as a short-term solution for a long-term problem; if Council decides to eliminate it as a requirement can they look for incentives for businesses to do it voluntarily, at a later date. Councilmember Kruse stated parking ramps should be discussed because shared parking within 600 feet does not work, a fee could be used in lieu of on-site parking, valet parking could be an option; Councilmember Harding stated the parking ramp discussion will be held as indicated in the CIP. Councilmember deBuhr stated agreement with voluntary shared parking and disagreement with required shared parking; without required shared parking the issue is how many spots need to be required. Councilmember Dunn stated parking has been a consistently discussed hot topic; the City has had parking studies done and Council asked for creative decisions, which included shared parking; she stressed the walkability of downtown and used an example of a big-box store and parking lot overlaid being approximately the size of downtown; even if the City builds a parking ramp, people will still have to walk; she stated there is no such thing as free parking. Councilmember Sires stated he is against shared parking and property owners shouldn't be made to "give it away". Mayor requested a consensus on eliminating shared parking – consensus reached. Discussion was held regarding private parking ratios and requirements without required shared parking. Ms. Howard provided the current code requirements for private parking utilizing the previously shared slide; Councilmember deBuhr asked if current code is a reduction in requirement from previous code; Ms. Howard stated yes. Councilmember Shultz asked what the general requirement is in Cedar Falls for rental home parking; Ms. Howard responded in general one per bedroom. Councilmember Harding states that this is more than what the study recommended. Councilmembers Kruse and Sires discussed and recommended rescinding form-based zoning altogether; Mayor Green stated that requires a separate work session. Mayor Green requested consensus on recommending 1 parking space per bedroom and/or unit to P&Z; consensus reached.

There being no further discussion, Mayor Green adjourned the meeting at 6:06 p.m.

Minutes by Katie Terhune, Administrative Assistant