

**Cedar Falls Planning and Zoning Commission
Regular Meeting
August 28, 2024
Cedar Falls, Iowa**

MINUTES

The Cedar Falls Planning and Zoning Commission met in regular session on August 28, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall. The following Commission members were present: Alberhasky, Grybovych, Hartley, Henderson, Johnson, Moser, Sorensen and Stalnaker. Karen Howard, Planning and Community Services Manager, Jaydevsinh Atodaria, Planner II, Thomas Weintraut, Planner III, Chris Sevy, Planner II and Matthew Tolan, Civil Engineer II were also present.

- 1.) Chair Hartley noted the Minutes from the August 14, 2024 regular meeting are presented. Sorensen made a motion to approve the Minutes as presented. Alberhasky seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 8 ayes (Alberhasky, Grybovych, Hartley, Henderson, Johnson, Moser, Sorensen and Stalnaker), and 0 nays.

- 2.) The first item of business was a HWY-1 District Site Plan for Golden China restaurant at 1150 Brandilynn Boulevard (Case No. SP24-004). Chair Hartley introduced the item and Mr. Weintraut provided background information. He explained that the item was discussed at the last meeting and spoke about the changes that have been made by the developer since that time. He noted that the issues that were discussed at the last meeting that were the reason for denial of the item have now been addressed. The applicant has removed several elements of the street-facing façade that gave the appearance of the back of the building and added spandrel glass windows and canopies that give the appearance of windows as viewed from the public street. The dumpster and enclosure was relocated to the southwest corner of the site and will be screened with landscaping. Due to issues meeting ADA requirements, the sidewalk location will remain the same as originally proposed.

Staff recommends approval with any comments or direction specified by the Commission and conformance with all city staff recommendations and technical requirements.

Sorensen made a motion to approve the item. Johnson seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 8 ayes (Alberhasky, Grybovych, Hartley, Henderson, Johnson, Moser, Sorensen and Stalnaker), and 0 nays.

- 3.) The next item for consideration by the Commission was Zoning Code Text Amendments to allow accessory dwelling units. Chair Hartley introduced the item and Mr. Sevy provided background information. He explained that City Council made a referral to staff at a Committee meeting in March to prepare an ordinance to allow accessory dwelling units (ADU's) in residential zones. They are currently only allowed downtown. He explained that an ADU is defined as a small secondary dwelling unit that is accessory to an owner-occupied, detached single-unit dwelling. He also provided information to explain the benefits of ADU's, which included an increase of the taxable value of properties, they can add small, affordable housing units with little change to the neighborhood character, they are inexpensive to maintain and tend to have a low carbon imprint, they are sized to accommodate today's smaller average household size and can house people of all ages. They can also be an additional source of income for homeowners.

Staff is proposing that they be only allowed on owner-occupied properties with allowance of no more than one ADU per lot. They would be limited to one bedroom and the size would be limited to 50% of the floor area of the principal dwelling or 800 square feet, whichever is less.

They would only be allowed in the rear yard or within the existing principal dwelling. Detached ADUs would have a 5-foot side and rear setback. Mr. Sevy discussed design standards, stating that they must be a permanent structure, the materials and windows would need to match the principal structure, it would need a separate secure entrance and a paved path to that entrance. Two egress windows in the basement units would be required and no exterior stairs to upper stories would be allowed, with the exception of a second story of a detached garage.

At this time, staff is bringing the item forward for introduction and discussion purposes. If there are no significant concerns about the proposed code provision, staff recommends setting a public hearing to take place at the next meeting.

Sorensen asked how this affects the maximum footprint of outbuilding if it is part of a detached garage. Mr. Sevy explained that the maximum size rule still applies the same for any outbuilding(s) on the lot. However, if a unit is added above the garage, only the footprint of the garage counts against that allowance. Sorensen also asked about whether the unit can be a rental. Mr. Sevy explained that renting the unit would be allowed but a rental permit would only be issued for one of the dwelling units on the property, i.e. the property owner has to either live in the principal dwelling or live in the ADU.

Moser asked about parking and how it is decided for these properties. Mr. Sevy explained the owner is allowed to work that out with the tenant. No additional parking is required.

Chair Hartley asked about other towns who allowed ADU's and Mr. Sevy gave several examples in Iowa.

Stalnaker asked why exterior stairs are not allowed on the principal dwelling or for an attached garage. Mr. Sevy stated it is mostly for aesthetic reasons; the goal is to maintain the character of the property as a single family house. Ms. Howard noted that if there was enough room on the lot and could meet the setbacks for the principal structure, they would be able to add an enclosed stairway or if there is enough room within an existing garage to construct a stairway to a second level, this would be allowed. It is just the exterior stairway tacked onto the side of the single family home that would not be allowed.

Henderson asked how it is policed to ensure the main structure is owner-occupied. Mr. Sevy stated that a rental unit would only be issued for one unit on the property. That unit would be inspected initially and every three years after that. It also becomes very apparent when looking at the county records and noting where the taxable address is different from the subject property.

Grybovych asked how this has helped other communities using ADU's to address shortage of housing. Mr. Sevy acknowledged that it is typical that only a relatively small percentage of property owners build ADUs. However, an ADU policy can be a small piece of a broader effort to provide more housing opportunities.

Gabe Groothuis, stated support for ADU's and would like it to be allowed for rental properties. He gave an example of a situation where there was a mother-in-law suite and the mother-in-law is no longer living there, what do they do with the space then?

Noah Klunder, 1430 Green Creek, would like it to apply to rental properties and stated his support for ADU's as well.

Sorensen made a motion to approve moving the item to a public hearing for September 11, 2024. Stalnaker seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 8 ayes

(Alberhasky, Grybovych, Hartley, Henderson, Johnson, Moser, Sorensen and Stalnaker), and 0 nays.

- 4.) Ms. Howard, Mr. Atodaria, and Mr. Tolan gave a presentation regarding proposed updates to the Major Thoroughfare Plan. The goal is to update the Major Thoroughfare map and update the definitions and regulations within the City Code, as well as add street connectivity standards to the Subdivision Code. Howard explained what the Major Thoroughfare is and the current issues with the plan, including growth of new neighborhoods.

Mr. Tolan explained the different types of streets and their purposes. He discussed aspects of creating an effective street network as well as resources and references with regard to the updating process. He displayed and discussed the map legend and different street types. He provided a close-up section of the map to give an example of the things being considered.

Ms. Howard spoke about street connectivity and what it means. She discussed the current standards in the code and noted that there are no clear standards defining “well-connected street patterns.” She provided a list of the benefits of well-connected streets and provided diagrams showing the difference between well-connected and poorly connected streets. Ms. Howard discussed the early neighborhoods in Cedar Falls and the way they are laid out. She spoke about different street connectivity issues in the city and how to alleviate those issues.

Mr. Atodaria described the proposed solutions to the street connectivity issues and gave examples of what other Iowa communities are doing to alleviate street connectivity issues. He listed the proposed connectivity standards that are recommended.

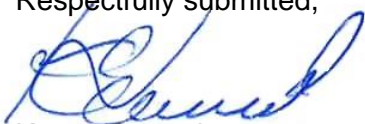
Ms. Howard described the process and tentative timeline for the updates and provided links to the City’s website for additional information for those looking for more detailed data.

The Commission had a few questions for staff regarding the presentation.

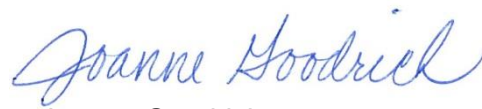
- 5.) As there were no further comments, Moser made a motion to adjourn. Alberhasky seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 8 ayes (Alberhasky, Grybovych, Hartley, Henderson, Johnson, Moser, Sorensen and Stalnaker), and 0 nays.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Karen Howard
Community Services Manager



Joanne Goodrich
Administrative Assistant