

Cedar Falls Planning and Zoning Commission
Regular Meeting
February 8, 2023
Cedar Falls, Iowa

MINUTES

The Cedar Falls Planning and Zoning Commission met in regular session on February 8, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall. The following Commission members were present: Crisman, Hartley, Larson, Lynch and Moser. Grybovych and Leeper were absent. Karen Howard, Planning & Community Services Manager, and Chris Sevy, Planner I were also present.

- 1.) Chair Lynch noted the Minutes from the January 25, 2023 regular meeting are presented. Mr. Hartley made a motion to approve the Minutes as presented. Ms. Crisman seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 5 ayes (Crisman, Hartley, Larson, Lynch and Moser), and 0 nays.

- 2.) The first item of business was a zoning text amendment to expand a list of potential conditional uses of defunct institutional buildings. Chair Lynch introduced the item and Mr. Sevy provided background information. He explained that a request was received for a zoning text amendment that would allow the addition of hair salons to the list of eligible uses in such buildings. He discussed current uses that are eligible for consideration and explained that salons would not fall under the professional office uses that are allowed. They are considered to be a personal service use. Mr. Sevy provided the pros and cons to allowing this kind of business to operate in such buildings. The proposed text amendment would read “Personal service uses limited to hair salons, shoe repair, tailoring services, therapy-based services and photographic studios.” These uses are primarily appointment based services used by all ages which may make them more appropriate in neighborhood context than other retail or service uses. Staff feels that, if approved, the limited approach would accomplish the applicant’s objective without adding a seemingly arbitrary salon use on its own. He also noted that if it is adopted the Board of Adjustment may still reject any conditional use proposal or impose any reasonable conditions based on neighborhood input. He stated that staff does not fully support the text amendment based on the cons noted. Staff recommends that the Commission discuss the proposed zoning code amendment and set a public hearing date for formal consideration and recommendation to City Council.

Chad Welsh, 6701 Strayer Road, spoke as the applicant regarding the item, noting that the proposed business is intended to be more of a makeup and brow salon. Mr. Sevy noted that he hadn’t been given that clarification. Mr. Welsh stated that he is available for any questions.

Steven Jordan, 2510 Cottage Row Road, spoke as Mr. Welsh’s realtor and stated that the item will still go through Board of Adjustment approval.

Mr. Larson suggested changing the business category to salon instead of hair salon to avoid making the description so specific.

Ms. Crisman asked for a definition of a defunct institutional building. Mr. Sevy explained that it applies to an empty building that is not currently being used for it’s purpose. Ms. Howard clarified that it has to be an institutional use building such as a church or school.

Mr. Hartley stated that he likes the idea of being able to repurpose buildings that would otherwise typically stay empty. Ms. Moser agreed with the sentiment.

Mr. Larson made a motion to move the item to public hearing. Ms. Crisman seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 5 ayes (Crisman, Hartley, Larson, Lynch and Moser), and 0 nays.

- 3.) The next item for consideration by the Commission was a discussion of amending the Planning and Zoning Commission bylaws to reduce the number of members from nine to seven. Chair Lynch introduced the item and Ms. Howard explained that the idea has been discussed previously as there have been challenges recruiting members. She noted that she has researched the size of planning commission in the 20 largest cities in Iowa, which includes Cedar Falls. There are 11 cities that have commissions with seven members, 6 cities with nine members, 2 cities with 11 members, and Des Moines has 15 commissioners.

Mr. Larson asked how the change might affect the quorum and the majority. Ms. Howard explained that with a Commission of seven the quorum would be four instead of five. When there are vacant seats it cancelling a meeting due to lack of quorum is more likely.

Ms. Crisman stated that she has spoken to the Mayor and found that there are several open seats on several of the boards and commissions in the City. She suggested potentially doing a little more marketing of these open seats to make people more aware of the openings. She feels that it would be good to wait a little longer before making this decision to allow time to make it more common knowledge within the community.

Mr. Larson asked if there has been any follow up with candidates that have applied in the past. Ms. Howard stated that the mayor has contacted people on the previous list and some are no longer are interested due to various circumstances or have been appointed to other boards or commissions in the meantime.

Mr. Hartley stated that he is hesitant to make a change as this has been working well for such a long time. It also allows for more voices in the process and leaves a little room for absences.

Mr. Larson stated that he feels the added diversity of having a larger Commission is helpful and brings more perspective.

Ms. Lynch asked for suggestions on finding people who would be interested and be a good fit for the position. Ms. Moser asked for a reminder regarding the application process for anyone watching the meeting. Ms. Howard provided that information.

Ms. Howard summarized the discussion and asked the Commission to confirm their recommendation is to wait and try to recruit people for the open positions and revisit the subject at a later date if needed. The Commission agreed.

- 4.) As there were no further comments, Ms. Moser made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Crisman seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 5 ayes (Crisman, Hartley, Larson, Lynch and Moser), and 0 nays.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Karen Howard
Community Services Manager


Joanne Goodrich
Administrative Assistant