

**Cedar Falls Planning and Zoning Commission
Regular Meeting
January 27, 2021
Via Videoconference
Cedar Falls, Iowa**

MINUTES

The Cedar Falls Planning and Zoning Commission met in regular session on January 27, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. via videoconference due to precautions necessary to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The following Commission members were present: Hartley, Holst, Larson, Leeper, Lynch, Prideaux, Saul, Schrad and Sears. Karen Howard, Community Services Manager and Chris Sevy, Planner I, were also present.

- 1.) Chair Leeper noted the Minutes from the January 13, 2021 regular meeting are presented. Mr. Holst made a motion to approve the Minutes as presented. Mr. Hartley seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 9 ayes (Hartley, Holst, Larson, Leeper, Lynch, Prideaux, Saul, Schrad and Sears), and 0 nays.

- 2.) The first item of business was a College Hill Neighborhood Overlay Review for 704-706 W. 28th Street. Chair Leeper introduced the item and Mr. Sevy provided background information. He explained that the request is to remodel an existing duplex on the southwest corner of 28th and Walnut Streets in the R-2 district in the College Hill Neighborhood Overlay. The proposal is to add bedrooms and other appropriate updates in order to double the rental occupancy of the property. Parking would have been an issue, but the applicant has already constructed a second driveway with a permit. However, it should have been brought before the Commission for review. The overlay defines the addition of bedrooms to a duplex as a substantial improvement, which requires approval by the Commission and City Council. Currently, each unit has two bedrooms and it is proposed to add an additional two to each unit.

Mr. Sevy discussed the criteria for review, such as change in density. He noted factors that detract from the neighborhood character, including:

- increased number of cars associated with the property,
- traffic increase from those cars and visitors,
- increased parking accommodations causing a loss of mature trees and usable outdoor space,
- and wear and tear of increasing the occupancy in a modest sized property.

He also discussed minimum on-site parking requirements, noting that the requirement is one parking space per bedroom for a duplex. The Code allows tandem parking for duplexes to count toward this requirement; however it is important to consider the practical logistics for eight roommates and their visitors. With regard to open space and landscaping requirements, the maximum driveway width is 18 feet with front and side yards landscaped with grass, shrubbery and trees. The current parking expansion has decreased outdoor living space and landscaping was lost and will need to be replaced.

Staff recommends denial of the proposal; however, if the Commission should choose to approve it, staff recommends that approval be subject to the condition that maintenance items in the staff report be included in the renovation. These include cleaning the face of gutters, touching up paint as needed at the windows, repairing and replacing rear siding, which is intended based on a letter from the applicant. Stairs at the rear door will also need to be replaced. Staff also recommends approval retroactively of the second driveway subject to the condition that landscaping be replaced to restore what was removed. The placement and design of the plants should screen the paved vehicular areas from the view of neighbors and help soften the view of the new paved area from the street.

Mr. Holst asked what the intent for the item is at this time. Does the Commission discuss at this meeting and continue to the next meeting or should a decision be made at this time? Ms. Howard stated that this is up to the Commission. Mr. Holst asked if there has been any contact with surrounding homeowners. Mr. Sevy noted that there has not. Mr. Holst felt that it would be good to inform neighbors before making this decision.

Mr. Larson asked when the driveway was done. Mr. Sevy explained that it was done in October. Mr. Larson then asked if there have been any complaints with regard to the expansion. Mr. Sevy stated that there has not. Mr. Larson asked how far the driveway is out of compliance. Mr. Sevy stated that it is two feet beyond the regular requirement and that staff is recommending approval of the driveway. Mr. Larson asked if this kind of case is potentially setting a precedent. Ms. Howard explained that this would typically have gone through the Commission for approval; however, this one was missed in the approval process as needing to be reviewed as part of the College Hill Overlay.

Wes Geisler, petitioner, stated that the majority of the houses in the area are already rentals. He also noted that he purchased the property from the owner and said he would complete the paving of the gravel approach the City was asking to be done. He also added the other driveway, and did take out bushes to do that, however the other two trees were removed by the previous owner. He noted that he will also complete the maintenance items mentioned, noting that he intends to remove the door at the back, making the stairs unnecessary.

Mr. Holst again noted that he feels the neighbors should be notified and the item continued to the next meeting.

Mr. Holst made a motion to defer the item to the February 10, 2021 meeting as the notice should have been sent to neighboring properties. Ms. Lynch seconded the motion.

Ms. Prideaux asked about the density of the surrounding homes. Ms. Howard stated that staff can provide that information. Mr. Sevy noted that he did look into the immediate surrounding homes and found that generally they are approved for four individuals on those lots.

Mr. Larson felt that it sets a bad precedent to deter a homeowner from improving their property. Ms. Saul agreed. Ms. Howard clarified that the issue is with adding density,

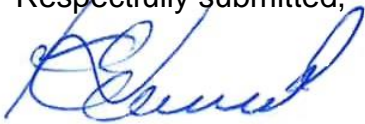
not making improvements. Ms. Lynch reiterated that she would like more information on the density in the neighborhood. Mr. Schrad agreed. Mr. Hartley asked if it is allowed on this property, would it then set the precedent for other properties to do the same.

The motion to defer was approved unanimously with 9 ayes (Hartley, Holst, Larson, Leeper, Lynch, Prideaux, Saul, Schrad and Sears), and 0 nays.

- 3.) As there were no further comments, Ms. Lynch made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Larson seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with all ayes (Hartley, Holst, Larson, Leeper, Lynch, Prideaux, Saul, Schrad and Sears), and 0 nays.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Karen Howard
Community Services Manager



Joanne Goodrich
Administrative Assistant