

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Cedar Falls Council Chambers

February 7, 2022

The City Council held a special work session at City Hall at 5:10 p.m. on February 7, 2022, 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 Director of Community Development Stephanie Sheetz. Ms. Sheetz stated there is one new item for referral: the process to repeal and replace Downtown Character District regulations; and previous items referred: missing middle housing; accessory dwelling units; use of vinyl siding; Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z) review of site plans; and private parking requirements, including shared parking, which has been forwarded to by Council to P&Z for review. Ms. Sheetz explained the steps to repeal and replace the Downtown Character District: the first step would be to repeal the Imagine Downtown Vision Plan; then to repeal the Downtown Character District; lastly to rezone back to the previous zoning designations. Ms. Sheetz referenced a slide containing data requested at the previous City Council Work Session about a petition signed by downtown property owners; there were 25 signatures (one was retracted) representing 72 properties. Mayor Green stated that meeting should be in two parts: first consider the repeal of Downtown Character Districts because if consensus is reached on repeal, consideration of other revisions is unnecessary. Councilmember Dunn stated the petition referenced was regarding parking, and was a very small number of the overall property owners. Councilmember Harding stated he was not in favor of repealing, but supports amendments to compromise and move forward. Councilmember deBuhr asked why new legal descriptions of the old zones would be needed; Ms. Sheetz responded the descriptions are from the 1970's and would need to be updated. Councilmember Kruse expressed concern regarding the proposed row homes, stating key components of the new code need to be reviewed, and concern with the lack of P&Z oversight. Councilmember Sires stated he wanted to repeal and replace the current zoning and return to the previous zoning. Councilmember deBuhr stated the area for the Downtown Character District is too large, and stated concern the district will be used for other areas of the City. Councilmember Dunn stated that each area of the City will have its own district(s) and what is happening in Downtown won't necessarily be reflected in other parts. Councilmember Harding stated the concerns shared about parking Council has been willing to address but he does not agree with repealing. Councilmember Ganfield stated willingness to amend the code but not repeal it; Councilmember Shultz agreed. Mayor Green requested consensus on repealing the Downtown Character District; consensus was not reached. Mayor Green moved to the second portion of the meeting's referred items. Ms. Sheetz stated that shared parking and the parking ratio concern has already been referred by Council to P&Z for review; the remaining items are: missing middle housing; accessory dwelling units; the use of vinyl siding; and the role of P&Z. Mayor Green requested

clarification on the role of P&Z going forward; he stated understanding that the process had been removed because guidance would be clear, but cited concerns heard about a lack of elected and appointed official oversight. Councilmember Harding stated there is a checklist that follows the ordinance for developers to complete; Councilmember Kruse stated that developers will try to push the boundaries and public oversight is needed; Councilmember Dunn stated if that's happening, then they aren't meeting the ordinance/checklist. Councilmember Kruse stated the old code utilized a checklist; Councilmember Dunn stated it was vague and confusing, thus the new code and checklist. Councilmember deBuhr questioned if any cases go through P&Z without changes; Ms. Sheetz stated changes occur along the way, and noted a particular area of debate for the old code was ambiguous height regulations. Councilmember deBuhr asked if review was beneficial; Ms. Sheetz responded that there were different opinions at different stages; Councilmember Dunn stated the debate was because the regulations weren't clear before, and now they are, eliminating the need for review. Mayor Green asked if Council wanted to add P&Z back into the approval process; Councilmember deBuhr asked if P&Z discussed not being part of the review process; downtown; Planning and Community Services Manager Karen Howard stated P&Z discussed and decided to leave P&Z out, and noted that this discussion was outlined in the decision matrix presented to Council. Mayor requested consensus on adding P&Z back for the review process; consensus was reached. Ms. Sheetz requested clarification on what Council would like P&Z to review. Councilmember deBuhr asked if the area to require review could be reduced. Mayor Green stated that additional referral items (missing middle housing, accessory dwelling units, and vinyl siding use) will be discussed at a future Work Session.

There being no further discussion, Mayor Green adjourned the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Minutes by Katie Terhune, Administrative Assistant