

**Cedar Falls Planning and Zoning Commission
Regular Meeting
February 9, 2022
In person and via videoconference
Cedar Falls, Iowa**

MINUTES

The Cedar Falls Planning and Zoning Commission met in regular session on February 9, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. at the Cedar Falls Community Center and via videoconference due to precautions necessary to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The following Commission members were present: Crisman, Grybovych, Hartley, Holst, Larson (arrived late), Leeper, and Saul. Lynch and Moser were absent. Karen Howard, Planning & Community Services Manager, was also present.

- 1.) Chair Leeper noted the Minutes from the January 26, 2022 regular meeting are presented. Mr. Holst made a motion to approve the Minutes as presented. Ms. Saul seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 6 ayes (Crisman, Grybovych, Hartley, Holst, Leeper and Saul), and 0 nays.
- 2.) The first item of business was a public hearing on a Zoning Text Amendment to eliminate shared parking requirements in the Downtown Character District. Chair Leeper introduced the item and Ms. Howard provided background information on the petition from Council.

Ms. Howard displayed the location of the Downtown Character District and noted that the details of the ordinance had been presented at the last meeting. She noted that if there were any questions about the current regulations in the Downtown Character District, the slides from the last meeting were available for viewing.

Eashaan Vajpeyi, 3831 Convair Lane, indicated that he was a spokesperson for a group of owners of property downtown. He feels there needs to be more specificity in the shared parking requirements to exempt certain businesses or to specify which businesses can afford to share their parking and which cannot. He gave the example of restaurants and how due to their hours they would not be able to shared their parking. He noted examples of potential issues and possible solutions.

Mr. Holst asked for clarification on the current requirements for shared parking. Ms. Howard clarified that the shared parking requirements only apply to new buildings with residential uses and upper floor commercial. There is no shared parking requirement for existing businesses or for ground floor commercial, including restaurants. Mr. Holst stated that parking has been a big concern for him throughout this project. However, he feels that a lot of time has been spent on review of this new code and that we should try things the way they are now set up before changing it.

Mr. Larson agreed and feels a great deal of work, research and math considered in coming up with the numbers. Those can be changed without scrapping the whole code that everyone has put so much work into. He feels that trying it the way it is and adjusting as needed is the best plan. He believes that a great deal of time and effort has gone into the current code and it would be arbitrary to change the position on the numbers that were considered so seriously before.

Mr. Leeper stated that he doesn't feel that the shared parking requirement is not very significant. He likes the idea of making the effort to fix the problem, but feels the shared parking is only meant to be a very small part of the overall approach to parking, so would be

open to deleting it. Mr. Holst stated that he feels the need to forge ahead and at least give it a try to see how it works. The idea behind it is beneficial to the overall health of downtown and a lot of time and work has been put into researching all the information that was used to create the code.

Ms. Saul stated that she feels that if a developer wants to build downtown and is a good steward they will voluntarily do the sharing. She doesn't believe forcing the issue is necessary. She agreed with concerns about enforcement.

Mr. Hartley stated that he believes that some additional definition should be added, particularly with regard to underground and outdoor parking lots.

Ms. Saul made a motion to eliminate shared parking requirements. Ms. Grybovych seconded the motion. The motion was denied with 3 ayes (Grybovych, Leeper and Saul), and 4 nays (Crisman, Hartley, Holst and Larson).

Mr. Leeper asked if this can be brought back for consideration down the road to see how it is working. Ms. Howard stated that it can.

- 3.) The next item for public hearing was a zoning text amendment to CD-DT to increase parking requirements for residential uses in multi-unit and mixed use buildings. Chair Leeper introduced the item and Ms. Howard stated that the request from City Council is to consider increasing the parking requirement for residential uses in mixed-use or multi-unit buildings to one space per bedroom.

When asked, Ms. Howard also noted that the Commission may discuss and vote to forward any alternative proposals for changes to the parking requirements by a separate motion.

Eashaan Vajpeyi asked for clarification on the requirements on the parking ratios. He discussed a map that was brought up that shows Halloween weekend in 2018 showing one surface residential parking lot that is only 52% full. He asked if anyone checked how occupied the building was. He feels that the accuracy of the numbers would need to include the building occupancy at the time to show the real parking ratio. He feels that there should be at least a minimum one spot per bedroom as he believes that more people have cars than are being counted. He feels that the ratio of spots and occupancy is very important.

Daryl Kruse, 2725 Minnetonka Drive, spoke regarding the parking study noting that, of the residents that live downtown, 35% do not have an assigned parking spot. Most park on the street or in a parking lot, consuming spots for customers. He also stated that the seating capacity for all the bars and restaurants downtown is very close to 4,000. If they are half full and everyone comes two per car, there are 1,000 cars that need to park. The parking study shows approximately 680 parking spots on the street. If new buildings are built without one spot per bedroom, parking will be very limited. He also had an issue with the difference in parking requirements for rentals from downtown and the rest of the town. He feels that one spot per bedroom should be the minimum.

Mr. Holst asked for clarification regarding the parking for studio apartments. Ms. Howard stated that a studio apartment would be considered one bedroom and would currently require 0.5 spots per resident and 0.25 for shared parking.

Ms. Saul made a motion to change the code to one parking space per residential unit. Mr. Larson seconded the motion.

Mr. Hartley said that changing the code to require at least one space per unit is a good idea,

but the reality is that no one knows what the “magic” number regarding how many spaces per bedroom is until this is put into practice.

Mr. Leeper feels that requiring additional parking is a hindrance to development downtown and the environment that is attracting people downtown. People don't come downtown for the parking. He asked for clarification on the parking study that was done and Ms. Howard stated that parking was counted different days and different times of day to get a feel for the overall parking situation. Mr. Leeper stated that this seems to be a good case study. Ms. Saul interjected that shared parking is also being required. Mr. Holst stated that that small of a change isn't going to have that big of an impact either way.

Mr. Larson withdrew his second to the motion that was made to increase parking to one space per residential unit. The motion was removed from the table.

There was further discussion regarding an alternate motion. Mr. Holst stated that he feels that if the requirement is increased to one space, it should include the shared parking requirement. He noted that he is not in favor of increasing to 1 space per bedroom and then have the additional 0.25 space in shared parking requirement, which would make it higher than it was before the new code was adopted. Mr. Larson noted that a lot of time was spent on the numbers and feels that it was well researched. This is just referring to new development and isn't going to affect a great amount of parking.

Saul made a motion to increase the parking requirement for residential in multi-unit and mixed-use buildings to 0.75 per bedroom, but no less than one space per dwelling unit. Mr. Holst seconded the motion.

Mr. Larson stated that this is substantially over-parked compared to the current condition and reiterated that he feels that a great deal of objective thought, meetings and research went into the current requirement. Ms. Crisman agreed.

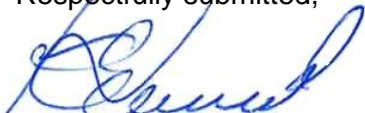
Ms. Saul feels that the increase is a good compromise as consultants are making these kinds of recommendations all over the country, but Cedar Falls may not be like all those other locations.

The motion was approved with 4 ayes (Hartley, Holst, Leeper and Saul), and 3 nays (Crisman, Grybovych and Larson)

- 4.) As there were no further comments, Ms. Saul made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Larson seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 7 ayes (Crisman, Grybovych, Hartley, Holst, Larson, Leeper and Saul), and 0 nays.

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Karen Howard
Community Services Manager


Joanne Goodrich
Administrative Assistant