

**Cedar Falls Planning and Zoning Commission  
Regular Meeting  
February 24, 2021  
Via At City Hall and Videoconference  
Cedar Falls, Iowa**

**MINUTES**

The Cedar Falls Planning and Zoning Commission met in regular session on February 24, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall and 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, Saul, Schrad and Sears. Prideaux was absent. Karen Howard, Planning & Community Services Manager, Thomas Weintraut, Planner III, Michelle Pezley, Planner III, Jaydevsinh Atodaria, Planner I and Chris Sevy, Planner I, were also present.

- 1.) Chair Leeper noted the Minutes from the February 10, 2021 regular meeting are presented. Ms. Lynch made a motion to approve the Minutes as presented. Mr. Hartley seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 8 ayes (Hartley, Holst, Larson, Leeper, Lynch, Saul, Schrad and Sears), and 0 nays.
- 2.) During the public comments portion of the meeting, Eashaan Vajpeyi, 3831 Convair Lane, came forward to speak about density and parking as an attorney on behalf of Concerned Citizens for College Hill. He wanted to recognize that there are items on the agenda that deal with density and parking and he encourages commission members to consider how that will relate to the College Hill Vision Plan update that is being reviewed. He stated that the items will discuss the challenges with higher density and less parking and feels it's a good opportunity to use examples from Downtown issues to help with the College Hill review process.
- 3.) The first item of business was the College Hill Neighborhood Overlay review for 704-706 W. 28<sup>th</sup> Street. Chair Leeper explained that the item was discussed at the last meeting where it was tabled. The Commission has the option to remove the item from the table and give a recommendation or take to take no action and remove it from old business. No action was taken.
- 3.) The next item for consideration by the Commission was a Central Business District site plan review for property at 7<sup>th</sup>, Main and Washington Streets. Chair Leeper introduced the item and Ms. Pezley provided background information. She explained that it is proposed to demolish the existing First Baptist Church located at 123 7<sup>th</sup> Street and replace it with a two-story, 25,778 sq. ft. building with 16 apartments and retail space, with solar panels, green space and an amenity deck on the roof. Setbacks in the Central Business District overlay are 0-10 feet from the property line. The setbacks are met from all streets except for Washington Street, where they are proposing a setback of 94 feet. According to City Code, exceptions are only to be granted if the applicant can:
  - provide a detailed explanation of why the standard cannot be met;
  - explain how the proposed building is uniquely designed to fit the characteristics of the site and neighborhood, how it is consistent with the purpose and intent of the CBD and how it will not detract from other properties nearby;
  - be able to provide an alternative design solution consistent with the intent of the standard being modified if required by the Commission or City Council.

Staff had concerns with the parking lot being next to the public sidewalk as it is not in keeping with the vision for a pedestrian-friendly downtown. To mitigate the negative aspects of a surface parking lot instead of a building at the street corner, the applicant is proposing to put up a decorative screen wall and landscaping to separate the parking from the right-of-way. Given that the site is challenging with frontage on three different streets, staff finds that this is an acceptable compromise to the standard along one street frontage. Ms. Pezley discussed streetscape, landscaping and plans for trash. She also noted that sign location are noted on the site plan, but not the final design of the signs and that a separate sign permit must be submitted for each sign. With regard to the stormwater plan, detention is proposed under the parking lot and the applicant is working with the Public Works Department to coordinate their project with the City's project to reconstruct Washington Street. The final design of the lighting plan has also not been finalized but all lights will need to be fully shielded and downcast.

Ms. Pezley discussed the building design, displaying renderings of the design and style. The building design review included the roof shape, pitch and direction, pattern, building composition and windows and transparency. The project would also require an exception for the percent of fenestration (windows and doors) on the storefront façade facing 7<sup>th</sup> Street. The code allows a request for modification to this standard for corner lot buildings, allowing reduction on the secondary street frontage. Staff notes that the building meets the 70% requirement on the Main Street façade, but does not on the 7<sup>th</sup> Street façade. Given that this is a corner building and due to the interior storage and display needs for a grocery, staff recommends approval of an exception as shown on the site plan with façade recesses that may make it easier in the future to install additional storefront windows. Ms. Pezley discussed the materials and colors proposed as well as architectural features and entries. She noted that there would also be a need for an exception to the required number of entries along the 7<sup>th</sup> Street façade. The applicant proposes to recess the façade near the ground floor windows to provide the opportunity for an additional entry in the future. Staff finds this to be an acceptable solution and recommends approval of the exception.

Parking requirements were discussed, including space requirements, lot setbacks and parking circulation. Ms. Pezley explained that deliveries would come from the 7<sup>th</sup> Street end of the property and continue on to the alley. As the width will not be wide enough for two lanes, access will be one way with removable bollards. Staff notes that the proposal is to reserve the surface parking for the co-op grocery store during business hours. Staff indicated that the requirement in the code is for parking for the residential units in the proposed building. If the parking is going to be reserved for the grocery store, the proposal does not meet the code requirement for residential parking. Staff recommends the site plan be resubmitted showing designated residential parking areas. Pezley discussed the option of using the vacant lot at the corner of Washington and 6<sup>th</sup> Street for at least a portion of the required residential parking and improving the surface parking with screen wall and landscaping as proposed for the other lot. She also noted that if this option were pursued by the developer, this off-site parking would have to be tied to this site plan through a development agreement.

Staff feels the building will be a positive change for the block and that it meets standards of the downtown plan. Staff recommends exceptions to the building setback, windows and transparency, building entries and the parking lot setback. The parking spaces for residential units remain an outstanding issue. Staff recommends gathering comments from the Commission and the public at this time for further discussion at the March 10 meeting. A revised site plan showing the residential parking spaces should be brought forward at that time.

Dan Drendel, Slingshot Architecture, explained that Brent with Hi-Yield will be present at the next meeting for further discussion. He noted that he will be available for any questions at this time.

Kate Dunning, 2100 Grand Boulevard, Waterloo, spoke as a representative of The Rooted Carrot. She explained that The Rooted Carrot is a community-owned, full-service grocery store in the making, focused on local healthy, sustainable foods and products. Ms. Dunning stated that the Imagine Downtown Vision Plan noted that there was a need for a grocery store downtown and she knows the City is committed to such a project. She discussed the statistics of having a locally owned co-op, which will help keep money circulating into local business. She also explained the market research done on co-ops and how they have used that information to create the model being discussed. She spoke about working with the City for parking solutions and asked for support of the shared parking plan.

Mr. Schrad stated concern with how well the shared parking would work for the residents, given the extensive hours for the grocery store. He noted that he really likes the overall plan for the project, but feels the parking is an issue.

Ms. Saul asked for further clarification on the second parking lot. Ms. Howard explained that the property owner also owns the vacant parking lot at the northwest corner of that block and staff has spoken with the owner about using the lot for the parking needs of the residents. She stated that it may be an option to come to an agreement to tie the parking lot to the project with a Development Agreement. Staff would recommend that the lot be improved in the same manner as the closer lot.

Eashaan Vajpeyi spoke again as a shareholder in the co-op and noted concern with the idea of shared parking, stating that he doesn't believe that it will work. He also doesn't believe that making so many exceptions is appropriate and sets a bad precedent. He felt that the code states that parking should be on the actual property and not a block away, and that citizens will feel the impact of continually building residential properties above commercial and not creating enough parking.

Ms. Saul agreed that the parking appears to need to go through proper zoning ordinance changes. If changes to the code are to be made, those should be done first. Mr. Larson clarified the parking numbers and stated that he feels that the requirements are met. If the agreement is amenable with the tenant and the developer, it may not be the Commission's business to subjectively speculate as to what the problems might be. Mr. Leeper asked if it is the Commission's job to police who uses the spots if the developer is providing the proper number of spaces. Ms. Howard stated that the code requires parking for the residential tenants of the building, not for the commercial. Since the developer and the grocery store have clearly indicated that the parking will be reserved for the grocery store, the developer will need to show where the parking for the residents will be provided. She also noted that a developer can always provide more parking than what is required. She explained that off-site parking is allowed in the Central Business District within a reasonable distance, but there would need to be an agreement between the developer and the City to reserve that parking over time. Mr. Leeper stated his support for staff recommendations. Mr. Hartley noted that he has concerns with the parking. Although it meets the current code, he feels that there could be conflict and that more parking should be provided. He would like to see a better solution than what is proposed. The item was continued to the next meeting.

- 4.) The Commission then considered a Central Business District Overlay design review for a remodel of the building at 4th and Main Streets. Chair Leeper introduced the item and Mr. Atodaria provided background information. He explained that the building is located at 108 E. 4th Street and the vacant land sits at northeast corner of 4th and Main Street. The request from the applicant is to propose an indoor/outdoor restaurant at this site and the idea is to utilize the maximum of the original structure and retrofit the use. Mr. Atodaria mentioned that this building was never designed as a storefront building and the applicant is requesting an

exception to the fenestration requirements and painting the brick facades. City staff is supportive of those exceptions, as the code allows exception for buildings which are on corner lots and were never designed as storefront buildings. Mr. Atodaria discussed other façade elements in detail, including architectural features, proportion, color, projecting sign, outdoor patio area, street furniture, building entries, materials, windows and transparencies, texture and composition of façade. He discussed that the proposal is likely to make great utilization of this site and also enhance the building, its use, surrounding area and be a great addition to downtown. Staff recommends discussion of the submitted proposal.

Brian Wingert, on behalf of Stone and Terrace LLC, stated that this proposal is more to retrofit the use of an existing building and therefore an exception to fenestration was requested. He was excited for this adaptive re-use project. Previously the commission did discuss how to emphasize adaptive re-use and retain the existing character of a place. It is intended to do the same with this project and pay homage to the history of the site. Moreover the project will bring new activity to this corner, as it is not utilized for about 11 months of the year. Community Main Street has a plan for Santa's workshop, so that will not be an issue. Community Main Street also provided a letter supporting the project, stating that everyone is excited about it. Mr. Wingert believed that most of the regulations have been met and that the requested exception is also supported by staff. He would like to move this forward to Council, if the commission does not have any concerns or comments, to get the project moving quickly. Ms. Saul mentioned that the proposal looks very good. Adding to the comment, Ms. Lynch mentioned that the proposal is going to be a great addition to downtown.

Ms. Saul made a motion to approve the item. Mr. Larson seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 8 ayes (Hartley, Holst, Larson, Leeper, Lynch, Saul, Schrad and Sears), and 0 nays.

- 5.) The next item of business was a land use amendment and rezoning from M-1 to HWY-1 at 7009 Nordic Drive. Chair Leeper introduced the item and Mr. Sevy provided background information. He explained that the property is in the Industrial Park close to the intersection of Highway 58 and Ridgeway Avenue, and staff feels it would be appropriate to change the land use map from Industrial to Commercial Corridor for that area, since at least a portion of the area has already been zoned HWY-1 and could also include the area proposed for rezoning. Staff recommends discussion at this meeting and setting a public hearing for March 10, 2021. Mr. Sevy then noted that the Commission could either discuss the land use amendment portion of the item or he could continue providing information with regard to the rezoning request that goes with it. Mr. Leeper chose to continue with the zoning information.

Mr. Sevy explained that the applicant is seeking to use the 7.5 acre property at 7009 Nordic Drive for medical or clinical purposes, which is not allowed in the M-1 District. The applicant would like to rezone the property to HWY-1 to allow those uses and Mr. Sevy noted that that zoning district is more restrictive than the M-1 District in many ways. He provided information regarding requirements to fit into the HWY-1 district, including a 20-foot landscaped setback, green space of 10% land area, street trees equivalent to 875 planting points and the interior of parking lots requiring landscape islands with one overstory tree for every 15 stalls.

If the rezoning is approved, staff recommends the following conditions:

- Improve the property to meet the green space planting and street tree requirements as outlined in the staff report.
- Require a landscaping plan and planting schedule prior to final approval of the rezoning.
- The conditional agreement should identify a timeline for when the parking lot interior landscape islands and setback will be brought into compliance.
- Any other conditions identified by the Commission and City Council.

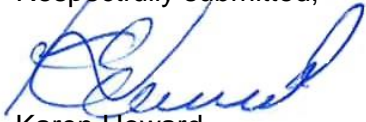
At this time, staff is bringing the project forward for discussion and requesting that the Commission set a public hearing for the next meeting.

Ms. Saul stated that the land use amendment and rezoning make sense. The Commission agreed to set the public hearing for March 10 for the land use map amendment and rezoning.

- 6.) As there were no further comments, Mr. Larson made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Lynch seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 8 ayes (Hartley, Holst, Larson, Leeper, Lynch, Saul, Schrad and Sears), and 0 nays.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Karen Howard  
Community Services Manager



Joanne Goodrich  
Administrative Assistant