

**Cedar Falls Planning and Zoning Commission
Regular Meeting
August 24, 2022
Cedar Falls, Iowa**

MINUTES

The Cedar Falls Planning and Zoning Commission met in regular session on August 24, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. at the Community Center. The following Commission members were present: Crisman, Grybovych, Hartley, Holst, Larson, Leeper, Lynch, Moser and Saul. Karen Howard, Community Services Manager, and Jaydevsinh Atodaria, Planner I, were also present.

- 1.) Chair Leeper noted the Minutes from the August 10, 2022 regular meeting are presented. Ms. Lynch made a motion to approve the Minutes as presented. Ms. Saul seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 9 ayes (Crisman, Grybovych, Hartley, Holst, Larson, Leeper, Lynch, Moser and Saul), and 0 nays.
- 2.) The first item of business was a zoning text amendment regarding certain site plans in the CD-DT district. Chair Leeper introduced the item and Ms. Howard provided background information and explained that this is a public hearing regarding a petition from City Council to require P&Z review of site plans that would expand the floor plan or where residential is being added, similar to language in Section 26-196C.2.b. She showed the draft of the new language being proposed per the Council's petition. Staff recommends that the Commission discuss the proposed amendments to the Zoning Code and make a recommendation to City Council.

Ms. Moser stated that she feels this is putting the Commission in an awkward position as it was sent back to them after they had agreed on this item unanimously in an effort to streamline the process. To change it would add an extra layer to the process.

Ms. Grybovich added that no planning documents are perfect and they have discussed the ability to revisit the item down the road to allow the Commission to see if changes should be made. A lot of work has gone into this document and she feels that they should move forward with what the Commission has proposed.

Mr. Hartley stated that he has wrestled with creating a process that is efficient and easy to move through, but he also likes the idea of transparency and the ability for citizens to see everything laid out for them to see what is being proposed. He asked how much comes to the Commission currently with regard to site plans throughout the City. Ms. Howard stated that there are a number of zones where site plans are not reviewed through the Commission and City Council (i.e., R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, C-1, C-2, etc.) Typically, the zones that are reviewed are planned developments that have a master plan associated with them (i.e., RP, HWY-1, MU, and other Overlay Zones, such as the previous CBD Overlay).

Mr. Holst feels that the positive side is the consideration of public transparency and can see the merit to adding the review. He believes there is a good deal of public interest and feels that if this is what the Council would like to see he is comfortable with their recommendation. Ms. Saul stated she agrees with Mr. Holst.

Mr. Larson feels that the proposed language is a good middle ground and would support some additional oversight as long as the end goal is the intent to remove it from the equation. He doesn't believe the Commission needs to see everything that comes through and suggested that if it is amended to create more review there should be an agreement to revisit this in a year, if the process is too onerous.

Ms. Crisman stated her concern that once amended the ordinance will not be changed in the future to reduce unnecessary oversight of site plans. She doesn't feel that it has been sent back to the Commission from a concern for the public. She believes that the Commission has made every effort to make the code clear and it is P&Z's responsibility to focus on planning for the future, such as improvements to the code for College Hill and other areas that need attention rather than on minor site plan reviews. She stated that staff is very capable and excellent at reviewing site plans. The Commission had agreed previously that they were mostly just curious to see how it was working, not that there was concern or need for additional public comment. She doesn't feel that the public is worried about adding additional square footage to an existing building. She would like to move forward so the Commission can focus on other matters that need their attention. Mr. Larson agreed with the majority of these sentiments.

Mr. Holst stated that he could understand that this is a big change. He disagreed that the public doesn't care about projects like these. Mr. Larson noted that the only way that the Commission can decide on how the change will work is to make a decision and give it time to try out the process to see if there are any shortcomings that need to be taken into account.

Ms. Crisman stated that she doesn't believe that this is taking away the public's ability to provide comments. Every meeting has time set aside for public comment where they could share their thoughts and ideas.

Mr. Holst noted that people won't have a chance to comment on projects that aren't coming through Planning and Zoning. Mr. Leeper stated that the reason that the projects aren't coming through the Commission is because the rules in the code are clear so it would not be necessary. He feels that this is more of an issue of process and that the Commission spent a lot of time trying to get this right. The previous recommendation from the Commission to focus additional review only for new buildings was approved unanimously and he is wondering how long these minor changes to the code will continue to come back from the Council.

Ms. Grybovich asked what happens next in the process. Ms. Howard stated that at this time the Commission should decide to recommend for or against the proposed changes per the Council petition. If denial is recommended, it will require 2/3 of the Council to pass the ordinance. If approval is recommended a simple majority of Council will be required to pass the ordinance.

Mr. Larson made a motion to approve the proposed language changes. Ms. Saul seconded the motion. The motion was denied with 4 ayes (Hartley, Holst, Larson and Saul) and 5 nays (Crisman, Grybovich, Leeper, Lynch and Moser).

- 3.) The next item for consideration by the Commission was a College Hill Neighborhood Overlay design review for a new duplex at 1224 W. 20th Street. Chair Leeper introduced the item and Mr. Atodaria provided background information. He explained that the site is in the R-3, Multiple Residence Zoning District and the College Hill Neighborhood Overlay zoning district. The proposal is to add a new duplex (4-bedroom, 2-bath/unit) after demolishing the existing single-family unit and detached structure on the property at 1224 W. 20th Street. All minimum zoning requirements, including lot width, lot area, on-site parking, landscaping points, building design etc., are all met. Mr. Atodaria noted that the proposed two-unit dwelling is configured in a way that the garage sites closer to the street while the main entrance of the units are recessed. He also mentioned that the street facing façade will be layered with stacked stone and the building design also includes roof-dormers as an architectural feature of the building. Mr. Atodaria also explained additional criteria of the overlay district, noting that the proposal is unique in character with building a garage fronting the street with the main house entry being recessed

in comparison to other buildings in the neighborhood. He also mentioned that the best practice is to have garages recessed or have garages accessed through an alley. However, the proposal is unique and appropriate for the site, considering existing site constraints including floodway area on the south side of the lot, natural vegetation, and no accessible alleyway. He also noted that staff recommends that the mature trees on the site and in the public ROW be preserved to the extent possible and the applicant has agreed. Staff recommends approval subject to any comments or direction by the Commission and conformance to all city staff recommendations and technical requirements.

Russ Campbell, 1934 Campus Street, commented that tandem parking is not a good concept, as students park two cars on street. He suggested asking city council to create a rule about requiring independently accessible parking spaces. Mr. Campbell noted that this is a general comment.

Mr. Campbell also noted that a few years back that two curb-cuts were discouraged, and the proposal could have been possible if the approach is reduced to single approach. Mr. Atodaria noted that limiting curb-cut per property is always a good idea as it increases opportunity for on-street parking and reduces paving. However, staff did discuss the same with the applicant and in order to save the mature trees, a decision to have two curb cuts was made. Mr. Campbell mentioned that what he meant was reducing each driveway width to single car wide approach, thereby not impacting any tree removal but creating narrower curb-cuts.

Ms. Lynch noted this is a vast improvement from what is currently on-site and made a motion to approve the plan subject to staff's recommendation. Mr. Larson seconded the motion.

Ms. Crisman made a comment thanking the staff for the preservation of neighborhood aspect. She looks forward to seeing updated the College Hill Overlay Zoning District to see how we will be able to preserve historical houses as well as work on how we can nicely blend the newer development within existing historic character of the neighborhood. She also asked staff if the current code allows any additional dwellings in the back of this lot. Ms. Howard stated that it would be something like a flag lot which would require the lot to be subdivided. Without further analysis she did not know if it would be possible for this property.

Mr. Leeper asked if there are any suggestions that we can propose to the developer to reduce the width of the driveways at the curb. Mr. Holst mentioned that the problem is to get required off-street parking spaces with 2 spaces in the garage and 2 spaces tandem behind the garage. If the width is reduced at the curb cut there would not be enough room for a person to park two cars on the driveway, as the setback is only 25 feet (which is about a car's length).

The motion was approved unanimously with 9 ayes (Crisman, Grybovych, Hartley, Holst, Larson, Leeper, Lynch, Moser and Saul), and 0 nays.

- 4.) As there were no further comments, Ms. Lynch made a motion to adjourn. Moser seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 9 ayes (Crisman, Grybovych, Hartley, Holst, Larson, Leeper, Lynch, Moser and Saul), and 0 nays.

The meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Karen Howard
Community Services Manager


Joanne Goodrich
Administrative Assistant