

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

MINUTES

The Cedar Falls Planning and Zoning Commission met in regular session on March 24 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: Holst, Larson (arrived later), Leeper, Lynch, Prideaux, Saul, Schrad and Sears. Hartley was absent. Karen Howard, Community Services Manager, Michelle Pezley, Planner III, Jaydevsinh Atodaria, Planner I, were also present.

- 1.) Chair Leeper noted the Minutes from the March 10, 2021 regular meeting and work session, as well as the March 3, 2021 work session are presented. Ms. Lynch made a motion to approve the Minutes as presented. Ms. Sears seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 7 ayes (Holst, Leeper, Lynch, Prideaux, Saul, Schrad and Sears), and 0 nays.
- 2.) Public comments were brought forward at this time. Carol Weisenberger, 1010 W. 13th Street, brought forward a concern in her neighborhood with the appearance of Air B&B's. She spoke about a home in the neighborhood that has been used as an Air B&B and has been allowing more people to use the house than what is allowed for in their rental permit. She stated her concern with the fact that there is no plan in place for dealing with these kinds of facilities and there are no regulations for them. They do not fit into the current zoning for the property and Ms. Weisenberger would like this to be looked into.

Yvonne Pettegrew, 1115 West 12th Street, stated concern with the fact that the lack of regulations as it not only creating issues with parking and traffic, there is an increased amount of trash that is not being properly contained.

- 3.) The first item of business was a Central business District Overlay site plan review for a new mixed use building at 7th and Main Streets. Chair Leeper introduced the item and noted that the petitioner has requested to defer the item to a later meeting while they address parking issues.

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

- 4.) The Commission then considered a land use map amendment and rezoning from M-1 to HWY-1 at 7009 Nordic Drive. Chair Leeper introduced the item and noted that the applicant would like to continue the hearing to the next meeting.

Ms. Sears made a motion to continue the public hearing to the next meeting. Mr. Holst seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 8 ayes (Holst, Larson, Leeper, Lynch, Prideaux, Saul, Schrad and Sears), and 0 nays.

- 5.) The next item of business was a Central Business District Overlay design review at 302 Main Street. Chair Leeper introduced the item and Mr. Atodaria explained that new signage is proposed for the Lincoln Savings Bank and showed renderings of the proposed signage. He discussed the proposal for the signs and the requirements for projecting and wall signs. Mr.

Atodaria stated that staff recommends approval of the signage and that if the item is approved it will be moved to the next council meeting for consideration.

Mr. Schrad asked for clarification of whether the signs are lit. Mr. Atodaria explained that the projecting sign will be lit.

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

- 6.) The next item for consideration by the Commission was a request to rezone the area 500 feet north of Huntington Road along the west side of Cedar Heights drive from A-1 and R-1 to MU and update the Pinnacle Prairie Master plan. Chair Leeper introduced the item and Ms. Howard provided background information. She noted that this was a new application for a rezoning, but a similar request was considered last year by the Commission and was denied. She explained the current uses and how they would change if rezoned and noted that the applicant would like to incorporate this area into the larger Pinnacle Prairie Master Plan. The item was reviewed in the fall and part of the review included looking at the future land use map in this location and updating that as well. She noted that the Commission had recommended approval of the change to the Future Land Use Map at that time. She noted the applicant would like to refine the master plan for Pinnacle Prairie East. Ms. Howard displayed the 2015 Master Plan and discussed the potential update. She discussed the previous proposal in 2020 that was denied due to a lack of an east-west street connection to Cedar Heights Drive. With this new master plan proposal they show a new street layout that includes extension of Prairie View Road to Cedar Heights Drive at its intersection with Huntington Road. They would propose to continue to use their same design standards as apply currently in the Pinnacle Prairie development, which establishes prairie-style aesthetic. Ms. Howard explained that there will be focus on alley loaded types of townhomes and the neighborhood commercial area will have street access and trail connections to ensure residents have easy access. She elaborated on the Prairie View Drive extension to connect with Cedar Heights Drive and noted that there are still some outstanding questions about the viability of the commercial area shown on the master plan due to floodplain issues. If it is determined that the commercial area is not feasible, the applicant has agreed to shift the east-west extension of Prairie View Road to the north to extend along the southern boundary of the multi-family area that is the subject of this rezoning. Howard noted that if this were to occur, then the concept plan shown for the multi-family area will need to be modified to accommodate the street right-of-way.

Ms. Howard displayed a view of the area proposed for rezoning, noting that it will contain primarily multi-family development with approximately 12 units per acre with buildings oriented toward the street and good access to open space amenities and trails. The street network and traffic circulation will provide good public access to the trail network and a park, the streets will be laid out in an attractive yet connected curvilinear pattern, and the open space is well distributed. She explained some of the potential adjustments with regard to the east-west connection. The location has access to public services and Ms. Howard noted that adjustments to the open space, parks and trails will be addressed in the development agreement. With regard to technical comments she explained that a preliminary and final plat will be required prior to any land sales within the master plan area. Although the issues in the previous developmental procedures agreement have now been resolved, a new agreement will need to be drafted and signed prior to setting a public hearing at City Council for the requested rezoning. Staff recommends initial discussion at this time and setting public hearing for April 4.

LeaAnn asked why we don't know if commercial will be allowed in that spot. Ms. Howard explained that the floodplain maps are currently under review for changes so it will depend on

when the plan is submitted and whether they can comply with the new flood insurance rate maps, likely to be finalized by FEMA next spring.

Eric Johnson, Beecher Law Firm, asked if Carrie Hansen had joined the meeting online. Staff stated that she was not. He explained that he is available for any questions with regard to the project.

Since there were no questions, Mr. Larson made a motion to set the public hearing for April 14, 2021. Ms. Sears seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 8 ayes (Holst, Larson, Leeper, Lynch, Prideaux, Saul, Schrad and Sears), and 0 nays.

- 7.) The next item of business was a public hearing regarding the Imagine College Hill! Vision Plan. Chair Leeper introduced the item and Ms. Pezley provided background information. In response to questions asked at the last meeting, she described the public outreach conducted throughout the planning effort. She noted that the City sent mailers to residents, local property and business owners, issued press releases, radio and television interviews and other means for getting the word out regarding the plan and encouraging feedback. She also noted that the College Hill Partnership had also made significant effort to encourage participation in the planning effort. Pezley also addressed the question about equity in planning efforts raised during the last meeting and explained how the language in the plan related to providing more housing and business opportunities to a wider diversity of people could be further enhanced and discussion of leveling the playing field between student renters and other populations who would like to live in the area and how the plan addresses this type of neighborhood stabilization.

In response to some questions posed at the last meeting, Mary Madden of Ferrell Madden spoke about the vision plan, explaining that it is a policy document and not regulatory. There have been questions regarding how the zoning ordinance will be updated to implement the vision plan. She noted that this is the next step in the process, so there is nothing in the vision plan that indicates specific parking requirements. She noted that the plan is intended to identify the aspirations for the area and possible barriers to that vision and possible solutions to consider. In their research they heard a strong desire for revitalization and redevelopment, particularly in the business district. It is important to keep in mind that you are dependent on private re-investment to make re-development happen and that there are several things the city can do to help encourage that. Those include establishing new public policies, changing regulations, such as zoning, and additional public improvement (sidewalks, public spaces, stormwater, etc.).

Ms. Madden discussed that their market analysis revealed that the key to unlocking re-development potential is to consider changes to parking requirements and adjustments to parking policies. It is recommended that the city revise the current parking standards as part of the zoning update, coordinating parking management with UNI, continue to implement the parking study strategies and consider additional parking management tools in the future as needed. Ms. Fadden explained that College Hill has parking demand concerns that are due to two significant factors. The parking in College Hill is less expensive than parking in university facilities. It is also closer in proximity to the center of campus than many of the University parking areas. Together, they make College Hill a preferred parking location even though the University has plenty of available parking at reasonable rates. She stated that the question is who should get to park on city streets and how much should they pay. The study for the business district shows that it is important to have short term parking available for people who frequent those businesses. Ms. Madden discussed the parking ratios and prototypical projects and what is determined accordingly. She provided renderings of theoretical building footprints and prototypes as part of the vision as they were trying to determine how much development is possible under the current parking requirements and what is possible if changes are made.

These examples are intended to provide insight into the type of changes in policy and regulation will likely be need to achieve the vision expressed by the community.

Ms. Madden also discussed the current parking requirements and how they will affect potential projects. One option she discussed was the possibility of off-site parking and what some of the pros and cons would be for that choice. She also addressed comments from the last meeting regarding social equity. She also noted that one of the really significant costs in housing is parking and that if a parking space is required for every bedroom, families or those without cars are paying for parking they do not need, which drives up rents.

Ms. Pezley then discussed specific changes to the plan language recommended by staff and the consultants.

Becky Hawbaker, 2309 Iowa Street, would like to add a comment for preserving the neighborhood area. She supports development that will bring a greater diversity of business to the Hill, but she would like to ensure that the owner-occupied areas are also preserved.

Christopher Martin, 421 West Seerley, is the president of the College Hill Partnership and stated that they are really excited for the vision plan and noted what he feels are important points. He feels that it encourages students to live closer to campus where they have a better opportunity of being successful. It also encourages stabilization of neighborhoods. It encourages resilience by encouraging multiple modes of transportation, in particular walking and riding bikes. He also stated that the businesses would like to have more customers from the neighborhood, so more density is needed.

Kathryn Sogard, 330 Columbia Circle, reiterated that the College Hill Partnership's mission is very cohesive with the proposed plan. It is important for the city and students to mesh well and improve living conditions for each other.

Eashaan Vajpeyi, 3831 Convair Lane, stated that the Section 8 Program always has a long waiting list and there is a lack of properties available. He feels that staff should consider working with City Council to make this program a priority for redevelopment on the Hill and bring more diversity to the area. He discussed issues he sees with the parking standards and spoke about the parking study that was done. He would like the Commission to listen to the citizens and tell Council that they like the plan but would like more parking.

Andrea Geary, 1816 Tremont, feels that the City hasn't given enough time to considering marginalized populations and thinks the City should go out of their way to reach out to other populations to get their feedback.

Ms. Madden spoke to Mr. Vajpeyi's comments and reiterated that they are attempting to ask the questions of who needs the parking, who provides it, who pays for it and where is it located. Any developer is able to choose to provide more parking if they feel the need, but the question is whether the City is requiring people to provide more parking than is needed.

Mr. Schrad asked why no-car rental units aren't built for walking students only. He also noted that there are only 74 days of the year where the weather is conducive to walking and those fall mostly in the summertime, which is not a time where parking is an issue.

Ms. Saul agreed with Mr. Vajpeyi in that she feels that if the Commission passes this without comments about really working on the parking issues, the Council will feel that they voted for it so they must feel it is good the way it is. She feels it is a wonderful plan, but the parking needs to be addressed.

Ms. Prideaux believes that it is a good plan, and that parking is always a contentious topic in any city. She feels the plan sets a reasonable standard and that it encourages a healthier lifestyle and more walking. She also added that she feels that the City has done all that they could to promote input options, however the Commission is all white and structurally that should be a greater consideration with future appointments.

Mr. Holst likes the vision plan overall and understands that parking is a big concern. He is also struggling with the diversity issue, but wonders how it could be addressed at this point in the project. He asked Ms. Geary if she had any suggestions on how to accomplish what she felt was lacking in the outreach efforts.

Mr. Larson feels the Commission should give extra effort to the parking concerns to find a balance. He would like to see some discussion and engagement with Council. He feels the plan is fantastic.

Mr. Larson made a motion to approve the item. Ms. Prideaux seconded the motion. The motion was approved with 7 ayes (Holst, Larson, Leeper, Lynch, Prideaux, Saul, and Sears), and 1 nay (Schrad).

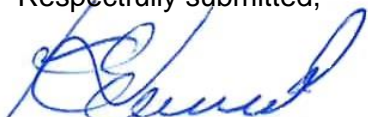
- 8.) The next item for consideration was rezoning and zoning code text amendments. Chair Leeper introduced the item and Ms. Howard provided brief comments. She noted that the code and regulating plan were presented about a month ago and it has been posted for public review during that time. There have been four work sessions to discuss the elements of the code and comments have been received from citizens. The next step will be to set a public hearing.

Mr. Schrad made a motion to set a public hearing for April 14, 2021. Ms. Lynch seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 8 ayes (Holst, Larson, Leeper, Lynch, Prideaux, Saul, Schrad and Sears), and 0 nays.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Karen Howard
Community Services Manager



Joanne Goodrich
Administrative Assistant