

CITY PLAN COMMISSION
Wednesday, November 16, 2016

A meeting of the City Plan Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson Rick Wiesner in the Council Chambers, City Hall, 421 Michigan Street.

Roll call: Members Jeff Norland, Ron Vandertie, Bob Starr, Rick Wiesner, Steven Hurley, and Dennis Statz were present. Excused: Member Mike Gilson. Also present were City Administrator Josh Van Lieshout, Planner/Zoning Administrator Ryan Kernosky, Community Development Director Marty Olejniczak, and Community Development Secretary Cheryl Nault.

Adoption of agenda: Moved by Mr. Norland, seconded by Mr. Statz to adopt the following agenda:

1. Roll call.
2. Adoption of agenda.
3. Approval of minutes from October 19, 2016.
4. Consideration of: Cooperative ground sign for Tractor Supply Company and Pick 'n Save.
5. Consideration of: Jefferson Street corridor rezoning to Mixed Commercial-Residential (C-5).
6. Discussion of: Zoning code amendment to allow accessory dwelling units.
7. Consideration of: Future meeting time.
8. Public comment on Plan Commission related items.
9. Adjourn.

Carried.

Approval of minutes from October 19, 2016: Moved by Mr. Vandertie, seconded by Mr. Statz to approve the minutes from October 19, 2016. All ayes. Carried.

Consideration of: Cooperative ground sign for Tractor Supply Company and Pick 'n Save: Mr. Kernosky stated that Tractor Supply Company has petitioned for a cooperative ground sign for Tractor Supply Company and Pick n' Save that needs approval from the Plan Commission since cooperative signs can be 25 feet tall and up to 200 square feet in size. The proposal is for the sign to be 25 feet high and 99 square feet for each face. Creative Sign Company will install the sign, but it will actually be constructed by a sign company out of Alabama.

Mr. Kernosky added that if a new business or businesses would occupy the rest of the K- Mart building, only wall signage would be allowed, since the square footage is maxed out for the pylon sign.

Commission members were concerned with the brightness of the sign. Mr. Statz stated that he preferred the raised backlit "halo" letters, with LED lights.

Discussion continued. Moved by Mr. Starr, seconded by Mr. Vandertie to approve the cooperative ground sign, subject to review by the Aesthetic Design & Site Plan Review Board.

Creative Sign Company representative Andrea Swanson stated that this is a more economical sign. If bulbs are taken out there would be inconsistent lighting. That is why the bulbs are placed so close together. LED lights are actually less expensive and last longer than fluorescent bulbs. She mentioned that a diffuser to tone down the lighting could be added. Vinyl could be placed on the back side of the sign.

Mr. Kernosky thought that the steel tube holding the signs seemed to be unscaled to the size of the sign.

Mr. Hurley said the sign had a cold feel to it and suggested some type of landscaping around the sign to warm up the area.

Mr. Starr added to his motion, along with Mr. Vandertie's second, to add potential landscaping around the sign. All ayes. Carried.

Consideration of: Jefferson Street corridor rezoning to Mixed Commercial-Residential (C-5): Mr. Kernosky stated that a neighborhood meeting was held on November 15th, with 16 people in attendance, to discuss a potential rezoning for Jefferson Street. Most concerns were in regard to signage and parking if the use would change. There was a request from the neighborhood to send out a survey to gather feedback. There were no objections from those in attendance.

Mr. Olejniczak addressed parking concerns in the C-5 district. A property owner could pay in lieu of parking. That amount is set by the Finance Committee. There may be landscaping that property owners may not want to tear out for parking. A special overlay district to restrict Jefferson Street could be considered to prevent on-site parking in the front of the building.

Mr. Starr added that there are many older homes on Jefferson Street. C-5 zoning is specifically for those homes and this is an appropriate process to go through.

No further action was needed at this time.

Discussion of: Zoning code amendment to allow accessory dwelling units: Mr. Olejniczak began discussion explaining that an accessory unit would be a second unit on a property. It can create more affordable housing in a neighborhood. He went through the purpose to allow such accessory dwelling units, as well as potential requirements.

Commission members discussed items such as converting an upstairs of a garage to a dwelling unit, minimum floor area, setbacks for existing buildings, lot size, requiring parking space, etc.

Mr. Norland expressed his concern that this was opening a Pandora's Box, especially in existing neighborhoods. Over time it could become an eyesore.

Mr. Wiesner could see this as a duplex in the R-1 district. It would be a great idea if taking care of parents, etc.

Mr. Vandertie asked if we are trying to fix something that doesn't have to be

Mr. Starr stated there are pre-existing duplexes in R-1. He is cautiously interested in the accessory dwelling unit idea. Public input would be important.

Mr. Olejniczak mentioned that this could be done in certain districts only.

Chris Kellems, 120 Alabama St., stated she was concerned about permeability filling up lots. A variance should be obtained. She suggested doing a go slow approach.

Mr. Statz spoke about a carriage house idea with a small dwelling above a garage in back of the house. Mr. Norland responded that the older persons, such as parents, won't want to climb steps to a dwelling.

It was the consensus of the Commission to continue with discussion at a future meeting.

Consideration of: Future meeting time: Commission members discussed the possibility of changing future meetings to an earlier time of day. It was the consensus of the Commission to begin future meetings at 6:00 p.m.

Public comment on Plan Commission related items: There was no public comment.

Adjourn: Moved by Mr. Statz, seconded by Mr. Norland to adjourn. Carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Nault
Community Development Secretary