

City of Decorah
Planning and Zoning Commission
January 13, 2014 – 7:00pm

Meeting Minutes

Members present included: Lynne Sootheran, Brian Cook, Donna Rae Ibanez, Benji Nichols, Stan Moellers and Barbara Massman. Others present included City Manager Chad Bird. The commission currently has a vacancy due to a resignation.

Mayor Don Arendt, Paul Wanless, Chuck Lore, Jody Niess, Randy Schissel, Tade Kerndt and Bill Wagner from the city council were also present.

Approval of the December 9, 2013 meeting minutes

Motion by Ibanez and seconded by Moellers to approve the minutes from the December 9, 2013 meeting.

Roll call vote: Unanimous, motion passed.

Consider C-3 Commercial Design Review re: 607 Washington Street, The Spectrum Network

Bird introduced this item and noted that the Spectrum has purchased the building at this address and is renovating it for their future use. Part of the renovation is to change the signs on the existing mounting and provide for an expanded and handicap accessible entrance door.

Massman moved and Moellers seconded a motion to recommend approval for the renovations to 607 Washington Street for The Spectrum Network.

Roll call vote: Unanimous, motion passed.

Consider C-3 Commercial Design Review re: 511 Water Street, Oneota Professional Building

Bird reviewed this application with the commission and noted that the owner is applying for C-3 review for the proposed new signs on the front elevation of this building. Bird noted that it is unlikely the signs will all be installed at the same time.

Bird also noted the signs are to be lit internally with one by LED and the others by fluorescent lighting.

Ibanez moved and Sootheran seconded a motion to recommend approval for the addition of new signs to the front elevation of 511 Water Street.

Roll call vote: Unanimous, motion passed.

Discussion and possible action on preliminary plat – Downing Commercial Subdivision

Bird introduced the preliminary plat for the commercial subdivision in the Downing addition. He noted that there are no know infrastructure improvements associated with this subdivision and that most of the area would soon be annexed to the City under the water and sewer extension project.

Cook moved and Moellers seconded a motion to recommend approval of the preliminary plat for the Downing Commercial Subdivision on 172nd Avenue.

Roll call vote: Unanimous, motion passed.

Discussion and possible action on zoning petition referred from City Council

Nichols noted that the council has referred the petition for a new zoning district to the commission for their review and comment. He reviewed the petition was for a new zoning district that would provide for medium housing density. Mr. Karl Knudson provided an overview of his reasons for the petition; in that he sees a need for a district that addresses medium density housing. He said the trend is for condominium housing and that people want that type of housing. He noted that having a district like this is also congruent with the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Knudson proposes an R-6 district and he provided some information relative to bulk regulations and a comparison to the other districts in the city's zoning code.

There was general discussion on housing needs in the community. There was also some discussion on the city comp plan.

City Council member Tade Kerndt commented that caution should be exercised in reviewing and considering changes in existing zoning districts and overlays as it could cause unintended consequences for existing owners and properties.

Cook moved and Ibanez seconded a motion to table the discussion until such time as the commission can review the recently completed housing study and continue discussion.

Roll call vote: Unanimous, motion passed.

Other business

1. Update on sign code amendments
 - a. Nichols provided an update on the issues being discussed by the sign committee.
2. Brief overview of Community Housing Assessment Team study – Housing Study
 - a. Bird provided an overview of the housing study and said a full review would be coming soon.
3. Bird informed the commission that since they had requested information from the Serenity Drive development several months ago, and Bird had specifically and deliberately asked the developer for information, no additional communication or information has been provided. Bird noted that he is closing the file and application on the project and that any further progress on the development will require a new application be filed with his office.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Chad A. Bird
City Manager
Zoning Administrator