

City of Decorah
Planning and Zoning Commission
June 10, 2013 – 7:00pm

Meeting Minutes

Members present included: Barbara Massman, Donna Rae Ibanez, Benji Nichols, Stan Moellers, Brian Cook and Lynne Sootheran. Absent: Ross Hadley. Others present included City Manager Chad Bird, City Engineer Lindsay Erdman, and City Attorney Rick Zahasky.

Approval of the May 13, 2013 meeting minutes

Motion by Massman and seconded by Ibanez to approve the minutes from the May 13, 2103 meeting with the noted correction that Ross Hadley and Stan Moellers were listed as present when they were actually absent. Unanimous, motion passed.

Discussion and possible action on a site plan – Serenity Drive

Bird presented information relative to the discussion at the May meeting. Nichols read through the list of items the Commission had asked to be provided or clarified for this meeting and Bird reviewed the information relative to each item.

ADA parking spaces in the required parking lot. Bird noted that the developer has provided verification and justification for the four designated ADA spaces they show on the plat.

Assurances of ongoing maintenance of the storm water detention areas. Bird noted that the developer has issued a written statement that they will continue to maintain the ponds and water ways noting they have a vested interest in keeping these areas clean and presentable also.

Bonding of public improvements. The developer has provided written verification that they will provide performance bonding sufficient to meet the City's requirements. Bird and Erdman discussed generating a list of the proposed public improvements and attaching a dollar amount so that the proper bonds may be issued to the city.

Providing a detailed shop drawing of the parking lot lights. Bird indicated the developer has provided a detail and noted further that the lights are similar to ones being used by Alliant Energy in the community for street lights. The lights are an LED head. Nichols asked about the height of the light pole but no one knew the height that would be used.

The Commission asked for confirmation of the 10% green space in the parking area and site plan. Bird shared a specific layout that showed the requirement has been met.

Erdman led a brief discussion about the storm water detention ponds noting that they appear to be relatively flat but that the proper calculations have been provided and the ponding areas are adequate.

In other discussion, Sootheran asked about ingress and egress of the site and neighborhood. Erdman discussed the existing 20' emergency vehicle access easement to the southeastern portion of the area.

There was some discussion about what this easement is for and how it operates. There was also discussion about possibly paving this easement to aid in wet weather use. Erdman stressed that the easement is intended to allow for emergency vehicles to enter

the area than it is for resident evacuation of the area. There was discussion about marking or placing signs to indicate the easement is for emergency use only.

Cook asked if the easement could be paved as a trade off for the sidewalks on their site. He questioned the need for the sidewalks and thought the paved easement may operate better as a pedestrian way to other areas of the community.

Nichols raised the question of the length of the cul-de-sac. Zahasky read the current city code on cul-de-sac requirements and noted the four criteria in section 16.04.170. It appeared the site plan meets these requirements.

Massman asked if an on-site manager of the complex would be provided. The developers responded yes.

There was also a discussion about the uniform look and appeal of the property including a discussion on window treatments. The developer indicated the unit will have standards for their tenants.

Nichols raised the question about lighting on the balconies and the developer indicated that they balconies will have smaller porch style lights. This led to a discussion about what would be allowed on the balconies. There was some discussion about items such as grills, bikes, and furniture. Bird said some of that will be regulated by the exiting property maintenance code. The developer also stressed that the complex will also have rules of conduct to regulate such issues.

There was also a question about the number of people allowed to live in any unit. Bird noted the city has code that regulates that to four non-related persons.

Sootheran raised the issue of storm shelters and durability of the building to withstand severe weather. Bird noted that the city does not have specific building codes to address this but noted the state does. The developer also noted he would be building a strong solid building but that there is no storm shelter planned.

Ibanez and Massman discussed shadow effect and sustainability practices. There was general discussion about these topics.

Motion by Cook to approve the site plan subject to completion of the performance bonds in amounts acceptable to city staff. Second by Moeller.

Roll call: Unanimous, motion carried.

Motion by Sootheran to amend the motion to include a paved emergency access easement. Motion died for lack of a second. No action.

Discussion and possible action on a re-plat request – Serenity Drive

Bird and Erdman discussed the easement vacation plat. Erdman noted that he would like to see easements for the new proposed public utilities. Bird noted that the professional engineer who signed the plat submission appears to have an expired license. Erdman and Bird also noted that the developer should secure a sign-off or waiver from other interested utilities as to their agreement to the proposed vacation.

The Commission took no action on this item until the plat is re-submitted with the above items addressed.

Consider C-3 Design Review Application for property located at 110 West Water Street re: Be Mobile / Verizon Wireless

Bird reviewed the application and noted that the property has received a Board of Adjustment variance but had not submitted the proposed sign for a C-3 design review. He noted the sign is in compliance with the granted variance but he suggests the application go through the C-3 design review process.

There was general discussion about how well the C-3 design process is working.

Motion by Massman and second by Ibanez to approve the C-3 design application from 110 West Water Street for Be Mobile / Verizon Wireless.

Roll call: Ayes – Massman, Ibanez, Nichols, Sootheran. Nays – Cook, Moellers.

Motion carried 4 votes to 2 votes.

Other Business

There was no other business.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Chad A. Bird
City Manager
Zoning Administrator