

City of Decorah
Planning and Zoning Commission
June 13, 2016 – 7:00pm

Meeting Minutes

Members present included: Benji Nichols, Barbara Massman, Jarrad Walter, Stan Moellers, Nathan Thompson and Llew Jenkins. Absent: Brian Cook

The commission welcomed new member Nathan Thompson to the commission.

Others present: Zoning Administrator / City Manager Chad Bird.

Consider approval of minutes from the May 9, 2016 regular meeting

Motion by Walter and seconded by Massman to approve the minutes from the May 9, 2016 regular meeting.

Roll call vote: Unanimous, motion passed.

Discussion and possible action on site plan re: Dike Road, Luther College Athletics

As it was not the appointed hour for the posted public hearing, Chair Nichols moved this item up on the agenda. Bird reviewed the application and noted that this site plan was for the proposed vertical improvements to the athletic fields at Luther College. Specially, Bird outlined improvements to seating and press box facilities on the baseball and softball fields.

There was some discussion regarding the storm water and Bird noted it went to privately owned storm conveyance systems and to the river. Bird also noted that the project had received applicable approvals from the Iowa DNR and the City regarding flood plain permitting.

Motion by Moellers and seconded by Nichols to approve the site plan application for Luther College for improvements to the athletic fields.

Roll call vote: Unanimous, motion passed.

7:10pm - Public hearing on rezoning of property; Highland Drive parcel R-1 Single Family Residential

This being the time and place for a public hearing on the proposed rezoning of property, Chair Nichols called the public hearing to order.

Mark Faldet, 407 West Broadway asked what the plans for development of the area are. He expressed concerns with storm water and the general conditions that may be created or exist with having neighbors in the primarily agricultural area.

Steve Christensen, 1101 Locust Road asked about the proposed plans for development but also noted he was in attendance to just learn more about the project.

Tom Massman, 1510 Laurel Drive discussed the concept of his plans which includes single family homes and perhaps condo style. He also noted that he intends to incorporate sustainability practices in to the subdivision design including storm water management.

Steve Henning, also commented and noted that it has been his family's desire to see the land developed into nice modest single family homes and he believes Tom Massman will build a nice subdivision.

At 7:27pm Nichols closed the public hearing portion of the meeting and thanked everyone for their participation in the discussion.

At this time Nichols asked if the commission had input or questions about the rezoning application.

Nichols urged caution in rezoning, especially to R-3 as it is the densest district and there could be unintended consequences or projects that might be less desirable than others. He also noted some concern about density issues.

Moellers notes some concern about storm water issues and Bird noted that subdivision design will be governed by the city's subdivision ordinance and proposed storm water management ordinance.

Consider a request for rezoning of properties from R-1 to R-3; Highland Drive Lot 2 - 3

Motion by Walters and seconded by Moellers to approve a request for rezoning of properties from R-1 – R-3. Massman abstained and removed herself from the discussion and vote.

Roll call vote: Unanimous, motion passed.

Other business – Joint workshop with the Decorah Zoning Board of Adjustment on matters of mutual interest

Janelle Pavlovec from the Decorah Board of Adjustment was present to discuss matters of mutual concern with the commission. She mentioned parking in the bed and breakfast category as an issue and there was general conversation regarding the definition of bed and breakfasts and the lack of parking regulations.

The commission directed Bird to research possible implications of parking and also generally accepted regulations for AirBnBs.

Pavlovec also discussed the city's new fence ordinance with the commission and there was general discussion regarding the provisions of the new ordinance. Some expressed concerns with fences in general and how they affect neighborhoods.

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In other business Bird mentioned the proposed use of sidewalks by area businesses for outdoor eating. He noted that this is a conversation that is beginning to develop in the community and hope the commission would engage in some thoughts on the matter. There was general discussion.

Other business

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:17pm

Respectfully submitted,



Chad A. Bird
City Manager
Zoning Administrator