Cedar Falls Planning and Zoning Commission
Regular Meeting
December 18, 2024
Cedar Falls, Iowa

MINUTES

The Cedar Falls Planning and Zoning Commission met in regular session on December 18, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall. The following Commission members were present: Alberhasky, Grybovych, Hartley, Johnson, Moser, Sorensen, Stalnaker and Watkins. Henderson was absent. Karen Howard, Planning and Community Services Manager, Shane Graham, Economic Development Coordinator, Michelle Pezley, Planner III, Jaydevsinh Atodaria, Planner II, Chris Sevy, Planner II, and Matt Tolan, Civil Engineer II, were also present.

1.) Chair Hartley noted the Minutes from the December 4, 2024 regular meeting are presented. Alberhasky made a motion to approve the Minutes as presented. Grybovych seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 8 ayes (Alberhasky, Grybovych, Hartley, Johnson, Moser, Sorensen, Stalnaker and Watkins), and 0 nays.

2.) The first item of business was a rezoning request for 13.28 acres located at the southeast corner of Greenhill Road and Cedar Heights Drive (4616 Cedar Heights Drive) from R-2-Residence District to MU-Mixed Use Residence District (RZ24-004). The MU District Site Plan for Cedar West Apartments (SP24-017) which functions as the MU Master Plan was also considered at this time. Chair Hartley introduced the item and Mr. Sevy provided background information. He noted that the rezoning was published in the Courier on December 10, 2024. He gave a brief refresher regarding the item and provided renderings of the proposed rezoning and site plan, as well as the landscape plan. He briefly explained the design review process and what is considered for that review, and displayed renderings of the proposed buildings and their elements. Staff recommends approval of the rezoning and the site plan, noting that the site plan cannot be approved prior to the approval of the associated rezoning.

Hartley noted that he likes the layout and the proposal. Sorensen agreed.

Sorensen made a motion to move the rezoning to City Council. Grybovych seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 8 ayes (Alberhasky, Grybovych, Hartley, Johnson, Moser, Sorensen, Stalnaker and Watkins), and 0 nays.

Grybovych made a motion to approve the Site/Master Plan. Moser seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 8 ayes (Alberhasky, Grybovych, Hartley, Johnson, Moser, Sorensen, Stalnaker and Watkins), and 0 nays.

3.) The Commission then considered a request for the Final Plat of Hidden Pines Addition (FP24-004). Chair Hartley introduced the item and Ms. Pezley provided background information. She explained that one of the criteria for approval is to compare the preliminary plat with the final plat for any changes. Because the changes to this final plat are minimal, staff finds it is consistent with the preliminary plat. Staff recommends approval subject to any technical requirements and the submission of Council documents.

As there were no comments, Stalnaker made a motion to approve the item. Sorensen seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 8 ayes (Alberhasky, Grybovych, Hartley, Johnson, Moser, Sorensen, Stalnaker and Watkins), and 0 nays.

4.) The next item considered was the Hidden Pines Urban Renewal Plan. Chair Hartley introduced the item and Mr. Graham provided background information. He explained that the plan is covering just the area of the Hidden Pines Addition residential subdivision. He discussed the State code requirements for residential urban renewal areas. He also discussed the Cedar Falls Comprehensive Plan and the goals, which include encouraging diverse housing opportunities to serve a variety of needs and preferences, repairing aging infrastructure and expanding technology infrastructure to attract business and industry. He noted that the Housing Needs Study recently completed shows a need of 3,778 housing units by 2030.

Mr. Graham also discussed the Future Land Use Map, showing a rendering of the uses in the area. He discussed the objectives of the Urban Renewal Plan. These included increasing the availability of housing opportunities; stimulating private investment in new housing and residential development; planning and providing for sufficient land for residential development; helping finance the cost of construction public infrastructure; achieving a well-balanced economy providing a desirable standard of living; and strengthening the tax base. To meet these objectives, City Council adopted a new guideline to allow for the reimbursement of 50% of the cost to install new public infrastructure in a residential subdivision to the developer. Public infrastructure includes new roads, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, water mains, etc. The incentive can only be offered after an urban renewal area has been established and approval of a subsequent development agreement between the developer and the City.

Based on the goals and designated future land uses listed in the Comprehensive Plan, staff finds that the proposed objectives and activities of the proposed Hidden Pines Urban Renewal Plan are in conformance with the general plan for the development of the municipality as a whole. Staff recommends that the Commission find that the Urban Renewal Plan is in conformance with the Cedar Falls Comprehensive Plan.

Hartley asked if Cedar Falls has a history of doing an Urban Renewal Plan for a new subdivision. Mr. Graham stated that he is only aware of one, but he feels there will be more in the future.

Sorensen praised the City for recognizing that the cost of development has gone up significantly and is stepping in to help with these costs.

Stalnaker asked about the LMI and whether the housing price will be reduced. Mr. Graham stated that if a developer is planning to include the LMI units they can get a higher percentage of the tax increment financing rebate. Stalnaker asked if this project has LMI units. Mr. Graham stated that it does not.

Stalnaker asked if there is any requirement or background where the cost savings get passed on to home buyers. Mr. Graham stated there will not be any requirements in the agreements, but they are hearing from developers that there may be reduced lot costs as their cost is reduced. Sorensen also clarified that this rebate is only seen well down the road, as homes are built and taxes are paid.

Kyle Larson, 4104 Wedgewood, spoke as the developer to answer questions about reducing housing costs for consumers. He stated that Cedar Falls doesn't have a demand problem, it has a supply problem. He also noted that LMI units will not be available in this particular project.

Bob Manning, 2908 W. 3rd Street, spoke in favor of the Urban Renewal Plan. He agreed with the supply shortage and he is excited to see a TIF operation that staff has helped develop and see the potential.

Hartley feels this is a great idea.

Hartley made a motion to approve the item. Sorensen seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 8 ayes (Alberhasky, Grybovych, Hartley, Johnson, Moser, Sorensen, Stalnaker and Watkins), and 0 nays.

5.) The Commission then considered the Preliminary Plat of Terraces at West Glen Third Addition (PP24-001). Chair Hartley introduced the item and Ms. Pezley provided background information. The property is located on the southeast corner of 12th Street and Union Road and is part of a Master Plan that was approved in 2019. The developer would like to replat to that each of the existing dwelling units is on its own lot. This is consistent with the Master plan and all infrastructure and stormwater is in place. Staff recommends the Commission send the item to City Council with their recommendation if there are no issues.

Mike Gersch, 1608 Union Road, asked how the development will affect the original plan and noted that he feels the lot line is encroaching his property. Ms. Howard explained that the only change is that each will have its own lot line. She also stated that they would need to look closer at the lot lines to see if his property is being encroached upon.

Hartley made a motion to send the item to City Council. Alberhasky seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 8 ayes (Alberhasky, Grybovych, Hartley, Johnson, Moser, Sorensen, Stalnaker and Watkins), and 0 nays.

6.) The Commission also considered the Final Plat of Terraces at West Glen Third Addition (FP24-002). Chair Hartley introduced the items and Ms. Pezley provided further information. She explained that this is an extension of the last item and the final plat is consistent with the preliminary plat. Staff recommends approval.

Sorensen made a motion to approve the item. Alberhasky seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 8 ayes (Alberhasky, Grybovych, Hartley, Johnson, Moser, Sorensen, Stalnaker and Watkins), and 0 nays.

7.) The next item for consideration by the Commission was the Minor Plat of CV Flips, LLC First Minor Subdivision Plat (MP24-004). Chair Hartley introduced the item and Stalnaker recused himself from the next two item on the agenda. Mr. Sevy provided background information, noting that the applicant is proposing to subdivide the property at 1305 W. 19th Street into two smaller parcels. He intends to build two bi-attached single-unit dwellings, each on their own lot. The property is in the College Hill Neighborhood Overlay District and the design review will be discussed in the next agenda item. He showed the proposed minor plat and development plan on the plat. Setbacks meet all requirements and staff recommends approval.

Nick Brewer, (petitioner), 2920 McClain Drive was available for questions.

As there were no further questions, Sorensen made a motion to approve the item. Alberhasky seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 8 ayes (Alberhasky, Grybovych, Hartley, Johnson, Moser, Sorensen, Stalnaker and Watkins), and 0 nays.

8.) The Commission then considered a College Hill Neighborhood Overlay Site Plan and Design Review for new Bi-Attached Units (DR24-005/SP24-014). Chair Hartley introduced the item and Mr. Sevy provided background information. He explained that each unit on the site is proposed to have four bedrooms and 3 ½ baths, around 2,000 square feet, a two-car garage and a small covered front porch. The proposal meets all setback and landscaping requirements. He discussed the building design, colors and materials, and the preservation of the neighborhood character. The prominent garages are not consistent with the other homes in the neighborhood, but staff finds that the building scale and materials are consistent with the surrounding dwellings. Since the College Hill Neighborhood Overlay District talks about preservation of neighborhood character but does not have specific objective standards, Staff recommends discussion on the matter to make a balanced recommendation to the City Council.

Hartley stated that he feels it is a nice building for the neighborhood, but feels it doesn't fit the character of the neighborhood with the garages in front. He asked about other options.

Watkins asked if there is an example of a similar plan that was changed to make the design fit into the neighborhood that could be used to assist the developer with other options. Howard stated that staff is willing to work with the applicant to address the concerns.

Hartley stated that he understands that it is a more modern looking home in an older neighborhood, and while it doesn't totally fit, he doesn't have a problem with it. Sorensen agreed. Moser disagreed, stating that she likes the look of the house, but it doesn't fit into the neighborhood. Alberhasky agreed with Moser and feels that it would really stick out in that neighborhood.

Nick Brewer, petitioner, stated that there is no real good way to move the garage.

Bob Manning, stated that he feels that one nice thing in Cedar Falls is that it seems to be a place where you can put different styles of housing in the same neighborhood and it still blends and looks nice. He feels that it is one of the beauties that Cedar Falls can offer people.

Sorensen made a motion to recommend the item to Council. Moser seconded the motion. The motion was denied with 3 ayes (Hartley, Johnson, Sorensen), and 4 nays (Alberhasky, Grybovych, Moser and Watkins, 1 abstention (Stalnaker).

The Commission asks that the petitioner bring other options for the design at a future date.

9.) The next item for consideration was College Hill Neighborhood Overlay Site Plan and Design Review (SP24-013). Chair Hartley introduced the item and Mr. Atodaria provided background information. He explained that the petitioner (Bani's at 2128 College Street) is proposing a building addition, an update to the façade and the site to better comply with the zoning code. He discussed criteria for College Hill Neighborhood review requirements.

Mr. Atodaria discussed the proposed building addition and façade updates that will enhance the overall look of the building. Also discussed that the parking area, landscaping buffer, signage, and site lighting will be altered to bring the property in compliance with City Code.

Staff recommends approval of the proposed building addition and façade improvements with the following conditions: No LED strip/rope lighting within or around the storefront windows (any lights on the building must be downcast and fully shielded) and any comments or direction specified by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Esnad Bejic, 3711 Apollo, spoke as the general contractor, and stated that the new redesign will blend in well with the rest of the buildings in the area.

Moser made a motion to approve the item with staff recommendations. Alberhasky seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 8 ayes (Alberhasky, Grybovych, Hartley, Johnson, Moser, Sorensen, Stalnaker and Watkins), and 0 nays.

10.) The Commission then considered a request for Rezoning to amend the frontage designation on the Downtown Character District Regulating Plan from Neighborhood Small to Urban General 2. Chair Hartley introduced the item and Mr. Atodaria provided background information. He explained that the request involves the properties at the corner of West 1st, Walnut Street, and Olive Street. He gave a brief explanation of the *Imagine Downtown! Vision Plan* as well as the Downtown Character District Zoning Code and Downtown Character District Regulating Plan.

The proposal is to extend the Urban General 2 designation to the southern boundary of the Regulating Plan on Walnut and Olive Street. If approved, it will allow more flexibility to develop the shallow lots along W. 1st Street, as per intent of the vision plan.

Staff recommends initial discussion and setting a public hearing for January 8, 2025. Johnson asked if this is to correct a potential boundary that created a zone that was not able to be used as Urban General 2. Ms. Howard stated that it is.

Mark Ludwig, 109 Walnut Street, came forward as the petitioner, explaining that he would like to build a six-unit townhome structure on the vacant lot on corner of W. 1st St. and Walnut St. He intends to build and manage the property and has submitted plans for the potential building.

Mary Jane McCollum, 807 W. 2nd Street, noted concerns with a site plan that wasn't seen. She doesn't want to see a large building backing up to a residential area. She feels traffic and noise would be increased. She would like more information on the plans before any decisions or recommendations are made.

Hartley made a motion to set a public hearing for January 8, 2025. Johnson seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 8 ayes (Alberhasky, Grybovych, Hartley, Johnson, Moser, Sorensen, Stalnaker and Watkins), and 0 nays.

11.) The next item for consideration by the Commission was the Rezoning of property from A-1 Agriculture to PC-2 Planned Commercial District. Chair Hartley introduced the item and Ms. Pezley provided background information. She explained that the City is proposing to rezone the property and that the general rezoning criteria have been met. She also noted that the City adopted the Creekside Technology Center Master Plan in 2019, which was used as a guide to

prepare the master plan and standards for the PC-2 rezoning. She discussed the guiding principles for the 2019 Master Plan and how the proposal will match this approved plan. Ms. Pezley shared that there will be a public space on the same lot as the stormwater detention that will incorporate wetland features. She went over the uses listed in the Master Plan and the 30-foot buffer requirements along Hudson Road, US Highway 20, and West Ridgeway Avenue, with a 20-foot buffer on interior streets. She also discussed setbacks, open space, landscaping, and parking lot requirements for the area based on the requested zoning and Master Plan and spoke to the design review for individual site plans.

Staff recommends gathering comments at this time and setting a public hearing for January 8, 2024.

Stalnaker asked about the park space and the purpose of it. Ms. Howard stated that there are not necessarily wetlands there now, but the plan calls for designing the stormwater management to include wetland features and perhaps some educational components along the trail. This is not intended to be a large regional park, but will serve area employees and visitors.

Hartley made a motion to set a public hearing for January 8, 2025. Alberhasky seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 8 ayes (Alberhasky, Grybovych, Hartley, Johnson, Moser, Sorensen, Stalnaker and Watkins), and 0 nays.

12.) As there were no further comments, Moser made a motion to adjourn. Hartley seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 8 ayes (Alberhasky, Grybovych, Hartley, Johnson, Moser, Sorensen, Stalnaker and Watkins), and 0 nays.

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Howard
Community Services Manager

Joanne Goodrich
Administrative Assistant