

On Thursday, July 16, 2015, at 7:00 p.m., a regular meeting of the Plan Commission was called to order. Roll Call. Present: Chair Eric Larson, Rick Andersen, Karen Chevalier, Aurelio Gallardo, Rene Morris, and Steve Munson. Absent: Mike Mellott.

Also present were: Planner Dustin Wolff, Aldermen Retha Elston and John Stauter, City Manager Scott Shumard, Sterling Main Street Director Jana Groharing, and City Clerk Marie Rombouts.

Rene Morris made a motion to approve the May 28, 2015 minutes as presented; seconded by Steve Munson. Voting: Ayes – Andersen, Chevalier, Gallardo, Morris, Munson, and Chair Larson. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Superintendent Schmidt reported the Council directed the Mayor to send a letter of objection to the County for the rezoning of Rodriguez property at 1702 West Fourth Street from B-2, Commercial to A-1, Agriculture.

Chair Larson opened a public hearing at 7:02 pm for the petition from the Sterling-Rock Falls Historical Society at 611 East Third Street to vacate a portion of Seventh Avenue to allow the new Lincoln Learning Center to be moved further east allowing more green space between the Learning Center and the Lincoln-Manahan Home.

Bill Abate, President of the Sterling-Rock Falls Historical Society, introduced Terry Buckaloo, the Curator, and Marv Lofgren, consultant for the Learning Center project. Abate gave a brief summary of the Society, which began in 1959. In 2007 the Society obtained the Lincoln-Manahan Home. It took four years to preserve and restore the house. All fourth grade classes will tour the home each fall. The house displays how life was in the 1850's. Initial plans were to restore the old C & E Glass building for the Lincoln Learning Center. Demolition and rebuilding became a better choice. The building was razed in May.

Marv Lofgren stated they were trying to reconfigure parking with limited access onto Seventh Avenue. To vacate 20' of right-of-way would provide more green space between the House and the Learning Center.

Planner Wolff reminded the Plan Commission that this 100' right-of-way is the reason the overlay district was created. Wolff suggested that 20' of right-of-way be vacated on both sides of Seventh Avenue throughout the 200 block.

Chair Larson stated that publication in the *Daily Gazette* was made, fees were paid, property owners within 150' of the property were notified, a sign was placed on the

property for two weeks prior to the hearing, and no written comments were received from the public.

Karen Chevalier remarked that this is a huge opportunity and would be a great addition for the Historical Society.

Steve Munson asked if further zoning modifications are necessary. Superintendent Schmidt explained this is a permitted use but the right-of-way vacation would give them a greater use of the property.

Munson suggested a possible gate on Seventh Avenue to reduce traffic use.

Attorney Coplan suggested the 20' of right-of-way be vacated on both sides of Seventh Avenue from Third Street, south to the railroad tracks.

Chair Larson closed the public hearing at 7:21 pm.

Rene Morris made a motion to recommend to the City Council to vacate 20' of right-of-way on the east and west sides of Seventh Avenue from Third Street, south to the railroad tracks; seconded by Steve Munson. Voting: Ayes – Andersen, Chevalier, Gallardo, Morris, Munson, and Chair Larson. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Chair Larson opened a public hearing at 7:23 for the petition from Scott Hibbard for property at 201 Fifth Avenue to create a Special Use Permit on a B-2-2 zoning to expand the existing residential use.

Scott Hibbard explained that he is remodeling the property. His remodeling standards are above code requirements. This property borders on the downtown.

Planner Wolff stated the Special Use is necessary because residences are not permitted on the first floor of a B-2-2, Limited Service Business District. Wolff favors this petition to encourage redevelopment of existing buildings.

Superintendent Schmidt explained this will expand the current use and add one more residential unit on the main floor, for a total of four units. It is a total gut job.

Chair Larson stated that publication in the *Daily Gazette* was made, fees were paid, property owners within 150' of the property were notified, a sign was placed on the property for two weeks prior to the hearing, and no written comments were received from the public.

Steve Munson asked if there is adequate parking. Schmidt stated there is adequate parking to the rear of the building.

Rick Anderson stated the property will be better than now.

Chair Larson closed the public hearing at 7:32 pm.

Steve Munson made a motion to recommend to the City Council approval of the B-2-2 Special Use Permit to allow an additional residential unit on the first floor; seconded by Karen Chevalier. Voting: Ayes – Andersen, Chevalier, Gallardo, Morris, Munson, and Chair Larson. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Planner Wolff asked for any questions on the zoning code or zoning map. Discussion followed about City-owned property that is outside the City limits. Attorney Coplan explained the City can own the property but it may not be inside the corporate limits, therefore, no zoning.

Superintendent Schmidt reminded Plan Commission members that elections for Chair and Vice-Chair will be on next month's agenda.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 pm.

Marie Rombouts
City Clerk