

On Thursday, February 16, 2023, at 7:00 p.m., Chair Morris called the regular meeting of the Plan Commission to order in-person and via Zoom. Roll Call. Present: Chair Rene Morris (Zoom), Carol Corwell, Skip McCloud (Zoom), Joe Strabala-Bright (Zoom) and Jamie Schwingle (Zoom). Absent: Aurelio Gallardo.

Also present were: City Planner Dustin Wolff (Zoom), Building and Zoning Superintendent Amanda Schmidt, Attorney Tim Zollinger, City Manager Scott Shumard, Alderman Elston and City Clerk Teri Sathoff.

Skip McCloud made a motion to approve the minutes from January 19, 2023 and January 26, 2023 as presented; seconded by Carol Corwell. Voting – Ayes: Corwell, Schwingle, McCloud and Strabala-Bright. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Chair Morris opened a Public Hearing at 7:06pm. City staff is requesting changes to the following zoning code sections;

- Section 102-210: Accessory structures – some of the changes include allowing for larger structures on larger properties. A parcel less than 1 acre will allow a 900 square foot structure. A parcel between 1 and 1.499 acres will allow a 1,300 square foot structure. If the property is more than 1.5 acres, 2% of the total parcel area to a maximum of 4,000 square feet.
- Section 102-211: Fences: - changes include the materials that fencing are made with. Wire mesh and chain link fencing must have a wood or metal frame on the top. Farm fencing and plastic fencing are only permitted for temporary use. Fencing between a residence and an abutting roadway shall have a maximum of 50% opacity.
- Section 102-225: Driveway regulations and standards – The graphics have been enhanced to provide clarity.
- Section 102-709: Changeable copy sign – maximum sign area is 20% of the identification sign area. This will work better with sign companies default sizing. Custom sizes will no longer be required.

With no further business to discuss by staff, commissioners or guests, Chair Morris noted publications, fees, and signage were taken care of, notification requirements were met, and there were no written comments received.

The Public Hearing closed at 7:23p.m.

Skip McCloud made a motion to approve the zoning changes and recommend to the City Council to approve the zoning changes; Seconded by Joe Strabala-Bright. Voting – Ayes: Corwell, Strabala-Bright, Schwingle, McCloud. Nays: None.

Dustin Wolff opened the discussion on accessory dwelling units (ADU). Wolff stated ADUs are increasing in popularity around the country. Reasons to consider allowing ADUs include;

- Increase the number, variety and affordability of City housing stock
- Increase density while retaining neighborhood character
- Create flexibility for homeowners
- ADUs come in many types and sizes, giving flexibility to municipalities to determine the best kinds for their communities

Several things would need to be considered if ADUs are allowed;

- Size
- Height
- Lot Coverage
- Parking
- Entrances
- Setbacks
- Building Code
- Permit Compliance
- Utilities
- Neighborhood Context
- Short-term vs. long-term rentals
- Possible commercial use/activity

Wolff stated the current code allows for guest homes that cannot be rented, they must be a minimum of 900 square feet, lot size must be at least 15,000 square feet among other requirements.

City Manager Shumard stated he agreed there is a need for quality rental housing, however he is not sure if ADUs are the answer. He is concerned for the integrity of the single family neighborhoods. Shumard wondered if the City should focus on providing incentives to bring a new rental complex to the city. Shumard sees this as possibly being a short-term fix that will create an issue twenty years down the road.

Skip McCloud stated his company has created these for families they are a challenge to blend them into the neighborhoods, not all lots are created equal. McCloud agrees with Shumard's assessment.

Carol Corwell stated that demographically this may work for other communities that are land locked. Sterling is not land locked, there are several vacant lots that can be built on.

Joe Strabala-Bright asked about reworking the current guest house code. He would like allow for more of an in-family use. He stated he sees a need for families to provide a place for adult family members.

Discussion was had and it was the consensus to look at the current guest house code to see if can be changed to meet some of the goals.

Building and Zoning Superintendent Amanda Schmidt advised the commission that the City Council approved the special use request for 409 Avenue L. The Council also approved the letters of no objection for the Holly Road subdivision from Pete Harkness and for the Peaceful Properties plat along Lynn Blvd.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Teri Sathoff
City Clerk