

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

January 22, 2024

The Fergus Falls Planning Commission held a regular meeting on January 22, 2024 in the Council Chambers of City Hall. Chair Kilde called the meeting to order at 5:20 PM. Present were Laurel Kilde, Nate Kunde, Wayne Schuett, Ryan Fullerton, and Paul Vukonich joining later. Mike Walls and Sarah Duffy were absent, while staff Klara Beck, Jill Hanson, and applicant Mikel Olson were present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion to approve the agenda by Commissioner Kunde and seconded by Commissioner Fullerton. Passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Kunde made a motion to approve the minutes from December 5, 2023. It was seconded by Commissioner Fullerton. Passed unanimously.

NEW MEMBER WELCOME

Paul Vukonich was welcomed as the newest Planning Commission (PC) member.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Election of officers ensued; Laurel Kilde continued as Chair and Sarah Duffy as Vice Chair, while Nate Kunde's position as the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) ex-officio representative remained uncertain for 2024. Wayne Schuett expressed some interest, but a representative will be officially chosen at an upcoming meeting.

ACTION ITEM

6a. REQUEST BY THE FERGUS FALLS HOUSING & REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY FOR APPROVAL OF THE FINAL PLAT FOR A TWO-LOT SUBDIVISION OF TIMBER COVE ADDITION AT 1151 FRIBERG AVENUE

Community Development Manager Klara Beck noted that the public hearing for the preliminary plat was on May 28, 2021, with the PC recommending approval to the City Council with the following condition: That the applicant shall work with the Engineering Department to resolve concerns with the proposed driveway for the multi-family structure on parcel 1002992141000 (1161 Friberg Ave) connecting the parking lot and Friberg Avenue.

Since June 2021, Moore Engineering worked with the applicant and the City of Fergus Falls to prepare a final plat for review. The proposed driveway on Lot 2 connecting the parking lot to Friberg Avenue via the area on the plat marked "Existing Curb Cut/Access" was removed. The final plat also includes the location of a stormwater easement area and a bump-out for a shelter/ bike rack that was added to the site design but not considered in the preliminary plat. The City Engineer has reviewed the final plat and has approved it.

There was discussion about sidewalks and crosswalks along the Friberg Avenue area. Mr. Olson stated that the HRA supported more sidewalks and crosswalks for the area.

Commissioner Kunde made a motion to recommend approval of the Final Plat for "Timber Cove Addition" with the proposed findings as presented. It was seconded by Commissioner Schuett. Passed unanimously.

Mikel Olson gave a brief background on the supported housing project, Garitz Grove, that was the impetus for the plat.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

7a. SIGN ORDINANCE POTENTIAL UPDATES

Klara stated that she has been in discussions with Lynne Olson and April Zumach about language for seasonal and temporary signs, noting Lynne is the staff person who has worked with the applications for temporary signs and April is the code enforcement officer for the City. They had also discussed sandwich board signs.

The PC suggested merging temporary and seasonal signage and limiting temporary signage to no more than 120 days and posted no more than 30 days before an event or for 3 days after. Liability for and placement of sandwich board signs were also discussed. The guidelines for abandoned signs were made clearer. The language for billboards now includes electronic billboards. Language about signs along trunk highways and interstates was removed. The PC decided to continue the sign discussion at their next meeting. Chair Kilde asked to having paper versions of the sign code at the next meeting.

7b. HOTEL LANGUAGE UPDATE

City staff suggest removing the language stating “Hotels must have a reception desk staffed at all hours” to allow hotels to utilize the latest booking and check-in technology as requested by two local developers. Commissioner Kunde made a motion to recommend approval of the change to the City Council. It was seconded by Commissioner Fullerton. Passed unanimously.

STAFF UPDATES

Staff updates highlighted future agenda items, including revisions to the shoreline ordinance, parking minimums, and nuisance ordinances. Commissioner Kunde mentioned that the State of MN is looking at legislation that would eliminate or reduce parking requirements statewide. A sub-committee was formed to review nuisance ordinance and assist in the creation of a vacant building registration. Chair Kilde, Commissioner Kunde and Commissioner Vukonich volunteered to serve on the subcommittee.

COUNCIL UPDATES

Klara Beck provided a council update, mentioning the approval of an encroachment agreement for a medical clinic at the former Sunmart building.

The meeting adjourned at **6:50 PM**.



Community Development Manager