

**PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**  
**June 24, 2024**

The Fergus Falls Planning Commission held a regular meeting on June 24, 2024 in the Council Chambers of City Hall. Chair Kilde called the meeting to order at 5:40 PM. Present were Laurel Kilde, Sarah Duffy, Nate Kunde, and Ryan Fullerton. Absent were Paul Vukonich, Wayne Schuett, and Mike Walls. Staff present: Klara Beck and Jill Hanson. Others Present: Jason Schuetzle, Lance Johnson, Scott Kvamme, Rick & Roxane Thom.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Commissioner Fullerton moved to approve the agenda with a request to change the order of the public hearings. Seconded by Commissioner Kunde. Passed unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Duffy made a motion to approve the minutes from May 28, 2024. Seconded by Commissioner Fullerton. Passed unanimously.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**6b. REQUEST BY JASON SCHUETZLE TO OBTAIN A VARIANCE TO ERECT AN ACCESSORY STRUCTURE IN ONE OF THE FRONT YARDS OF THE CORNER LOT AT 1224 GREENFIELD AVENUE IN AN R-1 ZONE.**

Klara Beck presented the staff report for a variance request at 1224 Greenfield Avenue, an R-1 corner lot. The applicant seeks to build an accessory structure in one of the front yards. Zoning regulations require corner lots to have additional width for setbacks from both streets, meaning the property has two front yards. City code prohibits detached accessory buildings in required front yards, including both on corner lots. Due to the lot's shape and limited side and backyard space, the homeowner requests a variance to build a shed in the yard facing Opperman Lane. One supportive comment was received via email.

Chair Kilde opened the public hearing at **5:42 PM**. With no comments, she closed the hearing at **5:43 PM**.

Commissioner Fullerton motioned to recommend approval of the variance request, seconded by Commissioner Kunde. Motion passed.

**6a. REQUEST BY KEY PROPERTY INVESTMENT LLC TO OBTAIN A VARIANCE TO REDUCE THE REQUIRED FRONT YARD SETBACK FROM 30 FEET TO 24 FEET ON THE CLEVELAND SIDE OF THE LOT AT 1022 CLEVELAND AVENUE IN AN R-2 ZONE.**

Klara Beck presented the staff report for a variance request in the R-2 zone at 1022 Cleveland Avenue. The applicant plans to build a 34' x 56' three-bedroom home and seeks a variance to encroach 6 feet into the 30-foot front yard setback along Cleveland Ave due to the corner lot's constraints. The hill reduces visibility concerns, and granting the variance would allow the home to match the neighborhood's character and meet family living needs. No comments were received.

Chair Kilde opened the public hearing at **5:47 PM**. With no comments, she closed the hearing at **5:48 PM**.

Commissioner Duffy motioned to recommend approval of the variance request, seconded by Commissioner Fullerton. Motion passed.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**5a. SIGN ORDINANCE UPDATES**

Community Development Manager Klara Beck opened the sign ordinance discussion, noting the revised ordinance had been reviewed at the previous meeting. The Planning Commission was given time between meetings to review and suggest any changes. Commissioner Duffy compared it to other cities' sign codes and felt it was a solid draft. The other members agreed and directed staff to forward the draft to the City Attorney.

## **STAFF UPDATES**

### **6a. Cannabis Zoning**

Klara Beck explained that at the June 17 City Council meeting, two versions of the proposed cannabis zoning ordinance were considered. The original restricted sales to B-6 zones and above, while the second allowed retail sales in B-3 zones with a conditional or interim use permit.

The Council remains divided on the issue. The original ordinance, focusing on B-6 sales, failed to pass. Unable to compromise on cannabis business locations, the Council referred the ordinance back to the Cannabis Committee. The committee plans to present new language at a Committee of the Whole meeting, with the Police Chief proposing interim use permits for the downtown area. There was discussion on interim use permits and their five-year duration. Concerns were raised about five years being too short for a new business to thrive.

The PC reaffirmed its support for its original recommendation to the Council:

- Allow cannabis retail sales in B-3 zones. If further permitting is required, permit sales with a conditional use permit.
- Permit cannabis retail, microbusinesses, and mezzobusinesses in B-6 zones.
- Establish 250-foot buffer zones around treatment centers, schools (e.g., Lincoln School), and daycares.
- Permit cannabis cultivation in R-A or industrial zones and cannabis manufacturing in industrial zones.

A motion to support the original recommendation was made by Commissioner Fullerton and seconded by Commissioner Kunde. The motion passed.

July 22 is the next schedule meeting.

The meeting adjourned at **6:07 PM**.

*Klara Beck*

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Community Development Director