

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

August 26, 2024

The Fergus Falls Planning Commission held a regular meeting on August 26, 2024 in the Council Chambers of City Hall. Chair Kilde called the meeting to order at 5:15 PM. Present were Laurel Kilde, Nate Kunde, Ryan Fullerton, Wayne Schuett, and Mike Walls. Absent were Sarah Duffy and Paul Vukonich. Staff present: Klara Beck and Jill Hanson. Applicants present: Richard & Katharine Lahti. Others Present: Scott Kvame.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Kunde moved to approve the agenda with a request to remove the Accessory Dwelling Units action item for discussion at subcommittee, to be brought back to the Planning Commission at a future meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Fullerton. Passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Kunde made a motion to approve the minutes from June 24, 2024. It was seconded by Commissioner Fullerton. Passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

3a. REQUEST BY RICHARD LAHTI TO OBTAIN A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT TO ALLOW A DETACHED ACCESSORY BUILDING CONSTRUCTED BY POST FRAME IN A R-A RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT LOCATED AT 620 BROKEN DOWN DAM ROAD.

Klara Beck presented the staff report for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) request in an R-A residential district at 620 Broken Down Dam Road. The proposal involves replacing a dilapidated barn with a new detached accessory building constructed with post-frame materials. The property also includes a home and other structures. Klara explained that city code requires CUPs for pole sheds in any residential zone.

She noted that a comment was received from a neighbor's family regarding right-of-way and easement access to their property. There was discussion about the City's rights-of-way on the property and private easements. Klara recommended approving the CUP for the pole shed and suggested the applicants work with the City on a request to vacate the City's rights-of-way on the property. The Planning Commission briefly discussed the reasoning behind the code restrictions on pole sheds and decided to address the matter after the hearing.

Chair Kilde opened the public hearing at **5:29 PM**.

Richard Lahti, 620 Broken Down Dam Road, explained he is open to exploring the vacation application process. Katherine Lahti, 620 Broken Down Dam Road, explained that the property was resurveyed several years ago and meetings with all the parties involved did not happen so nothing was resolved. Chair Kilde closed the public hearing at **5:33 PM**.

Commissioner Kunde motioned to recommend approval of the Conditional Use Permit request to construct a pole shed at 620 Broken Down Dam. It was seconded by Commissioner Fullerton. Motion passed.

The Planning Commission then further discussed the CUP requirement for pole sheds. The code currently states that accessory buildings must have a matching facade and materials to the primary structure. Concerns regarding the actual engineering of the building are addressed during the building permit process. The Commission considered removing Section H, which requires a CUP for pole sheds in residential districts:

“(H) Conditional use permit required. Detached accessory buildings constructed by post-frame construction (pole buildings) shall be allowed in residential R districts by conditional use permit only.”

Commissioner Kunde moved to recommend removing "Section H" from the current Accessory Dwelling code. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schuett and passed.

ACTION ITEMS

~~4a. ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS (ADUs)~~

4b. SIGN ORDINANCE UPDATES

Klara Beck opened the sign ordinance discussion with review of the draft code from the City Attorney's office. Klara explained that we could add scrollable tables to the online version of the code. There was some discussion about removing the location section from the tables.

It was noted that B-1 zones would have a difference sign requires than the B-2, B-3 and B-4 zones because it is a buffer to residential districts. Chair Kilde stated that Mike Mortenson had concerns about having too many billboards in B-5 and B-6 zones if they were only 400' apart. Scott Kvamme, Indigo Sign, stated that he also felt we should leave the space between billboards in these zones at 800'.

There was some discussion about roof signs and how our current code allows for roof signs with height restrictions. Building code will determine the structural requirements for roof signage. There was some discussion about what CUPs and variances covers. The PC stated they would like to increase the number of signs allowed in Triangle Park to three signs at a time. It was also noted that there was a diagram showing window signage that should be removed for continuity.

A motion to recommend the changes discussed for the Sign Ordinance was made by Commissioner Fullerton and seconded by Commissioner Walls. Motion passed.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

5a. PARKING MINIMUMS

Klara Beck explained that many cities are shifting toward reduced or no parking minimums or implementing parking maximums. Klara stated that Minneapolis no longer has parking minimums. Business Development for Fergus Falls heard early discussion regarding parking minimums and supports allowing business owners and developers to determine their own parking needs. Commission Fullerton voiced concerns about not providing enough parking for employees and customers. Klara mentioned that ADA requirements should be research further before changes are made. Commissioner Kunde mention the cost of maintenance for parking lots for businesses. Commissioner Kunde made a motion to eliminate parking minimums. There was no second.

Klara explained the Chamber of Commerce will distribute a survey to businesses to gather data on parking needs and customer habits for more data. The PC decided to discuss parking minimums more after the survey information was gathered.

STAFF UPDATES

6a. SHORELAND ORDINANCE

Klara explained that there are a few changes so the item would be back in front of PC soon

6b. CANNABIS BUSINESS ZONING

Klara stated that cannabis sales will be allowed in B-3 Zones via Interim Use Permits.

September 23 is the next schedule meeting.

The meeting adjourned at **6:47 PM**.

Klara Beck

Community Development Director