

OWATONNA PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES FOR MAY 11, 2021

The Owatonna Planning Commission met in regular session at 5:30 pm in the Council Chambers of the City Administration Building with Senior Member Dan Boeke conducting the meeting. Present at roll call were Commissioners Dan Boeke, John Eickhoff, Kelly Rooks, Rachel Springer-Gasner, and Mark Wilson (5:45 pm). Commissioner Mark Meier was absent. Community Development Manager Greg Kruschke and Planning Technician Kristen Kopp were also present.

Community Development Manager Greg Kruschke administered the Oath of Office for new Planning Commissioner Nicholas Peake. Kruschke said that Nick is an At-Large member, as Mark Wilson shifted to represent the First Ward.

A nomination was made by Boeke and seconded by Eickhoff to nominate Kelly Rooks as the President. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion carried.

A nomination was made by Boeke and seconded by Eickhoff to nominate Mark Meier as the Vice President. Discussion was held if anyone else was interested in the office. Boeke stated that Meier would provide some continuity with the amount of new members. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion carried.

A motion was made by Boeke and seconded by Springer-Gasner to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of April 13, 2021. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion carried.

Application No. V-1447, which is a request by Derby Builders on behalf of Jason House for a rear setback variance of 15' where a 30' rear yard setback is required from the north property line at 2430 Briarwood Place NE, was presented by Community Development Manager Kruschke. (Refer to report on file.) Eickhoff asked what the rationality is behind the 30' setback. Kruschke said that Owatonna has been 30' front and 30' rear probably since the mid-1970s. In Faribault, they had a 10' minimum rear setback. We do allow garages and sheds to be 3' from the rear property line. Boeke asked if there is any kind of precedence that has been set, or if we'd be setting a precedence. Kruschke stated that variances, by state law, are required to stand on their own merits and are a unique case so precedence does not affect a request. Public hearing opened at 5:44 pm. Property owner Jason House and Dave Derby of Derby Builders were present. Mr. House said that they put a lot of time and effort into getting around having to apply for a variance. He tried to buy the land behind him, but that didn't work out. He said they were going to do an outdoor, in-ground pool with an accessory building, but it makes more sense in this climate to do an indoor pool. (Commissioner Mark Wilson arrived at 5:45 pm.) He said that it falls under the requirements for an accessory building. Mr. Derby handed out some copies of the plan to the Commissioners. Originally they talked about doing an accessory building, but they decided that they would like to join the two buildings with a firewall in between, and with a separate heating and cooling system. It's 980 square feet total with the pool and the walkable space surrounding it. They've done a few of these in Edina and Apple Valley. The pool itself will be a permit and there will be a permit for the building, as well as a mechanical permit. Kruschke said that if they were to treat it as an accessory structure, there would need to be a gap between the house and the structure. By attaching them, they are considered one structure from the zoning ordinance. Mr. Derby said that in Apple Valley, they regulated how they did the firewall. Kruschke said that this variance that was noticed for is for the rear setback, any other variance would need a new application and thus a new notification. Eickhoff asked about their timeline. Kruschke said they first came in in January on this project and have been back and forth a lot. Mr. Derby said that they've made some modifications to the plans. It's now 5' farther from the property line than originally planned and they have relocated some of the mechanical equipment. Eickhoff said that

he was struggling with it since it's so far past the regulation of the setback. He asked how much higher above the house this would be. Mr. Derby said that the sidewall is 12 feet tall and he said he believes that there is a 6/12 pitch on it. The goal was to get it high enough for an interior slide but had to get the roof over the top of the existing windows on the house. He said he asked Jason House to talk to as many neighbors as possible. Wilson asked if there was any feedback from the neighbors. Kesley Buchardt, the next-door neighbor to the east at 2450 Briarwood Place NE, said that she's not for or against it. She said she's okay with it, but had some questions about the height and what the reasoning is for the 30 setback. She also wondered about watershed, because it's taking up so much of the property, and wondered if that would make an impact. Mr. Derby said that originally on the plan, they had it mono-pitched. Mr. House said that the drainage won't change. Boeke asked if this was a walkout. Mr. House said yes. Mr. Derby said that this addition would be at walk-out level. He said that there are ways to mitigate drainage, such as a rain garden. It's a pretty good drop once you get past the fence line. Kruschke said that there is a 10' drainage easement on the back property line that goes into the wetland, and this addition doesn't trigger anything from an impervious surface side. Eickhoff asked if there was a maximum square footage that can be covered. Kruschke said there is a 30% maximum for accessory structures, but this is an addition to the house so that requirement does not come into play. Public hearing closed at 5:59 pm. A motion was made by Boeke and seconded by Springer-Gasner to approve this variance request with the following provisions:

- 1) There shall be no additional encroachments on the north side of the building.
- 2) All building codes shall be met.
- 3) No additional accessory structures shall be permitted on this parcel.

All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion carried.

Final Plat of Pearl Courtyard Addition, which is a 2.62± acre tract of land zoned B-3, Central Business District, owned by Owatonna Hospitality 1, LLC, and located at the 100 block of East Pearl Street & 200 block of North Cedar Avenue, was presented by Community Development Manager Kruschke. (Refer to report on file.) Commissioners Eickhoff and Wilson abstained from this request. A motion was made by Springer-Gasner and seconded by Boeke to recommend City Council approval of this final plat of Pearl Courtyard Addition with the following conditions:

- 1) The final plat shall be recorded within 60 days of the approval.
- 2) The title opinion shall be approved by the City Attorney prior to recording of the final plat.
- 3) All utility services not being used shall be disconnected at the mains or the Developer shall enter into a Utility Disconnection Agreement.
- 4) The plat is contingent upon the vacation of the public alley ways.
- 5) Easements as requested by OPU shall be added to the final plat drawing.

All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion carried.

The Commissioners discussed the Cedar Avenue Streetscape Updates. Kruschke showed the Commissioners the final plan that went out to bid last week. A couple of water features were added at the mid-block crossings. Some trees were removed in front of the Farmers National Bank and a bench was added across from the bank. The net loss on parking was 17 stalls. Bids are due May 26th. There is a pre-bid meeting on Thursday of this week with contractors. He said they are really looking at the timeline. The plan is for construction to start around June 14th. The groundbreaking ceremony for everything downtown will be on June 3rd. Wilson asked if the purchase of the building was complete. Kruschke said that it's scheduled for this week. Everything is on track.

Kruschke gave an intro to Downtown Parking. He said they look at downtown parking as a parking system, not individual businesses or wants, to make sure they have adequate parking. He showed the currently adopted downtown parking map. There are six different hourly designations, and each district or stall has a sign associated with it. There is street clutter everywhere and it would be nice to eliminate it. The goal is to have one time limit on Cedar Avenue from Central Park to Rose Street, aside from the Handicapped Stalls. The goal is to light and activate the alleyways so that people can park in the lots and walk out to the businesses. From experience, if a stall is marked four hours, it will be parked in by downtown employees. If it is a two-hour stall, some employees will use it if they feel like chancing it. We don't have any one-hour stalls within the system currently. The goal is for anyone who is staying more than one or two hours to park in a lot. The recommendation is no more than two hours on Cedar Avenue. The consultant thinks that one hour is the best time limit. There has been a push for 30-minute time limit recently, but the limits are as good as the enforcement, which would be next to impossible. Two hours gives a comfortability when you go out to eat or shop so you are not rushed. Eickhoff asked if they've considered charging for parking. Kruschke said they have talked about it. There is a fine system put in place probably 15 years ago. He said that there will be a more formal discussion in the future with a recommendation to City Council. Rooks asked if they will also concentrate on the parking lots that they'd be directing people to. Kruschke said that at this point, it's probably best to tackle one thing at a time, but it is something to talk about in the future. Wilson asked about Parking Lot 1, and wondered why the City would list it for sale as that is parking downtown. Kruschke said that is a question for City Council as he was not a part of that discussion. Eickhoff said that he likes the two-hour idea. Rooks asked how many people live downtown. Kruschke said they could get a number of units, but not population. This is where the 24 and 21-hour parking lots come into play.

The Commissioners discussed the Transportation Plan. Kruschke said that the Planning Commission will be asked to adopt an Access Management Ordinance later this year. He pointed out a map of future corridors and street connections.

Kruschke updated the Commissioners on previous items and highlighted the Building Permit Reports for April. Boeke asked if Costco is planning to put up another building. Kruschke said that they have plans for additions, whenever they have the need. Kruschke noted that the high school is permitted through the state, so that will not show up on these reports. They are scheduled to start next week.

There being no further business to come before the Planning Commission at this time, a motion was made by Boeke and seconded by Springer-Gasner to adjourn the meeting at 6:33 pm. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Greg Kruschke
Community Development Manager