

OWATONNA PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES FOR APRIL 13, 2021

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

A motion was made by Boeke and seconded by Wilson to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of March 9, 2021. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion carried.

Petition by Owatonna Hospitality 1, LLC and Dale & Delores Bishman to vacate a portion of a public alley in Block 10, Original Town of Owatonna located on the east side of the 200 Block of North Cedar Avenue was presented by Community Development Manager Greg Kruschke. (Refer to report on file.) Commissioners Eickhoff and Wilson abstained from this request. Public hearing opened at 5:31 pm. No comments were made regarding this request. Public hearing closed at 5:32 pm. Rooks asked if there will be access to parking on the eastern side of that block. Kruschke said not on that block. The alleys on the east side won't necessarily access the public parking. Meillier asked if the street parking will be just hotel parking. Kruschke said no, that is public parking, though there may be a drop-off area. A motion was made by Boeke and seconded by Springer-Gasner to recommend City Council approval of this vacation of a portion of the public alley on the east side of the 200 Block of North Cedar Avenue. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion carried.

Preliminary 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. Public hearing opened at 5:38 pm. No comments were made regarding this request. Public hearing closed at 5:39 pm. A motion was made by Springer-Gasner and seconded by Rooks to recommend City Council approval of this preliminary plat of Pearl Courtyard Addition with the following conditions:

- 1) The final plat shall be approved within one year of the date of this report.
- 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) A 5' drainage and utility easement shall be provided along the north property line of Block 2.

All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion carried.

Applications No. V-1446, which is a request by Owatonna Pearl LLC for a rear setback variance of 6' where a 12' setback from the north property line is required for a new structure, was presented by Community Development Manager Greg Kruschke. (Refer to report on file.) Public hearing opened at 5:41 pm. David Dow asked where on the lot the building is located. Kruschke said that the parking lot is on the east side of the building. Mr. Dow said that was his only concern. Public hearing closed at 5:42 pm. Meillier asked if the setback was to the middle of the alley. Kruschke said that it is to the property line. Eickhoff asked if there were any maintenance concerns. Kruschke said no, but this gives them more room than they've had along the alleys. Garages have been within 5 feet of that property line in the past. Mr. Dow asked about the soil conditions. Kruschke said it's a pocket in the parking lot area. It surprised

everyone as the downtown is usually sandy. Mr. Dow asked if there would be any concerns for his parking lot. Kruschke said there would not be; this was just an unfortunate pocket of bad soils that is unsuitable to build a building on. A motion was made by Rooks and seconded by Meier to recommend City Council approval of Application No. V-1446 by Owatonna Pearl LLC, a request for a rear setback variance of 6' where a 12' setback from the north property line is required for a new structure 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.

All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion carried.

The Commissioners discussed the downtown streetscape. Kruschke played a video showing the rendering. He said that you can see the wider sidewalks and the raised crosswalks to make it more pedestrian friendly. There have been a number of minor changes since the video was put together. The trees in front of the Wells Fargo bank were removed for photography reasons, as that is a big tourist attraction downtown. A bench was repositioned across the street from the bank, and some handicapped parking stalls were moved. Rooks asked if the only raised crosswalks were midblock and not at the corners. Kruschke said that is correct. There are sidewalk bump-outs at the corners. All the alleyways are designed with a throughway of about 6 feet. There is a 17-stall loss on Cedar; it's going from 83 stalls down to 66. There are some bar top tables that don't take up a lot of space. The goal is to get people out of their cars and looking in shop windows. Wilson asked if the bistro tables are provided by the City. Kruschke said that's a good question. He said they're not planning on doing any tables in the corridor, but do have some in the alleyways. He said he will bring it up. The bike racks have the official Main Street logo. There will be removable bollards in the alleys. They are proposing a drip irrigation system for the vegetation. There will be a public hearing at City Council on April 20<sup>th</sup>. Rooks asked if they're starting at the 300 block and moving south. Kruschke said that is correct, and works best for the sewer installation. He said that they will be using a bid process for contractors, taking timing into consideration. He said if this group had a strong feeling one way or another, they could make a recommendation to City Council if they wish. Springer-Gasner asked if there would be an issue with snow removal with the bump-outs and raised crosswalks. Kruschke said that they will have to pay a little bit of attention and they will have to change how they remove snow downtown. Rooks asked if he's heard much back from the community, other than parking stalls. Kruschke said that parking is the biggest concern. There will be a lot of work happening downtown this summer. When we get to 2022 this will really be something special for Owatonna. Meillier said that he seconded that, too. We've been trying to create a destination. He said he hopes for appropriate signage and that he thinks it's going to be great.

Kruschke said that it is with great regret that he has to say this is Chairman Meillier's last meeting. He's served his three three-year terms. He thanked Josh for his service and said he's been a great leader for the Planning Commission. He said that Wilson is up this year and Wilson said he accepted the next term. The first meeting of May will be the annual election of officers. Meillier said, to anyone that takes his role, that Kruschke does a fantastic job.

Kruschke updated the Commissioners on past items and highlighted the Building Permit Reports. He said that the high school is set to break ground in May, although that won't show up on our numbers.

There being no further business to come before the Planning Commission at this time, a motion was made by Eickhoff and seconded by Wilson to adjourn the meeting at 6:11 pm. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Greg Kruschke  
Community Development Manager