

CITY OF ALBERT LEA
PLANNING COMMISSION
ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

*1/15/13, 5:30 pm
City Center - Council Chambers*

Members Present

Robert Hoffman
John Severtson
Tony Trow
Jon Murray
Carol Hassebroek
David Gross
Councilor Baker

Members Absent

Thayne Nordland

Staff in Attendance

Breanne Rothstein, WSB and Associates
Addison Lewis, WSB and Associates
Chad Adams, City Manager
Jennifer Nelson, Office Specialist

Chairman, Robert Hoffman called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by John Severtson and seconded by Tony Trow to approve the minutes of December 4, 2012. The motion was approved on a voice vote.

Public Hearing-None

Introductions were made for the new staff and members;

David Gross, employed by ITC and has a genuine interest for the City of Albert Lea. He advised he was a member of the downtown streetscape committee.

Jon Severtson, employed by Enders Tools. He stated he doesn't agree with some of the things going on and is ready for some changes.

Robert Hoffman, enjoys a career in real estate and owns his own brokerage and also manages commercial and rental properties. He supports growth of the downtown and wants to give back to the community. He is serving his last term and this will be his last year on the Planning Commission and noted he would still like to remain involved with the community in some way.

Jon Murray, employed by Mayo Health Systems and moved back to Albert Lea with his wife to be close to his family. He would like to see growth for Albert Lea.

Carol Hassebroek, employed as a pathologist for Mayo Health Systems and has lived in Albert Lea since August. She is interested in giving a fresh perspective and getting younger people involved in the community.

Tony Trow, is third generation family living in the area. He has lived in many different locations but has strong family history and ties to Albert Lea. He is looking for improvements for the City and stated it is exciting to think about the people living and thriving in the downtown area.

Breanne Rothstein, lives in Minneapolis and has worked as a municipal planner for the past eight years. She has a Masters Degree in Urban Planning from the University of Minnesota and a Bachelor of Arts in Urban Studies from Augsburg College. She enjoys living close to activities and the downtown. She likes the idea of the “urban village” and living in a walkable area.

Addison Lewis, grew up in Apple Valley and attended the University of Minnesota and has a Bachelor of Science in Urban Studies. He worked as an intern in Apple Valley and has been working full time with the WSB since August.

Chad Adams, City Manager advised he would be involved with the broader projects and listed some examples such as; Port Authority, Freeborn Bank Building, Downtown Street Scape, Blazing Star, Gateway Downtown projects, and Doug Johnson would take the lead on smaller projects.

Jennifer Nelson, Office Specialist for the Fire & Inspection Department will be taking minutes for the Planning Commission Meetings and assist with communications.

Old Business

- 1. Case # 12-22-ZA Diversified Central District and Re-zonings.** The staff report was presented by Breanne Rothstein who is the new consultant municipal planner. This report becomes part of these minutes by reference. *Memorandum was dated January, 2, 2013.* Breanne advised the advantages of the Diversified Central District (DCD) would bring more flexibility to the downtown, promote walkability, help with the retention of businesses and promote new business opportunities. This brings the idea of the “Urban Village” and bringing people to the downtown. This re-zoning will affect approximately 300 downtown parcels. Breanne presented a power point presentation to the Planning Commission (PC). This re-zoning would encourage denser land uses. Breanne explained that in the areas where there are single family dwellings those would become legal nonconforming status. If this was the case any expansion of a single family would require a variance. She also asked if the PC would want single family dwellings to be a permitted use in the DCD.

Breanne advised this re-zoning would also lead to more opportunities for redevelopment.

Breanne is looking for input and plans on beginning to draft an ordinance.

Breanne also asked for input on standards for parking.

Breanne discussed an outline for the next steps to move forward with this concept for the DCD. She advised putting together a public informational meeting to educate the public on the specifics of the proposed ordinance and for those whose parcels will be affected by this re-zoning. She would like feedback and to gather input and concerns the public may have. She plans to update the council of this re-zoning study at a work session on February 4th. The public informational meeting was set for Tuesday, February 26, 2013 at 6:30 p.m.

John Severtson brought up concerns regarding redevelopment in the HPC district.

Breanne advised they can still redevelop this area although the rules are stricter and they would be required to meet certain guidelines for approval.

Robert Hoffman advised there are benefits for being located in the Historic district. There are tax incentives and grants available.

Breanne would like to have a draft of the ordinance ready to present by the April PC and council meetings.

Re-zoning may also affect property values which may cause taxes to increase for these properties. Larry Baker thought it would be beneficial to include staff from the county assessor's office at the public meeting. This would assist to answer the questions of how much impact this would have for owners of existing properties.

Larry Baker thought it would be a good idea to put an informational piece together to air on the government channel.

The Commission discussed the need to have a preliminary community meeting introducing the idea of a Diversified Central District, then a follow-up community meeting to discuss the specific re-zoning of each property.

- 2. Case # 12-37-ZA Sign Ordinance Discussion.** Breanne asked for feedback from the PC before an amended sign ordinance brought before the council. This report becomes part of these minutes by reference. *Memorandum was dated January, 2, 2013.* The Commission discussed the minor changes to the sign ordinance, including allowing more square footage for projecting signs on corner properties, and directed staff to bring a revised ordinance and conduct a public hearing on the matter.

New Business- Breanne would like to put together a work plan for 2013 and asked the PC members what items they would like to include on the plan. Tony Trow would like to discuss the Albert Lea Listens concept and the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Communications:- none

Staff Communications:- none

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m. 1/15/13 motion by John Severtson and second by Jon Murray.

Respectfully submitted,

_____/s/_____
Breanne Rothstein, Planner

Approved:

_____/s/_____
Planning Commission Secretary