

CITY OF ALBERT LEA
PLANNING COMMISSION
ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

*2/8/13, 5:30 pm
City Center - Room 213*

Members Present

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

Staff in Attendance

Doug Johnson, Building Official
Jennifer Nelson, Office Specialist

Chairman, Robert Hoffman called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Interested Parties

Bob Graham, 1336 Crestview Rd, Professional Planner

Approval of the Agenda

Robert Hoffman made a motion to approve the agenda and John Severtson seconded the motion. The agenda was approved unanimously on a voice vote.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Tony Trow to approve the minutes from January 15, 2013 and David Gross seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously on a voice vote.

Election of Officers

A motion was made by Robert Hoffman to nominate Jon Murray to serve as Chairman and was seconded by John Severtson. Approved on a 7-0 roll call vote.

A motion was made by Robert Hoffman to nominate himself to serve as Vice Chairman and was seconded by Carol Hassebroek. Approved on a 7-0 roll call vote.

A motion was made by John Severson to nominate Carol Hassebroek to serve as Secretary and was seconded by Robert Hoffman. Approved on a 7-0 roll call vote.

Public Hearing

1. Case #12-37-ZA Sign Ordinance

Memorandum prepared by Breanne Rothstein, Planner WSB & Associates, Inc. becomes part of these minutes by reference.

The hearing was opened for public comment.

David Gross believes portable signs should be more restricted in B-1 District due to the close proximity to residential areas. Looks to review under conditional use permit which would have to be approved by the planning commission. He would like to see these districts keep their residential character.

Robert Hoffman advised he is torn because he can see from both perspectives of businesses wanting to advertise sales and also keeping the character of residential neighborhoods.

It was the consensus of the commission to continue the hearing until the March 5th planning commission meeting do to questions about the allowance of portable signs in the B1 and PD districts, Doug advised that he will discuss with Breanne and bring back findings to the March 5th meeting.

Tony Trow questioned the language on projecting signs on the corner, he wanted more clarification on what is defined as a corner building and also that the right angle language would not apply to the corner, Doug advised that he will discuss with Breanne and get the correct language for the March 5th meeting.

Jon Murray closed public hearing and discussion will continue into March meeting.

Old Business

1. Diversified Central District Update.

There will be a public informational meeting held in the Council Chambers on Tuesday, February 26, 2013 at 6:30 p.m. to introduce the concept of the Diversified Central District. The purpose of this meeting is to educate the public on the specifics of the proposed ordinance and for those whose parcels will be affected by this re-zoning. Staff will be at this meeting to answer any questions or concerns regarding the DCD.

2. Work Plan- Albert Lea Listens/Comprehensive Plan Discussions

Bob Graham gave a review of the history of the Comprehensive Plan. The current comprehensive plan was approved in 2008. This took two years to develop and create. This is the basis for creating zoning in the community.

It was also mentioned it may be about time to start another Albert Lea Listens initiative. The last Albert Lea Listens process took six months. Questionnaires were sent out to the public which included a variety of socioeconomic statuses. The information gathered boiled down to common themes which included; community appearance and attitude, business development and job creation and cultural amenities. The comprehensive plan builds on many of the directions and ideas first established through the Albert Lea Listens community initiative.

Tony Trow also brought up the question on how we measure success. The Comprehensive Plan, and particularly the Actions Steps, serve as a basis for identifying future projects and directions. How do we measure? This will require further discussion.

Staff brought up an education opportunity to the planning commission. The WSB & Associates, Inc. (City of Albert Lea consulting planners) offers a Planning 101 class they would offer to teach in Albert Lea. This course covers topics such as; why planning is beneficial for communities, the history of planning, legal basics of planning process, land use and zoning tools and trending topics in the planning field. This will be something set up in the near future.

New Business-

1. Approve official meeting schedule for 2013

Robert Hoffman motioned to accept the approval of the 2013 meeting schedule, Carol Hassebroek seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously on a voice vote.

2. Request for identification of 10 year future development areas in Albert Lea

The Minnesota DOT requested the planning commission review the designated growth areas to make sure they are consistent with the City of Albert Lea Comprehensive Plan . John Severtson motioned to accept the 10 year future development areas and Robert Hoffman seconded the motion. Approved unanimously on a voice vote.

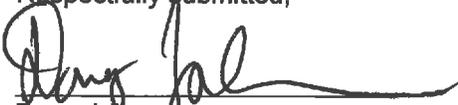
Commissioner Communications:-NONE

Staff Communications:

It was brought up the city is looking into the possibility to combine the Heritage Preservation Committee and the Planning Commission. It was brought up it has been difficult getting a quorum for the HPC meetings. The point was also brought up the HPC has power the Planning Commission does not due to the HPC being a certified local designation. The City Attorney will be checking on the legalities of this.

Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m. on 2/5/13 motion by Robert Hoffman and second by Carol Hassebroek.

Respectfully submitted,



Doug Johnson
Building Official

Approved:



Carol Hassebroek
Planning Commission Secretary



Memorandum

To: *Planning Commission, City of Albert Lea
Doug Johnson, Building Official*

From: *Breanne Rothstein, Planner
WSB & Associates, Inc.*

Date: *January 30, 2013*

Re: *Public Hearing Ordinance to amend Article IV of Chapter 74 SIGNS
Case #12-37-ZA*

Based on the discussions at the November and January Planning Commission meetings, staff has prepared a draft ordinance for your review. This is a public hearing and has been properly noticed.

Several changes to the sign ordinance are proposed, and are summarized below. The impetus for these changes was to reconcile the zoning ordinance with the “Architectural Guidelines for Historic Preservation” adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission and to allow multiple family district uses to install larger identification signs for complexes.

The primary discussion of the Commission was regarding marquees signs and their appropriateness in the B-3 district. The Planning Commission discussed not changing the standards for marquees and asked for renderings of signs for the Marion Ross theatre that could conform to the sign ordinance. They did express an interest in allowing for some additional square footage for projecting signs.

Currently, the definition of a “projecting sign” is: *a building sign extending more than 18 inches out from the wall of the building in which it is mounted*. Currently, projecting signs must be a minimum of 8 feet from the ground in all districts, and in the B-3 district, all awning, canopy, and projecting signs are limited to 12 square feet per sign face (and only one total of these types are permitted). Specifically regarding projecting signs, the code limits such signage to 4 feet long, and allows for projection of up to 4 feet. The Planning Commission expressed a willingness to allow more signage for projecting signs, but only those on a corner of a building. Staff is recommending an increase in square footage from 12 to 18, and an increase in length from 4 to 6 feet. Also, an allowance is proposed for the sign to reach up to the second story (rather than “halfway to the second story”).

The Planning Commission expressed a willingness to allow for more of this type of projecting sign. Two other minor changes include adding standards for portable signs in the B-2, I-1, and I-2 districts and allowing for R-2 and R-3 properties to have one larger development community sign. The ordinance is included in your packet, with tracked changes to allow for ease of review.

Planning Commission Meeting Dates for 2013

Tuesday, January 15, 2013

Tuesday, February 05, 2013

Tuesday, March 05, 2013

Tuesday, April 02, 2013

Tuesday, May 07, 2013

Tuesday, June 04, 2013

Tuesday, July 16, 2013

Tuesday, August 06, 2013

Tuesday, September 03, 2013

Tuesday, October 01, 2013

Tuesday, November 19, 2013

Tuesday, December 03, 2013

Tuesday, January 07, 2014