# CITY OF ALBERT LEA
# PLANNING COMMISSION
# ADVISORY BOARD
# MEETING MINUTES

*3/5/13, 5:30 pm*
*City Center - Council Chambers*

**Members Present**
Thayne Nordland
Jon Murray
John Severtson
Carol Hassebroek
Tony Trow

**Members Absent**
Robert Hoffman
David Gross
Larry Baker-Ex Officio

**Staff in Attendance**
Doug Johnson, Building Official
Jennifer Nelson, Office Specialist

Chairman, John Murray called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

**Approval of the Agenda**
Thayne Nordland 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 February 8, 2013 and Thayne Nordland seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously on a voice vote.

**Public Hearing**

1. Case #12-37-ZA Sign Ordinance
   Continued Public Hearing Ordinance to amend Article IV of Chapter 74

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

   No public was in attendance.

   The question was asked if the Diversified Central District zoning is passed would the sign ordinance need to be updated to include this area? Doug Johnson advised this district could be added to the table of the existing sign ordinance. Then the sign ordinance would need to be amended.

A motion was made by John Severtson to approve the sign ordinance as written and Tony Trow seconded the motion. Approved on a 5-0 roll call vote.

**Old Business**

1. **Diversified Central District Update.**

   There was 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 was to educate the public on the specifics of the proposed ordinance and for those whose parcels will be affected by this re-zoning. Staff and planning commission members were available at this meeting to answer any questions or concerns citizens had regarding the DCD.

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

   There was discussion that if the idea of the DCD takes off the city would need to look at bordering areas such as; Adams, Court St, College St and make changes to the Comprehensive Plan to allow the DCD to expand if needed.

   The DCD draft ordinance will be ready for review for the April 2, 2013 PC meeting. A tentative date was set for April 23, 2013 for the next public information meeting.

   The PC members all agreed it would be a good idea to invite Ryan Rassmussen from the Freeborn County Assessor's office to the next informational meeting to answer questions regarding how rezoning may affect the property values in this area.

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

   *Clarification was made regarding the minutes from February 8, 2013 PC meeting regarding the Albert Lea Listens process. Questionnaires were not sent out to the general public. The process was open to the public and over 600 residents chose to participate in over 60 listening sessions. Focus groups which averaged 15 people each which presented their vision to the steering committee and consultant for integration into the plan.

   No further discussion at this time regarding the work plan.

**New Business**-NONE

**Commissioner Communications:**-NONE

**Staff Communications:**

The City Attorney is still looking into the legalities of combining the Heritage Preservation Committee and the Planning Commission.

The City of Albert Lea will be hosting a Planning 101 class for the City of Albert Lea, Alden, Clarks Grove and Freeborn County. This class will be put on by the WSB & Associates, Inc. (City of Albert Lea consulting planners). 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 class will take place on Tuesday, March 19, 2013 at 5:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers. Planning staff and planning commissioners are encouraged to attend.

Doug Johnson advised the PC he is open to input or ideas regarding the City Community Development website. If anyone has any suggestions to let him know.

**Adjournment** - The meeting was adjourned at 6:48 p.m. on 3/5/13 motion by Thayne Nordland and second by Carol Hassebroek.

Respectfully submitted,

Doug Johnson
Building Official
Approved:

Carol Hassebroek
Planning Commission Secretary

WSB & Associates, Inc.
Infrastructure ■ Engineering ■ Planning ■ Construction
701 Xenia Avenue South
Suite 300
Minneapolis, MN 55416
Tel: 763-541-4800
Fax: 763-541-1700

# *Memorandum*

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

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

***Date:*** ***February 28, 2013***

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

---

Based on questions and suggestions from the Planning Commission in February, staff has completed additional minor changes to the proposed sign ordinance.

1) Staff has clarified what is meant by "corner building" to specify it is a building located on an intersection of two public rights-of-way.
2) Instead of adding a new table to discuss portable signs in additional districts, staff references the section of the sign ordinance that addresses portable signs.

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").

WSB & Associates, Inc.
Infrastructure ■ Engineering ■ Planning ■ Construction
701 Xenia Avenue South
Suite 300
Minneapolis, MN 55416
Tel: 763-541-4800
Fax: 763-541-1700

# *Memorandum*

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

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

***Date:*** ***February 28, 2013***

***Re:*** ***Case #12-22-ZA Diversified Central District amendment***

---

Staff would like to provide the Planning Commission with an update regarding the Re-zoning Study regarding the Diversified Central District. Many of you were in attendance at the public information meeting in February. It was a productive meeting and many good comments were collected. Specifically, the following comments were identified, and staff would like to discuss the incorporation/validity of these issues:

1) The study area should be examined to include more property south of the existing study area because there are a lot of low value residential parcels in that area too;
2) Parking is very important, and should be considered in this ordinance. A parking ramp should be considered when/if the clinic expands;
3) Residential transitioning from existing single family homes and potentially new multi-family dwellings should be considered;
4) The city should undertake an active financing role to facilitate/incentivize re-development;
5) Noise needs to be a consideration when planning for public events downtown;
6) Public restrooms are needed downtown;
7) Taxation and values are an important issue. It needs to be clear that the assessor looks at current use rather than highest and best use;
8) The types of permitted uses are important to reduce conflict between business and residential uses.

Staff is seeking feedback from the Planning Commission on the merits/value in these comments, and whether we should be considering all/some of them in the preparation of the ordinance.

The next step associated with the re-zoning study is to prepare a draft ordinance for your review and hold a public hearing. Staff is proposing to hold a second community meeting the same night but prior to the public hearing on the proposed ordinance/rezonings. Staff is seeking feedback from the Planning Commission on the timing of this public hearing. Would the PC like a discussion of the draft ordinance at April's meeting , and then conduct a public hearing in May, or shall staff prepare a complete ordinance for public hearing in April?