

CITY OF ALBERT LEA
PLANNING COMMISSION
ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

4/2/13, 5:30 pm
City Center - Council Chambers

Members Present

Thayne Nordland
Jon Murray
John Severtson
Carol Hassebroek
Tony Trow
Robert Hoffman
David Gross
Larry Baker-Ex Officio

Members Absent-None

Staff in Attendance

Breanne Rothstein, Planner
Jennifer Nelson, Office Specialist
Chad Adams, City Manager

Interested Parties

Bob Graham, 1336 Crestview Rd. Professional Planner

Chairman, Jon 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 David Gross 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 March 5, 2013 and Carol Hassebroek seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously on a voice vote.

Public Hearing-None

Old Business

1. **Diversified Central District Draft Ordinance Discussion**

| Case #12-22-ZA Diversified Central District draft ordinance:

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

| Breanne Rothstein reviewed the draft ordinance for the DCD.

| -The following items were discussed:

Single-family homes. Should single family homes be prohibited, a permitted use or a conditional use. Should they be restricted or less restricted?

Jon Murray commented that people would expect high density housing in a downtown district area.

Robert Hoffman brought up there are several affordable lower cost homes in this area and brought up concerns about not allowing the owners of existing single family homes to add on in this area. Maybe the market should decide. He would support single family homes to be allowed in this district.

Tony Trow commented that if this becomes an issue it could be changed if needed.

Larry Baker also commented it is easier to amend the ordinance than to take something out.

Breanne advised these are items to continue further discussion. You can prohibit but maybe it would be better to allow and not to be overly restricted. Also all commercial projects require an administrative site plan review.

Jon Severtson also commented several of the single family homes have been turned into duplexes and multiplexes as residential rental properties. The PC would like to have the mailing for the informational meeting go out to not only the home/business owner but the tenants also. This mailing should include a wider reach and be addressed to the resident of the address also.

Larry Baker thought it would be a good idea to provide some type of landscaping buffer be required for a commercial property that is next to residential. Breanne asked if the 15' setback would be an acceptable distance. Breanne will look into adding some tree and shrub requirements.

The issue of the turn-over of business was also brought up that legal non-conforming ceases after one year.

David Gross compared the City of Rochester and they have a "fringe" where single family homes are allowed. This may be an idea for surrounding areas of the DCD. Gross would like to keep the purpose and not allow single family homes in this district to keep the intent of higher density housing in this area.

David Gross brought up an example of a Bentonville Arkansas as having a very nice downtown. Population of this City is 30,000-40,000.

John Severtson brought up the question if this zoning would allow or discourage the possibility of income based housing in this district. This would be up to the developer as long as use and building code is followed it would not restrict what type of housing would be allowed. The purpose is to have more people live within proximity of the downtown.

Bob Graham commented this would not stop subsidized housing in this area, although it would leave more opportunities for market rate housing.

There were concerns regarding tattoo and piercing parlors being allowed in this district. Tattoo and piercing parlors would be prohibited uses in this area. Breanne suggested they could be expressly prohibited and this way would leave discretion to the zoning administrator to use his/her authority to decide if it is a similar use. If the citizen would then challenge this decision they could bring in front of the Board of Appeal if they do not agree with the zoning administrators decision.

The height requirements for buildings was questioned by John Severtson. Jon Murray thought that the maximum height of a structure was 150', the high rise located at 800 4th Ave S is 105' in comparison. John Severtson would like this information verified. The ordinance would allow for a six story building. Four stories and up to six stories with the approval of a CUP.

Parking was discussed also. A parking waiver could be used in this district which allows most flexibility. A market study could be used by a potential developer to show how much parking would be necessary. The parking could not be reduced than less than 50% of what the code requires. Also as an example senior housing requires less parking. It would depend on the project.

Tony Trow would like to see the information regarding the DCD be made available to the public on the City website.

The Planning Commission directed staff to move forward with the ordinance as written and conduct a public meeting on April 30th at 6:00 and hold a public hearing on May 7th.

New Business

John Severtson brought up the trail system. This would be important to link the downtown to the trail system and would take some planning. Breanne advised this would take some research and Larry Baker is meeting with the railroad with the City and County. He will keep the PC advised and should hear more in June. Larry will have to find out the next meeting date.

Commissioner Communications:-NONE

Staff Communications:

The next public informational meeting will be held Tuesday April 30, 2013 in the Council Chambers. Planning staff and planning commissioners are encouraged to attend.

Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m. on 4/2/13 motion by Thayne Nordland and second by Robert Hoffman.

Respectfully submitted,

Breanne Rothstein, Planner

Approved:

Carol Hassebroek
Planning Commission Secretary