

MINUTES OF THE ALBERT LEA PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting
May 7, 2024
5:30 pm – City Center

Chairman Lucas Schuster called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Wyeth Anderson, Vice-Chair
Rachel Christensen, Ex-Officio
Matt Dorman
Matt Maras
Lucas Schuster, Chair
Steve Thompson

MEMBERS ABSENT

Leon Axtman
Jared Dawson

STAFF PRESENT

Cierra Maras, Development Services Administrative Assistant
Wayne Sorensen, City Building & Zoning Official

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Thompson and second by Dorman to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Maras and second by Anderson to approve the February 6, 2024 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Staff report prepared by Megan Boeck, City Planner, is to become part of these minutes by reference.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Amending Section 50.0011. – Inapplicability of certain height limitations.

Sorensen stated this amendment removes language that states flagpoles are exempt from height limitations in residential zones. It also removes solar energy systems from exemption which is covered in a new solar ordinance.

2. Amending Section 50.0018. – Accessory buildings, fences and site appurtenances.

Sorensen explained that this amendment will allow a maximum of three cargo containers as permanent storage in I-2 and I-3 industrial zones.

3. Amending Section 50.0395. – Principal permitted uses (B-2 District).

Sorensen stated this amendment clarifies that billboards and poster board signs are no longer allowed in the B-2 Community Business District per our newly adopted sign ordinance.

4. Amending Section 50.0504. – Principal permitted uses (I-1 District).

Sorensen stated this amendment adds mini-warehousing as a permitted use in the I-1 district which was inadvertently removed when the B-2 district was amended.

5. Amending Section 50.0846. – Commercial Districts (B-1, B-2, B-3, IDD, PD and DCD with commercial uses).

Sorensen explained this amendment corrects the unintended limitation of a 25-foot height limitation for a flagpole in a commercial zone and allows for a 75-foot height limitation.

6. Amending Section 50.0847. – Industrial Districts (I-1, I-2, I-3, and PD with industrial uses).

Sorensen stated this amendment also corrects the unintended limitation of a 25-foot height limitation in industrial zones and allows for a 75-foot height limitation.

7. Amending Chapter 50 – Tiny Homes.

Sorensen stated this adds tiny home parks as a permitted use within a Planned Development District. The commission reviewed the drafted ordinance and made minor adjustments.

8. Amending Chapter 50 – Solar.

Sorensen stated this will add solar energy systems to the existing wind energy ordinance.

Schuster opened the hearing to the public at 6:40 pm

No one was present to speak.

Schuster closed the hearing to the public at 6:41 pm.

Motion by Maras and second by Thompson to recommend to City Council approval of six ordinance amendments and adding a new ordinance for tiny homes with minor amendments to the draft presented and to add a new ordinance for solar energy systems.

Motion passed on a 5-0 voiced vote.

COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATION

None.

STAFF COMMUNICATION

Sorensen handed out a very rough draft of a new cannabis ordinance to the commission and showed a zoning matrix staff has been working on for allowed, conditional, and prohibited zones for cannabis retail. He asked the members to discuss with friends and family and to watch for an upcoming open house for the community to review and provide input about the proposal.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Schuster and second by Anderson to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 pm. Motion carried.

Cierra Maras, Planning Commission Secretary

Lucas Schuster, Chairman