

MINUTES OF THE ALBERT LEA PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting
August 20, 2024
5:30 pm – City Center

Chairman Lucas Schuster called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Wyeth Anderson, Vice-Chair
Leon Axtman
Jared Dawson
Rachel Christensen, Ex-Officio
Matt Dorman
Matt Maras
Lucas Schuster, Chair

MEMBERS ABSENT

Steve Thompson

STAFF PRESENT

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Axtman and second by Dorman to approve the agenda with a change that the July 20, 2024 meeting minutes will be presented at a later date. Motion carried.

Ordinance amendments prepared by Cierra Maras are to become part of these minutes by reference.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

- 1. Amending Chapter 50: Zoning of Cannabis, Off-Sale Liquor, Tobacco & Sexually Oriented Businesses.**

Sorensen explained that the ordinance amendments being amended tonight are regarding new definitions, locations, prohibited uses in specific zones, and adding cannabis zoning. All of the amendments can be found in the documents provided to the commission as well as recorded audio of this meeting upon request.

Schuster opened the hearing to the public at 6:06 pm

Colin Minehart, business located at 1811 Main St E, stated that him and his family have spent thousand of dollars pursuing a cannabis retailer license. He noted he is in the restaurant has been in business since 1983 and he would like to change and pursue a retailer cannabis license. He stated he is in an excellent location in the B-2 Business District and that the new cannabis ordinance would create large issues for him. He noted that having a cannabis retailer business would draw people off the interstate in to our community as well as people from other communities. He explained that he would need to apply for a variance as his business location is too close to a daycare. He said the cannabis industry is changing. He noted that he is happy to show anyone his proprietary business plans tonight.

Jerry Collins, owner of Big Dream Organics located at 1039 Broadway Ave S, stated that the cannabis is a changing, new industry and he encourages growth to the city as well as brining in others to our community. He noted the cannabis matrix presented should have retail portion provisions for the microbusiness and mezzobusinesses. He noted that generally speaking, the city is largely concerned about the number of retail locations allowed. He added that those in the cannabis industry are good at doing things under the radar, know the risks of the industry, and are good at mitigating it.

Schuster closed the hearing to the public at 6:19 pm.

Sorensen explained that the setbacks added in the commercial and industrial districts regarding cannabis, liquor stores, and sexually oriented businesses are from structure to structure, not property line to property line. He added that people may always apply for variances, but it is a financial consideration. He noted that the administration portion of the ordinance is in charge of limiting the number of stores and it does not coincide with zoning.

Motion by Anderson and second by Maras to recommend to City Council approval of all ordinance amendments to Chapter 50 as written and discussed.

Motion passed on a 6-0 voiced vote.

COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATION

None.

STAFF COMMUNICATION

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Dawson and second by Anderson to adjourn the meeting at 6:53 pm. Motion carried.

Cierra Maras, Planning Commission Secretary

Lucas Schuster, Chairman