

February 12, 2015

Proceedings of the Zoning Commission of University Heights, Iowa, held at the City Office, 1004 Melrose Avenue, subject to approval by the Commission at a subsequent meeting. ALL VOTES ARE UNANIMOUS UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED.

Chairperson Yeggy called the February 12, 2015 meeting of the University Heights Zoning Commission to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Zoning Commission Members: Stepheny Gahn, Alice Haugen, Stuart Rosebrook, Larry Wilson and Pat Yeggy. Staff present: Clerk Anderson. Also present was: Pat Bauer and Silvia Quezada.

Absent: Attorney Steve Ballard.

The December 16, 2014 minutes were approved by unanimous consent.

Public Input: Pat Bauer stated he was happy to answer any questions the commissioners may have regarding his comments at the city council meeting the previous night. Silvia Quezada distributed a handout on proposed language for corner lots. At the council meeting, a citizen addressed how corner lots are impacted by the current ordinance and asked that the council and Zoning Commission to review this issue. Quezada stated the commission may want to address irregular lots and possibly double-frontage lots.

Schedule Future Meetings: Chairperson Yeggy stated there will be two public meetings to discuss the Maxwell proposal for the St. Andrew Church property. Two tentative dates for the first public meeting are February 23rd and 24th with the second meeting being held March 3rd or 4th; location to be determined.

Discuss Public Input Regarding Ordinance 79: The commission reviewed the definition for “garage” and will recommend it be changed to “Garage” is an accessory structure that is used primarily for storing private or pleasure-type motor-driven vehicles.”

The commission revised that open terraces, patios or concrete slabs that do not extend more than 16 inches above ground-level must abut the primary building on the property.

Required parking spaces may be located in the front yard provided that a minimum of two-thirds of the front yard shall remain open space, free of parking spaces and driveways. For lots adjacent to the east side of Olive Court, required parking spaces may be located in the rear yard, provided that a minimum of two-thirds of the rear yard shall remain open space, free of parking spaces and driveways.

City Attorney Ballard is researching garden structures, their definitions, what is allowed and where they can be placed on a property. Commissioner Haugen suggested Ballard also address “play structures”. Commissioner Wilson they need to address the setback for garden structures; it was suggested two feet from the lot line. Yeggy stated the commission may want to consider if solar panels will be allowed on properties.

Yeggy addressed concerns a citizen had regarding corner lots in the city; currently, the ordinance states for corner lots there would be two front yards with 25 feet setbacks. The commission felt that property owners should address the Board of Adjustment requesting a variance.

The commission deferred discussion on irregular lots to another meeting. Wilson stated he did not want to revise ordinances that affect the entire city, for one specific situation.

Discussion on Remaining Zoning Issues: Wilson distributed a “lot coverage work sheet” to the commission. Wilson gave examples of small, medium and large lot sizes and the corresponding lot coverage and Floor Area Ratios (FAR).

Yeggy stated many municipalities in Iowa use lot coverage. In Des Moines, if the lot is more than 64,000 square feet, the maximum coverage is 35%, if the lot is less than 4,400 square feet, the coverage is 50%. Yeggy stated there are 16 properties that are above 40% lot coverage. Wilson commented that the previous commission had recommended a 35% FAR and wondered how that could be converted to lot-coverage.

Commissioner Haugen said they need to incorporate a measurement of proportionality and include a “penalty” for a second story. Yeggy commented that she “wants to be reasonable” and not create a lot coverage that makes property owners out of compliance. Commissioner Rosebrook said there needs to be a “balance between different size lots”.

The commission plans on comparing Iowa City’s sensitive slope ordinance to University Heights’ ordinance. Rosebrook asked if the commission should have a policy whereas property owners are notified, when purchasing a property, about sensitive slopes on the property.

Discuss Info to Evaluate Maxwell Proposal: Yeggy stated that MPOJC will be providing information on traffic for the proposed development. The commission will be addressing the request for allowing more residential units and above-ground parking spaces. Wilson requested that MPOJC commented on whether the proposal allows for adequate parking and if there is any indication on who may buy these units.

Additional Public Input: Quezada suggested the commission ask MPOJC to serve as a liaison between the commission and the developers for additional information. Yeggy stated she felt that was already addressed.

The next Zoning Commission meetings will be held February 17, 2015 at 7:00 pm at City Hall.

The meeting was adjourned **by unanimous consent at 8:57 p.m.**

Attest: Christine M. Anderson, City Clerk

Approved: Pat Yeggy, Chairperson