

March 4, 2015

Proceedings of the Zoning Commission of University Heights, Iowa, held at the University Club, 1360 Melrose Avenue, subject to approval by the Commission at a subsequent meeting. ALL VOTES ARE UNANIMOUS UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED.

Chairperson Yeggy called the March 4, 2015 meeting of the University Heights Zoning Commission to order at 7:01 p.m.

Present: Zoning Commission Members: Stepheny Gahn, Alice Haugen, Stuart Rosebrook, Larry Wilson and Pat Yeggy. Staff present: Attorney Ballard and Clerk Anderson. Also present were: Pat Bauer, Gretchen Blair, Justin Doyle, Andy Dudler, Louise From, Josh Gahn, Darien Nagle-Gamm, Mark Hankins, Mike Harris, Jim Lane, Chris Luzzie, Dottie Maher, Jeffrey Maxwell, Virginia Miller, Kevin Monson, Merle Puhrman, David Shriver, Derek Timmerman, Mary Mathew Wilson and Ken Yeggy.

The February 23, 2015 were amended and approved by unanimous consent.

Chairperson Yeggy thanked the University Club and the staff for providing the meeting space. Yeggy read a letter from Jim Mondonaro regarding the need for adequate parking spaces for the retail business owners.

Rezoning Request Update: Kevin Monson, architect for Neumann Monson, presented a PowerPoint presentation of the proposed site plan which incorporated the changes. After the last commission meeting, Monson stated there has been a modification in the number of units being requested. The developer is now asking for 24 additional units to be considered instead of 44 as stated last week; resulting in 104 units for the entire site. Monson commented the development team was surprised at the reaction to one bedroom units and the plan now will be for mostly two bedroom units on the site. As a result, the south building has been shortened by 20 feet and has reduced the square footage for the commercial area; to 14,600 square feet. The above-ground parking has also been reduced and 73 spots are now needed. Monson stated the northern-most parking row has been eliminated until there is a demand for it by the retail business owners.

Commissioner Gahn asked how many one and two bedroom units will be in the south building; Monson replied 22 two-bedroom and 2 one-bedroom units. Yeggy inquired if the community space is still part of the plan in the south building. Monson replied it is, if the council is desirous of the space and that it will reduce the amount of commercial square footage. Commissioner Haugen inquired if the developers considered having non-residents park underground. Monson said there will be secured underground parking so that would not be feasible; there will be spots available for the retail business owners.

MPOJC Traffic Study: Darien Nagle-Gamm, traffic engineering planner for MPOJC, addressed the commission on the traffic study for the proposed development. The commission received a hard copy, dated February 25, 2015, based on 124 residential condominiums and 15,800 square feet of commercial space. Nagle-Gamm stated has re-run the analysis and will give a verbal update but will provide a hard-copy at a later time.

Nagle-Gamm said that one assumption used in the analysis is the north leg of Melrose Avenue will be realigned. By doing the realignment, it will allow for traffic to move concurrently north and south on Melrose Avenue; currently, delays occur due to the split phase of the lights. It would be expected there would be improved time for traffic movements and a decrease in delays during AM/PM peak hours. Nagle-Gamm stated the study did not feel a traffic signal was needed at the "main entrance intersection" and if it was installed it would actually create more delays. A left turn lane is still warranted at the main entrance to the development and would improve traffic significantly. Nagle-Gamm stated there does not need to be a left turn lane at the Melrose and Sunset intersection. Given the reduction in commercial space, it is expected there will be further reductions in traffic volumes.

Commissioner Wilson asked if the study took into account the difference in traffic generation for one-bedroom versus two-bedroom units. Nagle-Gamm replied the national standards MPOJC uses do not identify a difference between units; based on an average of multiple types of units. In Iowa, data has shown that residents generate fewer trips than the national average but MPOJC wanted to be conservative in their analysis and show the maximum potential affect. Yeggy asked if the report differentiates between different types of populations; young professionals and retirees. Nagle-Gamm stated she did not have the data to determine that. Residents will make an average of 5.8 trips per day and Nagle-Gamm stated she thought that was rather high for the city given its high walking/biking rate.

Public Input: The following addressed the commission with their concerns and questions:

David Shriver – 100 Sunset Street
Pat Bauer – 338 Koser Avenue

Noah Hughes – 1465 Grand Avenue
Justin Doyle – Part of Maxwell development team

Joshua Gahn – 62 Highland Drive
Mary Mathew Wilson – 308 Koser Avenue
Jase Humphrey – 27 Prospect Place (written comments read by Chairperson Yeggy)

Jim Lane – 303 Koser Avenue
Mike Haverkamp – 315 Golfview Avenue

Commission Discussion:

Commissioner Rosebrook commented that it has been five years since the 55 parking spots were determined. Rosebrook said this is not a static project and asked Monson to comment on the current market for the project. Monson commented that the retail business owners wanted assurances that there would be adequate parking and feels this is necessary for success. Monson stated they “were naive to think 55 [parking spaces] would be adequate”.

Justin Doyle commented there will be short-term leases of units as the condominiums are put on the market for sale. Wilson asked if the development team sees a difference between rentals and lease. Doyle responded he did not. The leases will be for one or two year terms until the units are put on the market.

Doyle stated the developer will not be able to rent the commercial space for the cost to build the space but it is an amenity the city and condo owners want in the development. Haugen inquired if the commercial was not required would that remove a floor from the front building. Doyle replied that would be a “more economically viable” solution.

Gahn stated that her initial reaction to the proposed increase in units and parking spaces was not favorable. Gahn likes the compromises the developer has shown and wants to keep the retail space in the development. Gahn does not want to see a parking lot or dorm on the site and feels it is time for the city to make compromises.

Yeggy said she is a proponent for “smart growth” and does not have objections to the high density on the site. Yeggy stated she is in favor of the proposed changes.

Wilson understands that the community, as a whole, is open to developing the property and he feels the August 2014 was the “agreed upon proposal”. Wilson questions the cost of realigning the intersection and the commented that the quality of the building materials has been reduced. The development does not relate visually or architecturally to the city. Wilson feels the community should receive more of what they want in a development and he is against the proposed increases.

Haugen stated a vote against the proposed increases will kill the project and stated she is unable to approve the request.

MOTION by Gahn, seconded by Yeggy, to approve the request to increase the number of condominium units and above ground parking spots as requested by the Maxwell development team. **Carried.**

Haugen - No	Gahn - Aye
Rosebrook - Aye	Wilson - No
Yeggy – Aye	

The next Zoning Commission meetings will be held March 9, 2015, at 7:00 pm at City Hall.

The meeting was adjourned **by unanimous consent at 9:09 p.m.**

Attest: Christine M. Anderson, City Clerk

Approved: Pat Yeggy, Chairperson