

March 16, 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 March 16, 2015, meeting of the University Heights Zoning Commission to order at 7:06 p.m.

Present: Zoning Commission Members: Alice Haugen, Larry Wilson, Stepheny Gahn, and Pat Yeggy. Staff: Attorney Steve Ballard. Also present: Dotti Maher, Mike Haverkamp.

Approval of the minutes from the March 9, 2015, meeting was deferred.

Public Input: Dotti Maher said that as long as the Zoning Commission meeting is a public meeting, the public should have the right to speak after individual points and not just at times set aside for “public input”. Yeggy said the Commission would ask for public input at other times, particularly where members of the public had special knowledge about a topic before the Commission, as circumstances dictate and warrant.

Discussion of Sensitive Slopes and Water Runoff: The Commission discussed zoning regulations related to sensitive slopes and water runoff.

- Wilson said he had contacted officials with the City of Iowa City regarding Iowa City regulations. He will report further at the next meeting.
- Other features to consider in discussion zoning regulations
 - Wetlands – defined by type of soil
 - Prairie remnants
 - Woodlands
 - Archeological sites
- Issues for University Heights regulations compared with those in Iowa City and Johnson County
 - University Heights seeks to apply regulations to much smaller scale.
 - Nearly all of University Heights has been developed.
- Yeggy and Gahn will meet with Rick Havel at Johnson County GIS to gather additional information.
- Wilson said one map created for University Heights by Johnson County GIS appears to be the type of map that triggers further review – request for additional, more-specific information.
- Wilson noted that some jurisdictions’ regulations are triggered not only by grade of slope but also by area under consideration.
- Yeggy suggested that perhaps GIS could produce a general map for a lot showing runoff.
- A suggestion was made that the City require applicant to obtain and include with application some map from GIS showing contours.
- Wilson also noted that “lot coverage” restrictions may implicate water runoff issues because of impervious surfaces.
- Gahn noted City of Dexter info circulated by Yeggy as a way of introducing restrictions to community.
- A suggestion was made to have Building Permit Applications require a depiction of lot coverage.
- Gahn reviewed Ordinance No. 128 and compared with similar provisions in Johnson County (No. 04-26-07-Z1) and the City of Iowa City (Nos. 14-51-8, 14-K6-1).
 - Possible changes to the University Heights Ordinance
 - “Purposes” (see Johnson County Ordinance for section number references)
 - 1 - Protect and preserve areas of environmental concern (sensitive area)
 - 3 – encourage good stewardship of the land
 - 4 –land use plan – maybe this should be omitted?
 - 5 – prevent injury and damage from natural hazards (flood, erosion)
 - 6 – prevent and minimize degradation of surface and groundwater
 - 7, 8, 9 may not be applicable to University Heights
 - “Definintions” – Ordinance No. 128
 - A - Ghan suggested changing Ordinance 128(A) and (B) to say “Development Plan”
 - B – looks good.
 - Alphabetize or keep in order of increasing slope, etc.?

- A-F look good and percentages are in sync with Johnson County and City of Iowa City.
- Should we add definitions?
 - Prairie lands
 - Prairie remnants – require buffer?
 - Archeological
 - Should these definitions be governed at all by size (e.g., 0.3 acres of contiguous prairie remnant)
 - Johnson County does this
 - One idea is if you get small enough, you don't have a viable ecosystem to protect.
 - Woodlands
 - University Heights defines based on not less than 2 acres
 - Others define by number of trees of particular diameter; perhaps University Heights should include “grove of trees – 10 or more trees each having a diameter of 12 inches or more with combined canopy covering at least 50% of the area covered by the trees”. (See Iowa City “definitions”).
 - Suggestion to strike “woodlands” and replace with “Grove of Trees” from Iowa City definition.
 - Maybe “Prairie Remnants” definition – see Johnson County.
 - Add “Buffer” definition? Only applicable to new construction? Look at Iowa City’s definition (but does it apply to individual lots?).
 - Include 2’ for 50’ of rise – see COIC.
 - Based upon what’s available on the subject lot?
 - If require specified dimension (e.g, 50’), then how establish a buffer on another’s property?
 - Include “cutback caving”?
 - See Johnson County ordinance
 - Is this applicable to University Heights?
 - Soils survey will determine if we need something further
 - Endangered species
 - Is University Heights too small for this
 - Do county, state, and federal laws cover this?
 - See Johnson County definition references other regulations:
 - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 - Iowa Department of Natural Resources
 - “Excessive slopes”
 - need more info to see what we have in University Heights
 - Hydric Soils – see Johnson County
 - Soil that is permanently or seasonally saturated by water resulting in anaerobic conditions
 - See USACE hydric soils list
 - “Sensitive Area”
 - See definition from Johnson County
 - Perhaps make this Section 3 of Ordinance No. 128
 - Move ‘steep’, ‘critical’, ‘protected’ to that section
 - Look at further definitions from Johnson County
 - Blue lines, floodways –
 - USGS survey shows this?
 - What about smaller areas?
 - Drainageway?
 - How to define – ask Rick Havel, Bob Miklo
 - “Land disturbance activity” – see Windsor Heights
 - Anything that increases storm water runoff (?)
 - Applies to smaller areas (not just 2+ acres) – 3,000sqft

Further Public Input: none.

The meeting was adjourned **by unanimous consent at 9:00 p.m.**

Attest: Steven E. Ballard, City Attorney
(substituting for City Clerk)

Approved: Pat Yeggy, Chairperson