

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

Secretary Tyler Avis called the meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission to order at 12:00 p.m. on January 29, 2021.

ROLL CALL: Adelberg __P__, Duke__P__, McGriff__P__, Baumann_P__,
Briscoe__A__, Stewart__A__, Stutz__P__.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM OCT 6, 2020: Adelberg made a motion to approve the minutes. Baumann seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Adelberg made a motion to approve the agenda. McGriff seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

COMMUNICATIONS: Mr. Avis explained that there was a large amount of communications received related to the rezoning request. A letter was submitted and signed by over 146 individuals in opposition to the proposed rezoning, and within that letter were 10 major items related to why they felt the rezoning request should not be recommended for approval to City Council. Avis read the 10 items as well as responses to each one of the items after conducting research on each one. The 10 items and those responses will be attached to these minutes. Avis then read two other letters that were in opposition to the request, and then read two letters that were submitted that were in favor of the rezoning request.

OLD BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Commission members to vote on Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson.

Adelberg nominated herself to be vice-chairperson. McGriff seconded the motion. Motion Passes Unanimously.

McGriff nominated Stewart to be Chairperson. Adelberg seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Review an application from Clyde and Kay Seery to consider a request to rezone all associated property commonly addressed as 1141 Penrose St from a mix of R-2: Two-Family Residential and C-1: General Commercial to C-1: General Commercial.

Mr. Avis read the staff report as attached as well as an additional attachment after conducting research on the site as well as similar rental apartments within the community. Avis concluded by stating that he would recommend approval to the Commission on the matter, but that there are issues raised by the neighboring property owners, and it shall be up to the Commission to determine if the issues can be addressed for a recommendation to approve the request by the Commission to Council can be made.

Wyllys Mann, representing MVAH Partners, conducted a presentation about their company, and discussed goals they would have related to creating a community within this development and detailed the reasoning for the placement of the building at this site and the amenities that would be available not only to residents but neighboring property owners as well. He addressed concerns that were raised about the issue of storm water runoff, indicating that a retention basin would be installed to collect all storm-water runoff from the building and parking lot, and that an overflow connection would be installed to the existing City storm-water located near 6th and Penrose. He also addressed screening and lighting concerns, indicating that all elements of the site would meet all of Grinnell's regulations. Mr. Mann then went on to address why they have chosen Grinnell for this type of development, highlighting results of the recently completed Housing Market Assessment, and touching on the quality of the building related to both its construction and management. He finished by highlighting the timeframe for both final plan review and construction, stating they would hope to be welcoming residents to move in during the spring of 2023.

Ms. Duke asked if the developer has made any approach to the neighborhood to discuss the proposal before asking for the rezoning. Mr. Mann stated that they hadn't and instead hoped that the forum provided by the Planning and Zoning commission would be able to address any concerns that exist.

Ms. Baumann asked about the reasoning for 51 units at the site when the housing study stated that there was currently a need for 27 senior rental units. Mr. Mann explained that the report stated that the report indicated seniors as being age 62+, but their facility includes individuals ages 55+ so they believe there is a pocket of individuals not encompassed by the report.

Ms. McGriff stated there is a difference in this type of housing vs Mayflower or Seeland Park where they have a buy-in and are a continuing care provider with associated monthly fees, and asked how this development would impact existing senior rental living facilities. Mr. Mann stated that there is a demand for all types of housing so he doesn't believe any existing facilities would see a huge increase in vacancies, and he believes that the demand will grow over time leading to little vacancy in this unit as well. He stated that although it is likely they would steal residents from competitors within Grinnell, he doesn't believe there will be a large number overall of vacancies because of the demand for this and all types of housing.

Mrs. Adelberg stated that it seems the neighborhood has a viewpoint of 'not in my back yard' for this type of development, and asked Mr. Mann if there is anything he believes they can do to ease those concerns. Mr. Mann stated that they had been informed of the points from the opposition, and he believes that the concerns can all be addressed as they are all either operational, functional, or financial issues that can be worked through to achieve a feeling of good standing with those that have concerns.

Ms. Baumann asked about R-3 vs C-1 and what is being proposed as it relates to this project. Mr. Avis explained the zoning regulations for the City, and explained the limitations of each, and highlighted the main difference between R-3 and C-1 is that very limited commercial uses are allowed in R-3 but all types of residential uses are, and that the primary difference related

to this project would be an increase of 7 feet of the side yard going from C-1 to R-3, which the applicant would not have any issue with in complying of.

Ms. Adelberg asked what the reasoning was for recommending the site be rezoned to C-1 vs R-3. Mr. Avis explained that adjoining property, and a portion of the site is currently zoned as C-1, and there aren't any properties adjoining that are currently zoned as R-3, but that doesn't mean that this site couldn't be. He further explained that the Comp Plan actually would promote an R-3 district surrounded by single-family homes or an R-1 District, so that individuals residing within an apartment building could enjoy the same benefits that typically exist in a single-family residential neighborhood.

Ms. McGriff clarified that they are to determine if this site should be allowed to construct an apartment complex. Mr. Avis stated yes.

Ms. Adelberg asked about commercial types of uses if they recommend the zoning to change to C-1. Avis explained that if the zoning were to be changed but the applicant doesn't go forward with this project, it could allow uses such as a Kohls, Target, or car dealership to be located there.

Ms. Adelberg asked if now is the time for the public to speak and Mr. Avis stated yes.

An individual named Bubba expressed that he first heard of the proposal a week ago, and feels the developer should have reached out to them before the meeting. He also stated that if the zoning changes, that could allow a massage parlor to be located here, and the proposed development would invade his privacy, and where the snow- runoff would go is concerning. He finished by saying he doesn't want this development in his backyard.

An individual with Bubba stated he believes there are other uses this property could be utilized for that make more sense. Bubba continued to ask if this development would create jobs for local people, and if not then what is the benefit. The individual with Bubba stated he doesn't know a lot about the project.

Cynthia Hansen at 1833 6th Ave stated she was concerned that City Staff has zoned these properties as commercial as they are all single-family homes. She stated that there are 15 properties in this block, and this development would add 51 units. She stated that Mr. Avis summarized the letter she submitted, and that she doesn't want to reread it, but even though the Commission members have received and reviewed it she wanted to highlight the issues related to water run-off, the retention pond is located in two separate locations, and they haven't completed a survey of the site yet. She continued that her lot has water that pools on it when snow melts or there is heavy rainfall, and there isn't enough information to determine what will happen. She continued to discuss the intersection of 6th and Penrose, stating that she had witnessed multiple accidents, noting 3 she had witnessed and 2 she hadn't. She continued to state that people turning is typically the issue related to speed, and they don't see the oncoming traffic. She continued to explain that the increased traffic from windmill installations among other things and mixing in more senior drivers would lead to increased accidents. Hansen continued to state that a traffic light needs to be installed at 6th and Penrose now as well as crosswalks because of the interest Ahrens Park brings. Hansen continued to state she is upset

and angry that Mr. Avis stated a traffic study is not warranted, believing that he is unaware how residents of this development would access downtown or any other services, and that requiring seniors to go through the intersection of 6th and Penrose with it being so unsafe warrants the request to be denied.

Nicholas Miguel of 1132 Ann St stated that this neighborhood has been neglected. Stating that the neighborhood should be rezoned to reflect what its uses currently are. He stated that 5 years ago he requested a stop sign at 7th and Ann, and after a traffic study was completed showing the intersection required no control devices, he thought that was mad since there is a school and popular ice cream shop a block away. Mr. Miguel continued that is it a good thing that it is likely the only people that use the intersection are those that live near it. He continued that 51 units would mean that a lot of people unfamiliar with the intersection would begin to be living near it and would put a lot of people, including himself, in danger. He finished saying that he is afraid the project will continue to go through and the issues related to zoning and traffic won't be addressed.

Jason Penyich of 1825 6th Ave stated that the people in the community are not opposed to residential buildings being added to it, but that the C-1 zoning opens things up for uses that they wouldn't want. He continued to state the number of proposed units are more than they are comfortable with.

Julie Beach of 1817 6th Ave stated she has lived in this area almost all her life, and that she is very proud of the community of Grinnell. She stated that the current owners are not from Grinnell but live in Iowa City, and the developer is also not from Grinnell. She stated that Mr. Avis hasn't listened to the neighbors' concerns in making a recommendation for the Commission to approve of the rezoning request. She stated that this is a single-family residential neighborhood regardless of the zoning and the Comp Plan shows that. She continued that traffic in the area is high, and adding 51 housing units would add to the issues present. She continued that the services the residents would need are not within walking distance. She asked why or who is promoting development in Grinnell for housing when there are apartments for rent in Grinnell, and that landlords have available apartments, and the people that commute to Grinnell do so because they have spouses that work elsewhere or they farm, or because of their location for where they live, and that senior affordable housing won't bring them to Grinnell. She stated she is concerned with who will manage them, believing that if it was Mayflower or Seeland Park she would not be concerned or worried. She asked if an environmental impact study has been completed, and if these units cannot be filled with 55 and older residents, what limits them from being changed to allow them to be rented to anybody.

Mr. Mann stated that an environmental study has not been completed yet but it will be because of their funding sources, as well as the restriction of the ages of the residents because of the Iowa Finance Authority's regulations. He continued that he appreciates the feedback, and has no intention of developing anything other than residential housing, and would be open to requesting the zoning be changed to R-3 to protect the neighborhood, and hopes to be able to continue a discussion with the neighborhood to address the needs and concerns.

Patrick Hansen of 1833 6th Ave stated he was asked what the vision was for the property if they were going to oppose the rezoning was by the City, and that the neighborhood wants R-2

zoning, and for their properties to be rezoned from C-1 to R-2, and that the neighborhood doesn't want R-3 zoning. He continued that almost 150 signatures from the community were submitted, and the commission should look at who is on that list, and that this is not just a not in my back yard issue. He continued that the largest complex in comparison to this one is half the size, and should constitute a traffic study. He continued in asking if the City and taxpayer should write a blank check to the developers of the project, to install a traffic light or sidewalks for this area, and a crosswalk should be installed at 6th and Ann.

Ms. Adelberg asked if the motion should be tabled to address the concerns of the neighborhood, and asked the commission members what their thoughts are.

Ms. McGriff stated that she would recommend to deny the request and that the City should look to rezone the properties from C-1 to R-2, as well as look into the safety concerns of 6th and Penrose and install a traffic signal at that location, control the intersection of 7th and Ann, and install crosswalks.

Ms. Duke stated that she would also be reluctant to recommend a zoning change on an area of town where the nearby community is totally against it.

Ms. Baumann stated that the City needs to do more to address the concerns not only in this neighborhood but community wide.

Ms. Adelberg stated she concurs with everything said, and asked if there was a motion to table the matter or if they should vote.

Mr. Avis recommended the Commission should likely vote to deny the request for the reasons stated.

Ms. Duke made a motion to deny the requests for the reasons stated by the commission members as discussed with Ms. McGriff stating the reasons being that the City should look to rezone the properties from C-1 to R-2, as well as look into the safety concerns of 6th and Penrose and install a traffic signal at that location, control the intersection of 7th and Ann, and install crosswalks crossing 6th Avenue. Ms. McGriff seconded the motion. The Commission unanimously voted to approve the motion to deny the rezoning request.

3. Continue discussion on potential new zoning district for Downtown Grinnell.

Mr. Avis explained that staff is compiling information to present, and that scheduling work sessions to review the findings in order to make a recommendation to City Council will likely begin the end of February.

ADJOURN: Baumann moved that the meeting be adjourned. Duke seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 2:03 p.m.

STAN STEWART, CHAIRPERSON

ATTEST:

SECRETARY

