

City of Mayer
Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, April 11, 2024

Commission Members Present: Chairperson Tom Stifter, Commissioner Les Hahn, Commissioner Michael Sommerfeld, Commissioner Sarah Strand and City Council Liaison Nikki McNeilly.

Commission Members Absent: None.

Others Present: Brad Quaas.

Staff Present: City Administrator Nicholas Johnson and Consulting Planner, John Anderson of Municipal Development Group, LLC.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER.

Meeting called to order at 6:31 PM by Chairperson Tom Stifter.

ADOPT AGENDA.

City Administrator Johnson added an agenda item regarding a discussion on filling the two vacant Planning Commission seats and whether a change should be made to reduce the number of Planning Commission seats from seven to five. A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Hahn and seconded by Commissioner Strand. Motion carried 5/0.

ELECTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSON FOR 2024.

A motion to elect Chairperson Stifter to remain as Chairperson for 2024 was made by Council Liaison McNeilly and seconded by Commissioner Sommerfeld. Motion carried 5/0. A motion to elect Commissioner Sommerfeld as Vice-Chairperson for 2024 was made by Commissioner Strand and seconded by Council Liaison McNeilly. Motion carried 5/0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

A motion to approve the September 5, 2023 Planning Commission minutes was made by Council Liaison McNeilly and seconded by Commissioner Sommerfeld. Motion carried 5/0.

PUBLIC HEARING - A VARIANCE TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF OFF-STREET PARKING SPACES REQUIRED FOR A COMMERCIAL/RETAIL USE FROM THE REQUIRED THIRTY SPACES TO EIGHT SPACES.

Planning Consultant Anderson presented the information for the variance to the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Hahn asked about parking on the west of the building on concrete area.

Planning Consultant Anderson stated that since this area is next to Ash Avenue, which is State Highway 25 and under the authority of the Minnesota Department of Transportation, that direct access would not be allowed and if access was to be allowed it would have to get approval through the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

Chairperson Stifter asked if a drive through could be allowed along the west side of the building.

Planning Consultant Anderson stated that it could be possible but that approval would still be needed from the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

Brad Quaas asked about the off-street parking count only showing eight off-street parking stalls but that there are thirteen off-street parking stalls located south of the building.

Planning Consultant Anderson stated that five of the stalls are located partially on the property and partially in the 4th Street right of way and therefore those five stalls cannot be fully counted since they are partially in the right of way. Due to that, the variance was based on only eight off-street parking stalls being provided rather than thirteen even though those five additional off-street parking stalls will most likely be used by the proposed commercial establishment. He stated that to be counted as an off-street parking space the stall has to be located completely on the property and not in or partially in the public right of way.

Planning Consultant Anderson discussed the proposed conditions for the site plan and for the variance. He did state the landscaping condition required five over-story trees to be planted on site or in some other public location if there was not room to plant on site.

Brad Quaas stated that he is proposed to place landscaping on the south side of the building as shown on the off-street parking plan and that he would do planter pots.

At 6:51 PM Chairperson Stifter opened the public hearing.

At 6:52 PM Chairperson Stifter closed the public hearing since there was no public comment.

A motion was made by Council Liaison McNeilly and seconded by Commissioner Strand to approve the variance request. Motion carried 5/0.

A SITE PLAN REVIEW FOR A NEW COMMERCIAL/RETAIL USE IN AN EXISTING STRUCTURE KNOWN AS THE OLD FIRE STATION LOCATED AT 400 ASH AVENUE NORTH.

A motion was made by Commissioner Sommerfeld and seconded by Commissioner Strand to approve the site plan with a change to condition number 5, landscaping, that allowed the proposed landscaping with planter pots to replace the five over-story tree requirement. Motion carried 5/0.

VACANT PLANNING COMMISSION SEAT DISCUSSION.

City Administrator Johnson stated that there are two vacant seats on the Planning Commission at this time and that he is looking for direction on whether or to advertise to fill the seats or look at the option to reduce the number of Planning Commission seats from seven to five. He stated that every board and the City Council in Mayer consists of five seats except the Planning Commission consists of seven seats. He stated that as of this date the open seats have not been advertised to be filled.

Council Liaison McNeilly stated that she would like to advertise to fill the seats and if there is no interest then the City could look at reducing the number of seats from seven to five.

Commissioner Hahn stated that the Planning Commission was started in 1976 and that he was part of that process and at that time they allowed residents of the neighboring townships to be on the Planning Commission.

City Administrator Johnson stated that the City code still allows residents of the neighboring townships to be members on the Planning Commission.

It was then asked if a business owner who is a non-resident of Mayer or the surrounding townships could be a member on the Planning Commission.

City Administrator Johnson stated that it only says residents of the City and neighboring townships are listed in the City code as being allowed to be members of the Planning Commission and that it does not reference business owners who are non-residents.

NEXT MEETING.

Next scheduled meeting is Tuesday, May 7, 2024.

COMMISSIONERS REPORT.

Commissioner Hahn asked about storage containers and if there was anything in the Code addressing them. He stated that there are some storage containers being used throughout the City and that they are different colors and can viewed from the street.

Planning Consultant Anderson stated that storage containers are typically looked at as outdoor storage and that under sections 152.090 Outdoor Storage and 152.091 Screening in the zoning ordinance for Mayer, there is language that addresses screening of outdoor storage and that it needs to be screened 100% from neighboring properties.

Commissioner Hahn brought up the tree requirement for properties in the C-2 Central Business District and if the tree requirement should be removed.

Planning Consultant Anderson stated that years back the landscaping planting requirement for the C/I Commercial/Industrial District was removed from the zoning ordinance and that if the City felt the tree requirement should be removed it is something that could be looked at.

ADJOURNMENT.

A motion was made by Council Liaison McNeilly and seconded by Commissioner Strand to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 PM. Motion carried 5/0.