

City of Excelsior  
Hennepin County, Minnesota

Minutes  
Planning Commission

Monday, February 24, 2020

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Wallace called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Wallace, DiLorenzo, Hersman, Holste, Noll

Commissioners Absent: Craig, Harrison

Also Present: City Planner Becker and City Attorney Staunton

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) Planning Commission Meeting of January 27, 2020

Motion by DiLorenzo, seconded by Hersman, to approve the Planning Commission meeting minutes of January 27, 2020 as amended. Motion carried 5/0.

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS

**a) *Residential District Ordinance Amendments***

Holste felt that the new numbers were much more in line and fit the Floor Area Ratios (FAR) of the homes that were considered good examples in the 2018 survey. Wallace discussed the requirement that porches be 50% open in order to be exempted from Floor Area Ratio measurements. Noll and Hersman felt that only open porches should be exempted. Direction to strike the language that detailed porches need to be at least 50% open at the perimeter. Noll wanted to clarify if the exception for off-street loading facilities included carports. Wallace suggested that "unroofed" be added to clarify that carports were included in FAR calculations.

The proposed FAR calculations were discussed. DiLorenzo wanted to see more examples of historic homes within the City to provide additional context for the proposed FAR. Wallace opened the public hearing.

Sarah Mullaney, 128 Third Street, asked clarifying questions regarding FAR. She asked why there was a sliding scale proposed for different sized lots.

Mark Brabec, 127 West Lake Street, points out that over half of the homes in the table do not meet the proposed FAR calculations, which would mean that all of these homes would require a redesign.

Dan Brattland, 6 Third Street, wondered why building and lot coverage and height wasn't enough regulation and why FAR was needed.

Wallace closed the public hearing. DiLorenzo reiterated that over half of the properties in the comparison table did not meet the proposed FAR. Wallace felt uncomfortable with the numbers, as some of the homes that were deemed as properties with greatest concern were meeting the proposed FAR calculations.

Noll motioned to move the item to Council with additional addresses as suggested by DiLorenzo as requested by the Commission added to the comparison table, seconded by Hersman. Motion carried 5-0.

The requirement that a non-conforming structure cannot be expanded to an extent exceeding 50 percent of the market value of a home was discussed. It was felt that this could incentivize tear downs and rebuilds.

The definition for a flat roof was discussed. Wallace suggested seeing examples of roofs with various slopes in order to better visualize this.

A possible requirement that the front façade of a home faces the primary abutting street was discussed. There was discussion on whether or not this should be a requirement, as doors shouldn't be limited to only the front entrance. It was also noted that it is hard to define primary entrance.

Four-sided architecture was discussed, and Noll questioned if a lack of four-sided architecture was being experienced in the City. Hersman felt that there were some projects in progress that were not

consistent in building materials and styles. Wallace suggested that draft language be added to the ordinance to be brought to a future meeting for discussion.

Tree preservation was discussed, and the Commission asked that examples of tree preservation ordinances from other cities should be brought to a future meeting. Becker also stated that there already existed provisions for tree protection within the City's ordinance.

Stormwater Management was discussed, and it was questioned why additions and new construction that is within the footprint did not require a Best Management Practice to be installed. Staunton suggested that the City Engineer attend the meeting to answer any clarifying questions.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

***a) Draft Residential Review Board Ordinance and Good Neighbor Guidelines***

Becker presented the report. Holste wanted to know what the purpose of a review board would be if a proposed home met all zoning standards. DiLorenzo felt that there was some redundancy with the zoning standards and the review board and questioned why the Heritage Preservation Commission would be involved. He felt that it added one more layer and complication. He appreciates the Good Neighbor Guidelines and believes that they set forth good criteria for review.

DiLorenzo asked if the Residential Review Board Research Committee (RRBRC) had considered implementing the Good Neighbor Guidelines with other bodies in the City. Wallace clarified that the thought process was that the Planning Commission would have to go to two meetings per month, and the RRBRC thought it would be a better idea to create a separate body. DiLorenzo asked Staunton if this review board would protect the City from future lawsuits. Staunton believes that the review board and the Good Neighbor Guidelines certainly set forth more clear standards to define compatibility than what is currently in the Zoning Code. DiLorenzo asked how far and to what degree the City wants to limit a property owner's right to build. Wallace clarified that the RRBRC recommended that the review board would be an 18-month experiment. Holste felt that it would be a positive to have non-members of the community on the review board. While this was not a public hearing, Wallace opened the meeting up for the public to speak.

Brattland was concerned with how the review board would affect selling a house.

Minutes

Planning Commission

February 24, 2020

Page 4 of 4

Lance Black, 274 Lake Street, suggested that the ordinances that were adopted 18 months ago go into effect on a number of properties before a review board is put into place. He feels that the process is going too quickly.

Peter Hartwich, 186 George Street, would like to look at the review board as an ambassador to a permit applicant.

Mullaney was intrigued with the idea of FAR and would be intimidated by the review board process.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Holste, seconded by Hersman, to adjourn at 9:25 pm. Motion carried 5/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Becker  
Planning Director

DRAFT