

MINUTES
BLOOMINGTON PLANNING COMMISSION and ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
JOINT MEETING
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2019 4:00 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL
109 EAST OLIVE STREET
BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. David Stanczak; Mr. John Protzman; Mr. Justin Boyd; Mr. Mark Muehleck; Mr. Thomas Kreiger; Mr. Tyson Mohr; Ms. Megan McCann; Chairperson Megan Headean.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Kevin Suess; Mr. Eric Penn

ZBA MEMBERS: Mr. Terry Ballantini, Chairperson Victoria Harris.

ZBA MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Michael Rivera Jr, and Mr. Richard Vitengruber, Mr. Tyler Noonan

OTHERS PRESENT: Ms. Katie Simpson, City Planner; Ms. Casey Weeks, Assistant City Planner; Mr. George Boyle, Assistant Corporate Council; Mr. Bob Mahr, Community Development Director.

CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Headean called the meeting to order at 4:05 PM. Ms. Simpson called roll. With ten members present, the Commission established a quorum.

ELECTION OF MEETING CHAIR: A motion was made to nominate Megan Headean as Chair, Ms. Victoria Harris seconded, approved by voice vote 10-0-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Greg Koos, existing conditions report 25% of single family housing has been converted to multi-family dwellings within R-3B zoning. Residents express a desire to enhance and preserve existing character. The comprehensive plan from 2015 states preserving established older neighborhoods links residents to history while maintaining affordable housing options in the community. The condition of the homes in the study ranges from pristinely preserved mansions and blighted deteriorated homes there are opportunities for tear down and infill in the area. The condition variants that have the R-3B designation relates to active neighborhood preservation. In 1985 there was no difference in blight between the West and East side of Grove Street. Mr. Koos documented and surveyed all the homes along Grove Street for the National Register nomination. Circumstances for West Grove Street and East Grove Street were the same with the exception of one variant. East Grove Street was designated a historic district with a community engaged in preservation. The goals of the R-3B zoning regarding housing and housing density are now being met by residential housing in existing historic buildings. The High School conversion on Washington is converting a historic building into 48 low income senior apartments. The State Farm building development is bringing 240 apartments in a historic building in the central city. The need for dense housing is in the Central Business

District. Reusing buildings prevents more carbon output contributing to climate change and can help us achieve carbon reduction. There is an immediate carbon savings associated with reuse and renovation as compared with new construction. There is a need for the Historic Preservation Commission and the City of Bloomington to come together and create a city wide preservation plan.

Brad Williams, President of Emmitt's Grove Neighborhood Association, would like see the zoning put back to R-2 rather than R-3B.

Clayton works at Prairie Signs speaking on the proposed sign ordinance. The sign ordinance may create a hardship on businesses and may choose somewhere other than Bloomington to start a business. Hold time for message centers is proposed for 2 minutes which is too long. The reduction in allowed sign space is too much.

REGULAR AGENDA:

- A. Presentation by and discussion with Carly Petersen AICP Senior Associate and Jackie Wells, Associate, Houseal Lavigne Associates regarding the sign code update.

Ms. Carly Petersen addressed the commission that there is no action at this meeting. This is an informative presentation on a proposed sign ordinance. Changes include making the codes in compliance with Reed v. Town of Gilbert Supreme Court ruling regulating freedom of speech regarding signs.

Ms. Jackie Wells addresses the commission with the draft of the sign ordinance to allow for input and comment. Downtown sign code regulations are driven by the comprehensive plan. Communities are rewriting their sign regulations due to the Reed v. Town of Gilbert Supreme Court Case. There is a sign survey online for residents to give input. Signs may no longer be regulated by content.

One square foot of sign area per linear foot of frontage. Maximum sign area for a pole sign is 200 square feet reduced from 300 square feet. Wall signs recommended to be 5% of façade area. Pole signs are proposed not to be permitted downtown. Sandwich signs are only permitted downtown.

Electric message signs are only allowed on monument signs. No dissolving or fading on the electronic signs.

Input from businesses includes allowing pole signs, the proposed regulations allow for pole signs and a taller height than other communities. There is currently a sign survey online along with the proposed ordinance allowing for comments and feedback.

The messages on the electronic message boards would have to adhere to the new code following adoption. Community Development receives approximately five to six sign complaints a week.

Residences are limited to two yard signs.

Are vehicle wraps considered signs? Page 25 of the ordinance refers to parked vehicles that are only used to sit in a right of way and not regularly operated.

Have there been examples of animation related to waving flags on electronic message boards? Are there statistics related to accidents caused by message board animation? Two minutes does not seem to be enough time allowed for changeable copy. Animation cannot be regulated by content and make exceptions to waving flags over other animation.

- B.** Presentation by and discussion with Carly Petersen AICP Senior Associate and Jackie Wells, Associate, Houseal Lavigne Associates regarding on the R-3B zoning and density analysis.

Preliminary policy direction on R-3B zoned areas are being looked at due to feedback from residents desiring a residential zoning with less density. In the study area there are 223 properties are currently zoned as R-3B around downtown. 85% were built as single family houses, 8% built as duplexes, 7% as multi-family dwellings. Approximately 30% of single family detached homes have been converted to multi-family. R-3B currently allows a maximum density of 70 dwelling units per acre which was the most concern among residents. Existing policy approaches regeneration on the west side of Grove and preservation on the East side of Grove areas of R-3B.

The consultants are looking for ideas and comments to revise code to reflect existing scale and character allowing housing options reducing maximum density and height to less than 70 feet. We are looking only at the properties in the study area around downtown. The consultants are not recommending the R-2 zoning since it does not reflect the existing housing variety that is available.

Commission members are interested in preserving the character of the neighborhoods. There is also concern regarding the economic viability and size of some of the large single family residences. Parking is a concern with single family housing converted to multi-family. Expansion of rental regulations and inspections could help control conversions. The consultants are exploring opportunities to encourage preserving the historic integrity of existing structures.

City staff and consultants will gather commission members' feedback in order to draft language to reflect ideas and views regarding R-3B zoning in the study area around downtown.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS: None

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 pm by voice vote, motioned by Mr. Boyd.

Respectfully submitted,
Casey Weeks
Assistant City Planner