

MINUTES

September 5, 2017

Chairman Smith called the City Plan Commission Meeting to order at 7 p.m. in the City Council Chamber. The following Commission members were in attendance:

Michael Smith, Chairman
Kenneth Mason, P.E.
Mark Motte
Lynne Harrington
Gene Nadeau
Robert Strom
Kimberly Bittner
Fred Vincent

Also present were: Peter Lapolla, Planning Director
Stephen Marsella, Esq. Assistant City Solicitor
Lynn Furney, Senior Planner
J. Resnick, Clerk

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon motion made by Mr. Motte and seconded by Ms. Harrington, the Commission unanimously voted (8/0) to approve the August 1, 2017, Plan Commission Minutes.

ZONING BOARD OF REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS

CRAIG FREEMAN (OWN/APP) has filed an application for permission to build a 936 +/- s.f. single family dwelling with restricted lot width, frontage, area, and side setback at 0 Beckwith Street AP 6/2, lot 318, area 4,000 +/- s.f. zone B-1. Applicant seeks relief per Section 17.92.010 Variance, Section 17.20.120 Schedule of Intensity.

Upon motion made by Mr. Motte and seconded by Mr. Strom, the Commission unanimously voted (8/0) to continue this matter to the October 3, 2017, Plan Commission meeting.

SYLVIA A. BERNIER (OWN) AND UNITED HOME CONSTRUCTION CO., INC. (APP) have filed an application for permission to build a 1,288 +/- SF single family home with restricted lot width and frontage at **0 Rose Street**. AP 8/1, lot 913, area 6,250 +/- SF, zoned B-1. Applicant seeks relief per Section 17.92.010 Variance, Section 17.20.120 Schedule of Intensity.

This application was reviewed for conformance with criteria (3) of R.I.G.L. 45-24-41 (c) "*Standards for Variance*" which reads as follows: "*That the granting of the requested variance will not alter the general character of the surrounding area or impair the intent or purpose of the zoning ordinance or the comprehensive plan upon which the ordinance is based.*"

Findings of Fact:

1. The City Clerk's Title Cards states the owner's name is Sylvia A. Donahue.
2. The 2010 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map designates this area of the City as Single/Two Family Residential less than 10.89 units per acre.
3. The lot exceeds the required area for a single family by 250 sq. ft.
4. The applicant's lot has 50 Ft. frontage, where 60 ft. is required.
5. The six abutting developed single family lots to the north of the applicant's lot on the same side of the street, have frontages of 50'.
6. The four abutting developed lots to the south have frontages of 54'.
7. Thirteen abutting developed house lots across the street all have frontages of 50 ft.
8. The proposed 26 x 44 ft. house exceeds the required side and rear yard setbacks by 2 ft., 4 ft., and 34 ft.

Recommendation: Upon motion made by Mr. Vincent and seconded by Mr. Motte, the Commission unanimously voted (8/0) to forward a positive recommendation on this application to the Zoning Board for the following reasons:

1. The proposed residential density of 6.97 units per acre is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
2. The proposed single family will not alter the general character of the neighborhood that contains 19 single family houses on the street with frontages of 50 ft.

JESSIE HOLSTEIN (OWN / APP) has filed an application to convert an existing garage to a music studio with restricted side and rear setbacks at **343 Northup Street**, AP 2/4, lot 33, area 3,440 s.f., zoned B-1. Applicant seeks relief per Section 17.92.010 Variance, Section 17.20.120 Schedule of Intensity. This application was reviewed for conformance with criteria (3) of R.I.G.L. 45-24-41 (c) "*Standards for Variance*" which reads as follows: "*That the granting of the requested variance will not alter the general character of the surrounding area or impair the intent or purpose of the zoning ordinance or the comprehensive plan upon which the ordinance is based.*"

Findings of Fact:

1. The 2010 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map designates this area of the City as Single/Two Family Residential.
2. The existing garage has a pre-existing 1'-7" rear yard setback, and a 1'-6" side yard setback, which currently does not conform to the required zoning 5' garage setbacks for side and rear yards.
3. The required setbacks for the proposed studio (living space) would be 8' side, and 20' rear.
4. The proposed conversion will add a full bathroom with shower, 4 roof skylights, picture window, and glass French doors.
5. The applicant stated that he will not be giving music lessons from this building.
6. The proposed use is not a home occupation.

Recommendation: The proposed music studio is not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map that designates this area for Residential Use, however, the Commission finds that converted living space with side and rear yard setbacks of less than 19" is insufficient. Upon motion made by Mr. Motte and seconded by Ms. Bittner the Commission voted (7/1 Ms. Harrington voted nay) to make no specific recommendation on this application to the Zoning Board.

PLANNING DIRECTOR TRANSITION

This being Lynn Furneys' last Plan Commission meeting, Chairman Smith and Mr. Vincent praised her work and expressed their best wishes on her retirement. ("She will be missed").

Mr. Lapolla explained that he will work the first few weeks of January, 2018, and then will use unused vacation time until his final retirement date of March 2, 2018. He stated that Lynn's replacement will not be hired until after the next planning director is hired so that it will be his/her choice as to who will fill the Senior Planner position.

Mr. Lapolla reviewed the hiring process and suggested the Plan Commission form a committee of five people (he will be one of the five) to comprise the "hiring committee". He stated that the position will be duly advertised in accordance with the City's Human Resources directors' guidance. Ms. Bittner suggested the position also be advertised on "Indeed", to which Mr. Vincent concurred. They stated that this website usually provides "high caliber" candidates.

Several members expressed concern with the salary to be advertised and felt that it was too low. Mr. Strom referred to a survey of State and Municipal employee salaries, stating that he has found that the City pay scale is lower than most other comparable cities for management employees. This matter will be discussed further.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion made by Mr. Motte and seconded by Mr. Strom, the Commission unanimously voted to adjourn at 7:50 p.m.

NEXT MEETING October 3, 2017 – City Council Chamber, 7 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Jason M. Pezzullo, AICP
Principal Planner/Administrative Officer