

MINUTES
MOUNT VERNON PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
MARCH 23, 2016

The Mount Vernon Planning and Zoning Commission met March 23, 2016 at Mount Vernon City Hall Council Chambers with the following members present: Truman Jordan, Trude Elliott, Rich Hileman, Richard Peterson, Matthew Nelson and Joan Burge. Absent: Jenna Wischmeyer. Also in attendance, Zoning Administrator, Matt Siders. Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Truman Jordan at 6:35 p.m.

1. Approval of Agenda and January 13 and February 10, 2016 minutes. These documents stand approved unless otherwise indicated by Commission members.
2. Open Forum: each citizen limited to 5 minutes per discussion item.
3. Discussion with James Moore regarding zoning and use types for his property at 616 1st Ave NE. Zoning Administrator, Matt Siders, explained that Mr. Moore had approached him regarding a couple of uses for the facility that did not fit with what was currently in the Mount Vernon Code and had asked to approach the Planning and Zoning Commission with this and some other issues up and down the corridor. Moore stated that his building is still listed as an iron factory but has not been that type of business for quite some time. He provided pictures of what the building looked like before he made the renovations and what it looks like now. Moore stated that in order to finish paying for the property without R.E.M. in the building, he needs to get a retail business in there. He has been approached by a few businesses but was unable to do anything due to retail not being allowed in that zone. He questioned whether Neal's would be considered retail due to the salt sales that take place and is in the same zone. Siders explained that this building is located in a Light Industrial Zone and retail is not permitted at all, not even with a Conditional Use Permit. Siders wondered if the timing of the Comprehensive Plan coming into fruition and being adopted by Council might be an opportunity to look at some use or zoning changes. Jordan asked Siders how he viewed the Neal's business and if it would be considered retail. Siders did not feel that retail was the primary aspect of the business. Hileman asked how long it had been since R.E.M. moved out and Moore said they had left the 1st of November. Moore said what was logical to him was to try and get some type of retail in the building. Hileman asked if there had been any interest from other types of businesses that would be allowed, such as telemarketing. Moore said there had not. Elliott said it was a very nice building if the right type of business were to move in there. Moore said he is looking for more options for the business. Siders said one type of business that would be allowed is "surplus sales" and Moore said he had talked with two different companies about this but it did not work out.

Jordan asked Moore if he had talked to the new City Administrator about all of this as it seemed that what he was dealing with was economic development for the town. Moore said that the City Administrator told him to come before Planning and Zoning first and if he didn't get the response that he wanted, he had the right to go to City Council. Jordan said that Moore was not the first person to come to Planning and Zoning with similar issues. It seems to him that the new Comprehensive Plan talks a lot about economic development and there is a lot of economic activity going on in the downtown area but felt that maybe it was time to think not only about the north end of town but all areas of town. Elliott said that it has always been important that the main street was always vital and she recalls that there was discussion about having all retail on main street. Peterson felt that the new Comprehensive Plan was an extension of the current plan. He went on to say that since 1994, we have done everything we can to protect retail sales and commercial development in the downtown area. There have been discussions about general commercial on the highway but nothing has ever become of them. Peterson said there is a long history of trying to figure out that retail needs to be in certain parts of town and needs to stay in certain parts of town and you can't start spreading it all over the place. Elliott said that with the new Comprehensive Plan, it is anticipated that the current zoning districts will be looked at and see if changes need to be made. Peterson said that there are currently 58 uses allowed in this particular district right now. Moore said that the only interest he has received on the building is retail.

Elliott felt that there wasn't really anything that Planning and Zoning could do right now. They will be looking at zoning and what is within the different zoning districts with the new Comprehensive Plan but that won't come for probably another year. In the meantime, she hopes Moore finds someone who is interested in the building that falls within the current plan. Elliott also said specifically what she hears Moore asking is for Planning and Zoning to make a change so he has more flexibility in how it is advertised. Moore agreed.

Siders asked Jordan how to proceed from here. Jordan said that the Planning and Zoning Commission would be looking at the current zoning once the Comprehensive Plan is passed by City Council. This will be done over the course of the summer. He went on to say that the new Comprehensive Plan puts a heavy emphasis on economic development and this would be important for owners of property all over town, especially properties on the NE side.

4. Zoning Administrator Report. Siders reported that three building permits have been issued.
5. Old Business.
6. New Business.

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Marsha Dewell
Deputy Clerk