

MINUTES
Mt. Vernon Planning and Zoning Commission
September 2, 2020

Due to the nature of the Novel Coronavirus, now known as Covid-19, and the restrictions placed on group gatherings by Governor Reynolds State of Public Health Disaster Emergency for Iowa, the Mount Vernon Planning and Zoning Commission believes it would be both impossible and impractical to hold a meeting in one location. With that being said, the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting was held via the Zoom application. The public was invited to participate via telephone by calling 1-312-626-6799 and prompted to enter the following information: Meeting ID: 816 5681 7354 and Password: 921588. If assistance was needed before the meeting began the public could contact City Administrator Chris Nosbisch at 319-359-8613. The following Commission members were remotely present: Truman Jordan, Matt Nelson, Trude Elliott, Jenna Wischmeyer, Joan Burge, Jay Willems and Rich Hileman. Also in attendance: City Administrator Chris Nosbisch, City Planner Laura Eckles, Christopher Shires from Confluence, resident Chris Carlson and resident and City Council member Deb Herrmann. Jordan called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

Approval of Agenda and June 10, 2020 minutes. These documents stand approved unless otherwise indicated by Commission members.

Open Forum: each citizen limited to 5 minutes per discussion item.

Public Hearing and Discussion and Consideration of the Hwy 30 By-Pass Plan.

Commission members were provided with an updated draft of the US Hwy 30 Master Plan prior to tonight's meeting. Christopher Shires of Confluence gave a presentation to update everyone on the long range plan for the Hwy 30 area. Items included in his presentation were an overview of the project itself, objectives, future land use plan component, the Master Plan itself, design guidelines and how they are implemented and the implementation plan of the entire document. If approved, this document would be creating a new overlay district within the Zoning code itself (US Hwy 30 Zoning Overlay District), adopting the future land use map/plan as a supplement to the current Comprehensive Plan and adopting the Design Guidelines section as a new overlay district within the code. As development within this area is either annexed or somebody comes in with a development plan, the City can then re-zone underneath this overlay district and have them follow the design guidelines. These are intended to be a supplement and build upon the City's existing Code. If approved tonight and commission members agree, a recommendation will be made that go before Council for review and adoption on September 21, 2020. City Administrator Chris Nosbisch explained that this will actually become a new overlay district and Article 5 of the Zoning Code. It is not actually rezoning but it is creating a new district.

Hileman felt that this plan would be changing the Comprehensive Plan and is inconsistent with it. Nosbisch explained that this is actually an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan and will be noted as such in the resolution approved by City Council. Elliott had concerns about affordable housing, senior housing and retail around the bypass. In regards to retail, she referenced page 86 of the proposed plan where it references “grocery store, pharmacy/drug store, office supplies store, bakery, clothing or department store, and similar retail use”. She objects to this and retail that is competitive with the uptown area. Hileman said this plan creates potential for retail in the area where it is not allowed by the current Comprehensive Plan. Hileman said he was ok in principle with some highway oriented retail out there but was not ok with opening it to “general merchandising” retail. He felt the bypass area was not the opportunity to have retail, but an opportunity to have more business park and light industrial. Elliott said she couldn’t vote for this the way it’s written because it’s completely against what she understood the City’s basic zoning would say. It is a concern of hers to keep the uptown area “main street” viable.

Jordan opened the public hearing at 7:52 p.m. Resident Chris Carlson, who is also a member of the Housing Commission, said the Comprehensive Plan says that any new residential development in the City of Mount Vernon would include a variety or mix of housing types and it would also include housing for all income levels. He wanted to make sure this plan was compatible with that. If he is understanding things correctly, he believes it does. Resident and City Council member, Deb Herrmann, encouraged commission members to think bigger than what Mount Vernon has historically thought. She went on to say, “We cannot survive in the future if we bind ourselves totally on what we’ve done in the past”. Jordan closed the public hearing at 8:11 p.m. Matt Nelson expressed his agreement with Hileman and Elliott regarding retail and felt the integrity of downtown is very important.

Elliott made a motion that the Planning and Zoning Commission recommend to the City Council the acceptance of the proposed US Hwy 30 Master Plan with the exception of the Zoning and Overlay land Use on page 86, delete the line under Personal and Consumer Service that says, “Retail sales (grocery store, pharmacy/drug store, office supplies store, bakery, clothing or department store, and similar retail use)”. Hileman seconded Elliott’s motion. Voting yes: Hileman, Elliott and Nelson. Voting no: Jordan, Burge, Wischmeyer and Willems. Motion fails.

Willems then made a motion that the Planning and Zoning Commission approve the Master Plan as discussed and presented tonight without any changes. Motion seconded by Burge. Voting yes: Jordan, Burge, Wischmeyer and Willems. Voting no: Hileman, Elliott and Nelson. Motion passes.

Public Hearing and Discussion and Consideration of final plat for Stonebrook 8th Addition to the City of Mount Vernon. Nosbisch said there were no changes from the preliminary plat. There are some items that need to be corrected on some of the

improvements but that would be addressed when a resolution was passed accepting those for public maintenance and operation. The City Engineer has also reviewed the documents. Jordan opened the public hearing at 8:36 p.m. and after hearing no public comment, closed the public hearing at 8:37 pm. Hileman made a motion to approve the final plat for Stonebrook 8th Addition to the City of Mount Vernon. Seconded by Elliott. All in favor. Motion passes.

Old Business.

New Business.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m. on September 2, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,
Marsha Dewell
Deputy Clerk