

Community Development Department

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MINUTES
PLAN COMMISSION
September 3, 2019 at 6:30 p.m.
City Council Chambers

Members Present: Bill Stuessel, Lisa Moody, Susan Reese, Michael Woolsey, Dan Toland, Craig Hinzman, Hal Watson
Members Absent: None
Staff Present: Amy Peterson, Sam Wessel, Brandy Howe, Crystal Raleigh
Applicants Present: Paul Gerrard, Brian Young
Others Present: Reta Sanford, Nalene Sanford, Mary Spindler
Council Present: Scott Morrissette

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting convened at 6:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

M/Woolsey, S/Moody – motion carried 7-0

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Reta Sanford, 532 N. 8th Street, spoke in opposition to the proposed rezoning of 805 E. Division Street with the reason being that if Bakken-Young moves out of that location, then it would be zoned to allow a commercial use to move in. She is not opposed to the funeral home, but all other commercial uses that could locate on that site.

Nalene Sanford, 524 N. 8th Street, spoke in opposition to the proposed rezoning of 805 E. Division Street. She is worried about the view down 8th Street from Division Street being limited by the proposed addition, which is a safety concern for her. She also noted concern that if rezoned, the setbacks for the property could become inadequate if right-of-way is acquired on Division Street for the jug handle project at Highway 35 and Division Street.

Mary Spindler, 96 E. Johnson Street, spoke in favor of the rezoning and project proposed at 1300 S. Main Street; however, she voiced her concerns regarding storm water issues on the site that have resulted in damage to her property.

Brian Young, owner of Bakken-Young at 805 E. Division Street, spoke in favor of the proposed rezoning of his property. He indicated that he and his wife have operated the funeral home at this location for 20 years. The building has been on the site since 1957 and is in need of substantial updates, including accessibility, elevators, bathrooms, meeting rooms, etc. He added that they do not intend to vacate the property anytime soon, which is evidenced by their planned improvements to the site.

Dan Ross, Ross & Associates, spoke in favor of the proposed rezoning of 805 E. Division Street. He added that the facility is in need of accessibility improvements. He also noted that the property has always been used for either a church or a funeral home, both of which are permitted in the B2 district, which is a logical zoning designation for that site.

CURRENT ITEMS

Consideration of a rezoning and future land use map amendment at 805 E. Division Street

Howe provided a presentation on the proposed rezoning. Ross & Associates, on behalf of Bakken-Young, requested a rezoning to enable construction of a 2,500 square foot expansion to their funeral home in order to modernize the facility and improve accessibility, energy efficiency, and operational flow. Howe described surrounding uses and provided a comparison between the district regulations for the existing versus proposed zoning and those needed for the proposed expansion. Howe noted that if approved, the rezoning would create a spot zoning but noted that limited, neighborhood-scale commercial in this location could benefit the neighborhood in that planning theory and practice now promote mixed-use areas. Howe compared the current and proposed future land use categories and noted that the “neighborhood commercial” category is recommended for consistency if the site is rezoned. Howe reported that notification letters were mailed to property owners within 300 feet of the site and noted that prior to the public comment period, no comments had been received regarding the rezoning. The next steps for the process involve City Council meetings on September 24 and October 8th and a fall submittal for development review, if the rezoning is approved.

Moody made a motion to approve PC Resolution 2019-05 recommending an amendment to the official zoning map and the future land use map of the Comprehensive Plan of the City of River Falls for 805 E. Division Street.

M/Moody, S/Reese - motion carried 7-0.

Consideration of a rezoning and future land use map amendment at 1300 S. Main Street

Howe provided a presentation on the proposed rezoning of 1300 S. Main Street. The City has been working with the Gerrard Corporation for 2+ years to come up with a development project for this site. The Gerrard are recipients of receive low income tax credits from WHEDA for the project.

The site is 1.6-acres that will be redeveloped as a net-zero, “green” building with 50-units of affordable housing, 10 of which will be reserved for disabled vets and/or physically impaired individuals. The project will require multiple approvals, including the creation of a TIF district, development agreement, and a planned unit development (PUD). Howe noted that a PUD will be necessary to provide zoning flexibility for setbacks and open space requirements. Howe described the surrounding uses, existing versus proposed zoning, noting that PUDs are not permitted in commercial districts, making the rezoning necessary for this project to move forward at this site. Howe compared the current and proposed future land use categories for the site and noted that the “high-density residential” category is recommended for the site if it is rezoned. Howe noted that the definition of “high-density residential” in the Comprehensive Plan is 8-12 dwelling units per acre and that there is no category that captures truly high-density development and suggested that this issue be reviewed in the future when the Comprehensive Plan is updated. The S. Main Street Corridor Study suggests that the site will redevelop, and that turning movements should be directed off of E. Johnson Street and that redevelopment projects should not impact the adjacent neighborhoods. Howe noted that the project would help fulfill some of the housing shortage identified in the Comprehensive Housing Needs Analysis, particularly for units available to veterans and those with disabilities. The next steps for the process involve City Council meetings on

September 24 and October 8th and a fall submittal for a general development plan (GDP), if the rezoning is approved.

Reese asked for information about the parking for the proposed development. Peterson responded that vast majority of parking stalls will be underground (89) with 11 surface spaces. Watson asked about the need for flexibility for open space on the site. Howe responded that the code has fairly strict requirements for open space in the R-3 multifamily residential district; most infill/redevelopment sites will not be able to meet the open space requirement without a PUD. In this instance, staff feels the open space flexibility provided by the PUD is merited due to its location with easy walking distance to numerous parks and other amenities, including schools and businesses.

Woolsey made a motion to approve PC Resolution 2019-04 recommending an amendment to the official zoning map and the future land use map of the Comprehensive Plan of the City of River Falls for 1300 S. Main Street.

M/Woolsey, S/Stuessel - motion carried 7-0.

UPDATES AND INFORMATION

Development Updates

Peterson provided an overview of upcoming meetings, including:

- 1) the Kwik Trip rezoning at Cemetery Road and Highway 65 that will come to the City Council on September 10th and 24th;
- 2) the 1300 S. Main Street rezoning to go to Council on September 24th and October 8th; and
- 3) the Bakken-Young rezoning to go to Council on September 24th and October 8th.

For the October 1, 2019 meeting, staff will provide presentations on the Campus Corridor project and the Kinni Corridor Plan and may potentially have a draft of the shoreland-wetland ordinance for the Plan Commission to review. Also, staff received development review plans for a multifamily housing project at 6th Street/Cemetery.

ADJOURNMENT

Watson made a motion to adjourn at 7:06 p.m.

M/Watson, S/Woolsey – motion carried 7-0

Respectfully submitted,



Brandy Howe, AICP, Senior Planner