

Planning Commission

June 22, 2020 – 7 pm

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

This meeting was held via Webex in accordance with the local emergency declaration made by the City under Minn. Stat. § 12.37. In accordance with that declaration, beginning on March 16, 2020, all Planning Commission meetings held during the emergency were conducted electronically. The City used Webex to conduct this meeting and members of the public were able to monitor the meetings by watching it on Comcast cable channel 16, by streaming it on CCXmedia.org, or by dialing in to the public call-in line. The public was able to participate in this meeting during public comment sections, by dialing the public call-in line.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 by **Chair Blum**.

Roll Call

Commissioners present: Rich Baker, Ron Blum, Adam Brookins, Andy Johnson, Lauren Pockl, Ryan Sadeghi, Chuck Segelbaum,

Commissioners absent: None

Staff present: Jason Zimmerman – Planning Manager, Myles Campbell – Planner

Council Liaison present: Gillian Rosenquist

2. Approval of Agenda

Chair Blum asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

MOTION made by **Commissioner Baker**, seconded by **Commissioner Johnson** to approve the agenda of June 22, 2020, after corrections are made. Staff called a roll call vote and the motion carried unanimously.

3. Approval of Minutes

Chair Blum asked for a motion to approve the minutes from June 8, 2020.

Commissioner Baker asked for edits to the minutes on page 3 regarding a title error, an edit to a statement he made, and a change to who made a statement. Chair Blum made an edit to the first page, noting the order of when items occurred needed to be edited.

MOTION made by **Commissioner Pockl**, seconded by **Commissioner Brookins** to approve the May 27, 2020 meeting minutes. Staff called a roll call vote and the motion carried unanimously.

4. Continued Item – Zoning Code Text Amendment - Proposed Adjustments to Narrow Lot Regulations

Jason Zimmerman, Planning Manager, gave a brief introduction on the City Council request, and highlighted a few items of public concern that were not actually included in this amendment.



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Zimmerman displayed the list of items reviewed at the June 8th meeting and reminded the group that the meeting was continued to today was because of discussion around second story dormers; he reviewed what is currently allowed and what the proposed changes are.

Second story dormers:

- Currently allowed, but must be within building envelope
- Proposed change:
 - Allow second story dormers to extend outside of building envelope in limited amounts
 - (+) Breaks up the shading that falls on adjacent properties
 - (+) Creates more interesting architectural features on new homes
 - (-) More complicated framing (more expensive)

Zimmerman expanded on dormers by discussing shed dormers and gable dormers, as well as the regulations when building them in to a second floor. Staff created a number of stills, mimicking shadows on and around a property when dormers are in place. Of particular concern to Commissioners was the amount of potential shade dormers would create, so staff showed examples of three times in the year: Summer Solstice, Fall Equinox, and Winter Solstice, utilizing actual location coordinates of a narrow lot and its neighbor. Displayed were examples of the current regulations, then what the shading would look like with both types of dormers on the home on the narrow lot.

Zimmerman moved on to address the previous meeting and the public hearing. He captured the number of comments, those from folks who live on narrow lots and otherwise. He listed the neighborhoods where most of the commenters live and their proximity to a narrow lot. He reminded the group of the three phone calls that came in during the hearing and listed the top five themes addressed in public comment.

Zimmerman ended by recapping the eight proposed changes and staff recommendation.

Commissioner Johnson asked staff if the shading models would become the standard for future discussion around massing or density. **Zimmerman** responded that shading was just one of the pieces considered when looking at topics like the one today. City Council specifically requested the Commission and staff look at ways to reduce impacts of narrow lots and shading happened to be one of those impact reduction items reviewed.

Commissioner Segelbaum asked how the sizes of the houses were determined in the shading model. **Zimmerman** responded that they mimicked the two real homes, both on narrow lots, as closely as possible. **Myles Campbell, Planner**, displayed a model showing the dormer options next to current regulations. **Baker** pointed out two bungalows next to each other and noted the level of shading in winter, adding that dormers do not drastically add to the shading at this particular time of year. **Commissioner Pockl** asked to be reminded how much additional usable space is provided on each dormer. **Zimmerman** stated there are a lot of variables but it's somewhere between a half and a full second story. Staff added that people tend to want a full second floor but there are houses in Golden Valley that utilize dormers. Staff surmised that gable dormers tend to be used less for added space and more for adding natural light. The conversation continued around dormers, height options, split level homes, and other options to gain floors without adding height.

Baker apologized to the Commissioners and the public for addressing the dormers so late in this process. He remains concerned that the approach to building on narrow lots may be flawed because it assumes any new home must be of a certain square footage and must have a full second floor. **Baker** said he remains convinced that houses of that assumed size may be beyond what's suitable for the smaller lots. He also said that the group should pass along to City Council that the City should focus and build smaller starter homes on smaller lots, this will create housing equity. **Commissioner Sadeghi** said he thinks the group was getting too specific on percentages of building items and staff has done a great job finding the right balance for the city code. The real issue at hand is the subdivision of lots and that should be where the focus is. He's concerned that the group may create too restrictive of a code and make it too hard for owners to either rebuild on their property or to do renovations. **Sadeghi** added that he remains firm on the stance he had two weeks ago on this issue. The conversation continued around reducing impact and harm to existing homes and neighborhoods as a whole.

The discussion circled back to dormers and potentially changing the percentages or removing dormers all together. When looking at the dormer plan as presented by staff, three Commissioners stated they were opposed: Baker, Blum, Pockl. **Brookins** stated his support of staff recommendation as did Johnson and Sadeghi. **Johnson** added that if moving the shed dormer percentage from 50% to 40% would help the vote, he recommends the group change that percentage amount in order to move the recommendation to Council. Commissioners continued their discussion and included staff on clarifications and shading examples.

Chair Blum thanked the Commissioners for the long process and quality discussions on this item. He added a thank you to everyone who had a public comment and contributed points that helped the discussions occur. **Baker** added that he wants the Council to consider equity in housing as a modifier.

MOTION made by **Commissioner Baker** and seconded by **Commissioner Brookins** to adopt the recommendation made by staff with two conditions: shed dormers be limited to a 40% maximum and that the Planning Commission ask Council to reconsider aspects of building for the future and housing equity in addressing how the City's few smallest lots should be developed.

Segelbaum asked that the housing equity recommendation be a second motion.

MOTION WITHDRAWN by **Commissioner Baker**

MOTION made by **Commissioner Baker** and seconded by **Commissioner Brookins** to adopt the recommendation made by staff with the condition that a home have a shed dormer regulation of 40% maximum.

Staff took a roll call vote and it passed 5-2.

Aye: Baker, Brookins, Johnson, Sadeghi, Segelbaum

Nay: Blum, Pockl

MOTION made by **Commissioner Baker** and seconded by **Commissioner Segelbaum** that the Planning Commission ask Council to reconsider use of small lots in terms of building for the future and creating housing equity in Golden Valley.

Staff took a roll call vote and it passed 5-2

Aye: Baker, Johnson, Pockl, Sadeghi, Segelbaum

Nay: Brookins, Blum

Televised portion of the meeting concluded at 9:08 pm

5. Council Liaison Report

Council Member Rosenquist updated the Commission on the City Council discussion around housing and equity and reported that the HRA would be more active in the future. The Rising TIDES task force had provided the Council with some recommendations and action on those recommendations would be coming soon. The City would also be moving forward to hire an Equity, Inclusion, and Volunteer Manager. She reported on the variance appeals that were heard at the June 16 City Council meeting and that the DMV would be opening by appointment only. Also, staff had produced a CORR plan for addressing safety during the pandemic.

Commissioner Segelbaum asked about the response to temporary outdoor dining.

6. Reports on Meetings of the Housing and Redevelopment Authority, City Council, Board of Zoning Appeals, and other meetings

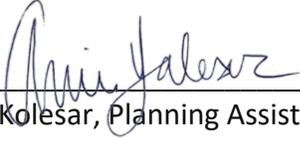
None.

7. Other Business

Zimmerman informed the Commissioners that the City Council, at its meeting reviewing the work of the Board of Zoning Appeals, had suggested that they would like to explore having a set representative or two from the Planning Commission that would handle all BZA meetings. This direction was intended to create more consistency at BZA meetings and allow the representative Commissioner to develop a greater background with the operations of the Board. Commissioners were hesitant to leave behind the rotation method that had been adopted in recent years, as it helped balance the additional burden of a third meeting each month. Commissioners Brookins and Sadeghi both volunteered to attend more meetings if that was the direction from the Council. Zimmerman stated that he would go back to City Council and let them know the first preference of the Commissioners was to keep the existing format of rotating members.

8. Adjournment

MOTION made by **Commissioner Pockl**, seconded by **Commissioner Brookins** and the motion carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 PM.



Amie Kolesar, Planning Assistant



Adam Brookins, Secretary