

**CITY OF WEST DES MOINES
DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING
CITY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING
Zoom Electronic Meeting; Board Room – City Hall**

Monday, August 17, 2020

Attending:

Council Member Matt McKinney	Principal Engineer Ben McAlister
Council Member Renee Hardman	Planner Brian Portz
City Manager Tom Hadden	Planner Kara Tragesser
Deputy City Manager Jamie Letzring	Planner Bryce Johnson
City Attorney Richard Scieszinski	Planner Karen Marren
Development Director Lynne Twedt	Fire Marshal Mike Whitsell
Development Coordinator Linda Schemmel	Assistant City Attorney Jessica Spoden
Building Official Rod Van Genderen	

Guests for all items:

City Engineer Brian Hemesath
Business Register Kathy Bolton

The meeting of the Development and Planning City Council Subcommittee was called to order at 8:00 AM.

1. Average Front Yard Setbacks

Director Twedt informed that residents are asking for more use of front yard space and requested input from the committee regarding changing how setbacks are determined. Allowing front yard additions could significantly impact neighbors' site line. Current code requires meeting front yard setback as written in the zoning code, or averaging setbacks between applicant and both adjacent neighbors in areas where existing houses do not meet minimum setbacks. Part of the concern is whether some uses would be more desirable than others, and code does not differentiate.

Council Member Hardman questioned impetus behind the change. Director Twedt stated that residents are requesting to use more of their front yard for additions, decks or garage additions. Development Coordinator Schemmel added that this primarily impacts existing neighborhoods, and its not always clear to residents how the setbacks are determined.

Council Member McKinney stated that the property buyer should have an understanding of these limitations when they purchase the property. He noted that application of the setbacks should be uniform for owners who bought knowing the restrictions and not change their protections after the fact.

Council Member Hardman expressed concern regarding changing the rules based on circumstances, and negatively impacting the neighbors. She questioned whether the existing averaging could be upheld legally. Director Twedt responded that it would be legally supported. The course for appeal would be Board of Adjustment variance, however it would be difficult to prove hardship. Under special exceptions, there may be a better opportunity to grant requests.

Council Member McKinney noted that this issue is more likely to affect residents in more densely populated areas. He questioned whether having neighbor approval would sway a variance decision. Director Twedt informed that neighbor approval wouldn't impact the Board's decision, however adding input from neighbors could be written into code. Council Member McKinney responded that having a series of factors should impact the decision, but not one variable.

Director Twedt stated the City would still be applying Fire and Building codes to the application as well. Ms. Twedt added that there are circumstances which could be looked into to provide variables to be weighed in making the decision.

Council Member McKinney questioned the timeline of implementation for late summer, early fall improvement projects. Ms. Twedt replied the amendment would likely be approved mid to late fall and residents might have the opportunity to get foundations and enclosures in place before winter.

Direction: Council Members were supportive of continuing the current policy but exploring options for unique circumstances.

2. Erik's Bike Shop

Development Coordinator Schemmel informed that Erik's Bike Shop is relocating their business due to the widening of Grand Avenue and is choosing an architectural style called "Doo Wop." The Grand Avenue Redevelopment Area has three 1950's design styles approved; however, this will be the first implementation of this particular design and it will stand out. She requested committee feedback regarding implementation of the proposal by the design team.

Council Member McKinney mentioned hearing from a concerned resident regarding the allowance of this style. Ms. Schemmel noted the ordinance will be written with the PUD; however, Staff reviews using Redevelopment Guidelines. Developments are asked to be cohesive in some way with the neighbors. In this area, the surrounding buildings have warm colors and brick. This building would have neither. She added that the design team could try to make it feel more similar to the buildings around them.

Council Member McKinney asked how the applicant could alter their design to make it cohesive if the neighbors don't meet the same architectural guidelines. Ms. Schemmel stated they could use similar materials, or similar colors, or actual style. They've already chosen the "Googie" or "Doo Wop" style, but materials and colors could be revised.

Deputy City Manager Letzring pointed out that this is similar in design to a new City building in another part of WDM. Ms. Schemmel responded that this is a different context; and the intent is to find cohesiveness within the individual PUDs.

Council Member McKinney asked where the process is at in timeline and what feedback was being requested at this time. Ms. Schemmel stated this was to raise awareness as they are finalizing details before proceeding to P&Z and Council.

Council Member McKinney stated he felt they needed to meet the standards and determine if there is support for the concept. He noted that he has heard from one constituent but said it was too early to comment. Council Member Hardman also noted that she didn't have any issues with this application at this time, as long as it meets the guidelines. Ms. Schemmel commented that the proposal meets minimum requirements for the guidelines. Staff would like to continue the discussion with the design team to see if more consistency with the surrounding area can be found.

Direction: Council Members were supportive of continuing the discussion with Erik's Bike Shop regarding architectural consistency within the neighborhood.

3. Upcoming Projects – A map was provided with a brief description of each.

- a. Willow Creek Rowhomes (SW corner of Veterans and future SE Salix Ave): Subdivide property into 46 footprint lots for attached rowhomes and 6 outlots for detention and private streets (FP-004807-2020). Planner Kara Tragesser summarized this project, noting the zoning has been approved, and the project will be moving forward this month.

- b. Spring Crest (SW corner of Westtown Pkwy & Sedona DR): Subdivide property into 48 footprint lots for attached townhome development (FP-004797-2020). Planner Kara Tragesser informed that this is one of the last parcels to be built in Maple Grove and this project will be coming before Council in the next month.
- c. Taxium Mixed Use (309 5th Street): Demolition of existing building and construction of new 2-story mixed use building with approx. 5,300sf commercial, 1,600sf office and 10 apartments (SP-004778-2020). Planner Johnson summarized this redevelopment project on 5th Street, noting parking areas and providing elevations.

Council Member McKinney commented on the Valley Junction Redevelopment Plan and questioned how this fit into that overall effort. Director Twedt replied Planners Munford and Johnson are spearheading the revisioning project and are currently summarizing the background. Next they will be developing an outreach plan. Projects are coming through more quickly than expected, due to incentive moneys made available. The 300 block is becoming a dividing line between old and new Valley Junction. Adding more mixed-use for day and nighttime fits with the overall plan. Director Twedt concluded that there has been no chance to lay down any architectural guidelines. There will be a change to the newer look in this block.

Council Member McKinney asked if Staff are comfortable with what is proposed. Ms. Twedt stated with this building will be similar to the most recently approved building, with metal cladding rather than brick. She added that she would like to see more brick for buildings on the 100 and 200 blocks.

Council Member Hardman clarified whether this was a project recently discussed at Council; Ms. Schemmel noted that this is a different project with a different developer.

- d. M&W Mini Storage (2001 Grand Ave): Establish Planned Unit Development (PUD) to grandfather use and establish performance standards (ZC-004808-2020). Director Twedt summarized the resolution of issues with this site, noting improvements by the applicant. She stated this will come to P&Z and Council for approval.

Council Member McKinney asked if the applicant is putting in the sidewalk as requested. Ms. Twedt affirmed that they are working through that as part of the process. Engineer McAlister noted they haven't reviewed this yet and haven't seen the storm water plan yet. Ms. Twedt concluded that the City is requiring that they bring the site into compliance.

4. Minor Modifications & Grading Plans

- a. Texas Roadhouse (6378 Mills Civic Pkwy): Addition of sidewalk (MML1-004805-2020)

5. Other Matters

None

The meeting adjourned at 8:51 AM. The next regularly scheduled Development and Planning City Council Subcommittee is September 8, 2020.

Lynne Twedt, Development Services Director

Jennifer Canaday, Recording Secretary