

On Thursday, May 21, 2020, at 7:03 p.m., a regular meeting of the Plan Commission was called to order via Zoom. Roll Call. Present: Chair Rene Morris, Doug Freed, Aurelio Gallardo, Skip McCloud and Jamie Schwingle. Absent: Dick Linville and Steve Munson.

Also present were: Planner Dustin Wolff and Brian Carranza of Mead and Hunt, Building and Zoning Superintendent Amanda Schmidt, Attorney Tim Zollinger, City Manager Scott Shumard, Alderman Retha Elston, Alderman Jim Wise and Assistant City Clerk Monique Castillo.

McCloud made a motion to approve the minutes as presented from April 2, 2020 and April 16, 2020. The motion was seconded by Schwingle. Voting – Ayes: Freed, Gallardo, McCloud, Schwingle and Morris. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Munson entered the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

Schmidt noted Council approved the request to annex the Steelton Subdivision – Group 5.

Schmidt also noted, at the Petitioners (Majeski) request, the Public Hearing to Rezone Lot #2 in the 400 block of 17th Avenue will again be tabled to the next regular scheduled meeting.

Chair Morris opened a Public Hearing at 7:06 p.m. to hear the recommendation to Rezone the property at 609 West Third Street from CB to CB Special Use.

Tim McLindsay, petitioner, stated after 23 years in the same location, the owner of the property he was renting sold the property. This initiated his search for a new home to continue his practice.

McLindsay noted in his 23 years of business he has been professional and compliant with county and state regulations, he has given back to the community and provided numerous donations for benefits and fundraisers. He also noted, this practice is not only his passion, but his primary source of income and how he has been able to provide for his family.

Wolff reiterated McLindsay stating there have been no issues in his 23 years of operation. The location he chose to relocate to is a multi-tenant facility which requires a special use for his particular line of practice. Wolff noted the property is adjacent to a residential area but has sufficient parking and there would be no impact on sidewalk traffic.

Wolff noted McLindsay has a long record of good business practice and provided a layout of the site, hours of operation and disposal methods for used materials. He supports the staff's recommendation to approve this request as stated without condition.

Schmidt noted McLindsay and his wife have been very compliant with regard to submitting necessary paperwork. They have also taken into consideration the other occupants and altered their hours of operation to adhere to the various practices of the other businesses.

Schmidt stated her office received two phone calls regarding this public hearing. The first call was from the neighboring bank, they simply wanted additional information but had no objections. The second call was from a Pastor and current occupant in the same building. At first, the Pastor was concerned about the type of business to be practiced but became hospitable after learning the McLindsay's had taken into consideration the hours of operation for the other occupants and would alter their hours accordingly.

There was a brief discussion about the other businesses in the complex. Mrs. McLindsay noticed the church, a furniture store, a room for AA meetings, and some type of drum service. The tattoo shop would have a separate entrance.

With no further discussion by staff, commissioners or guests, Chair Morris noted publications were made, fees were paid, notification requirements were met, signage notifying the public of the hearing was placed, no written comments received, there were 2 verbal comments but no objections.

The public hearing was closed at 7:16 p.m.

Munson made a motion to approve the request to rezone the property at 609 West Third Street from CB to CB-Special Use to allow for a tattoo shop. The motion was seconded by Gallardo. Voting – Ayes: Gallardo, McCloud, Munson, Schwingle, Morris and Freed. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Schmidt noted this would be referred to city council for the June 1, 2020 meeting.

Chair Morris opened a public hearing at 7:19 p.m. to hear the recommendation to annex/rezone properties contiguous to the City; Steelton Subdivision – Group 6.

Zollinger noted this is the continuation through this subdivision. As with the previous annexations/rezones, all properties have sewer access and pre-annexation agreements stating they would hook on when they became contiguous.

Wolff noted, as with the previous annexations, these properties are single family and will be rezoned to SR-8 to keep the properties legal and conforming as they all have small/side setbacks.

Marcella Wells, 507 Ash Avenue, inquired about her taxes and how else this annexation would affect her. It was noted her taxes may increase by approximately \$300/year but she would not notice the increase until 2021. It was also noted her monthly sewer bill would increase to include a monthly fee for garbage service. The current garbage rate is \$18.05 per month. Schmidt added a letter from her office will be sent, at a later date, with information regarding garbage services.

With no further discussion by staff, commissioners or guests, Chair Morris noted publications were made, fees were not applicable, notification requirements were met, signage notifying the public of the hearing was not applicable and no written or verbal comments were made.

The public hearing was closed at 7:26 p.m.

McCloud made a motion to approve the Annexation and Rezoning of the properties contiguous to the City, in the Steelton Subdivision – Group 6. The motion was seconded by Munson. Voting – Ayes: McCloud, Munson, Schwingle, Morris, Freed and Gallardo. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Carranza noted he is pleased with the progress made to date with the Comprehensive Plan. Tonight we will review Element 7; Agriculture, Natural and Cultural Resources.

Carranza stated agriculture defines the character of a community and is an important factor in the economic base. He noted many of the agricultural lands in our area are primarily outside city limits, as such, we will focus on Whiteside County as a whole.

Carranza reviewed agricultural heritages, explaining how early farming practices helped to invent machinery such as the steel plow by blacksmith John Deere of Grand Detour, Illinois, and led to other technological advances.

Carranza noted 97% of the farms in our area are family owned but are threatened by an aging population. He raised the question, how we can protect/encourage agriculture production?

Carranza introduced community and regional food systems or the Farm to Table concept. These systems have a positive impact on the economy and offer a working relationship between the community and the growers.

Carranza noted there are a variety of systems such as community gardens and urban farms, an open area shared by individual growers producing fresh, healthy and affordable agricultural products; community supported agriculture (CSA), which connects farmers directly to consumers to sell shares of their harvest each season. Shareholders are first in line to get fresh products weekly or bi-weekly. Farm to School, provide fresh and healthy foods from local farms to school cafeterias which helps to improve school nutrition while supporting the local farm economy.

Carranza noted the importance of planning efforts to support these systems and highlighted the 3 great avenues our area has with Twin Cities Farmers Market, Sterling Marketplace and the Kitchen Incubator of NW Illinois. He added Whiteside County maintains an interactive map showcasing the various locations of farmers market, farm stands, orchards, wineries/breweries, family farms and food/meat processing plants.

Carranza touched on farmland preservation and the importance of not allowing our farmlands to be converted for other uses. He stated by preserving these lands we can capitalize on demand for agricultural products by promoting density and enforcing planned growth boundaries.

Carranza discussed the variety of Natural Resources and endangered species we have in this area and the importance of protecting these critical resources. Wolff added if the resources are easily accessible, people will be more likely to protect.

Carranza briefly discussed the Cultural Resources of Sterling and how they contribute to the quality of life and give a sense of connectivity and continuity to the past, present and future. He noted there are 9 historical markers within the county and 5 sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Carranza also noted our community is very unique and proud as witnessed through various community events. Wolff noted these events have a major impact on economic development as locals want to get out and enjoy these events while others from surrounding communities are likely to travel to attend these events as well.

The next Plan Commission meeting is June 18, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. We will have another public hearing; Steelton Group 7, Majeski Public Hearing and continue discussion with the Comprehensive Plan.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Monique Castillo
Assistant City Clerk