

On Thursday, November 19, 2020, at 7:02 p.m., a regular meeting of the Plan Commission was called to order via Zoom. Roll Call. Present: Chair Rene Morris, Skip McCloud, Steve Munson, Jamie Schwingle and Joe Strabala-Bright. Absent: Doug Freed, Aurelio Gallardo.

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

Munson made a motion to approve the minutes from October 15, 2020 as presented. The motion was seconded by Schwingle. Voting – Ayes: McCloud, Munson, Schwingle, Strabala-Bright and Morris. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Schmidt noted Council approved the recommendation to annex Steelton Subdivision – Group 11.

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

Chair Morris noted there was nothing new to present for the continuation of the Public Hearing from October 15, 2020 regarding a request to rezone with a special use to allow for a cell tower at 2601 E. Lincolnway/Sterling Moose Family Center. This item will remain tabled until the next regular meeting on December 17, 2020.

Chair Morris opened a Public Hearing at 7:06 p.m. to hear the recommendation from petitioner Loos 1052, LLC to request a Special Use for a basement apartment at 601 West Third Street.

Scott Hibbard, petitioner, presented his companies vision and how they transformed the dirt floor on the lower level of their property by removing rotted wood and replacing old pipes to create a remarkable living space. He explained how exterior improvements were made to accommodate the living space of the proposed basement apartment and other apartments, on the upper level, in the unit that are currently occupied. Hibbard noted most recently, 36 pine trees were planted to the west of the unit for appeal and added privacy.

Wolff made note it is uncommon to have a basement apartment in a commercial use. This particular property is zoned community business and noted a special use is ideal for unique requests as this.

Wolff highlighted the importance of promoting neighborhood stabilization, he commended them for the parking improvements that were made and he noted there would be no adverse impacts on the infrastructure. All these factors correspond with the Comprehensive Plan and staff recommends approval of this petition without conditions.

Schmidt noted it was a really cool transformation, a great re-use of an old building.

With no further business to discuss 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 and there were no phone calls or written comments received.

The Public Hearing closed at 7:21 p.m.

Munson made a motion to approve the petition from Loos 1052, LLC for a Special Use for a basement apartment at 601 West Third Street. The motion was seconded by Schwingle. Voting – Ayes: Munson, Schwingle, Stabala-Bright, Morris and Freed. Nays: None. McCloud abstained. Motion carried.

Chair Morris addressed the petitioner, Sand and Sea, LLC, to hear the recommendation to rezone property located at 25460 Deer Run, Sterling, Illinois.

Dan Kapolnek and Ryan Njavro explained their request is for a sorting facility and not a recycling center. The purpose is to take recycled waste and sort through it to find precious metals. Upon completion, the recycled waste is then returned to the landfill. Njavro noted this facility would be beneficial to the landfill as it would reduce the amount of product taken to the landfill that does not belong there.

There was a brief discussion regarding fencing and storage of the parts/materials, the types of metals involved, how the metals would be gathered, if there were any EPA ramifications and how the City of Rock Falls felt about the process.

Njavro explained they install fencing to all of their properties as a security measure and not to block vision of unsightly storage outside the facility. Regarding the types of metals, Njavro stated 95% is copper but may also include gold, silver and platinum (as found in most computers).

Njavro noted this would not be a full production facility but more of a staging site where materials would be trucked-in, metals would be removed and then shipped to a more developed facility. There would be no EPA ramifications to worry about.

Njavro further explained the City of Rock Falls has already submitted a letter of no objection to Whiteside County.

Wolff noted the task of this commission is to make a recommendation to City Council to issue a letter of objection or no objection based on the information provided from the petitioner for this proposal. The County Board will actually make the final decision to approve or deny the request.

Zollinger noted it is not up to the City to approve or deny, but Whiteside County will take into consideration whether or not we support the proposal.

Wolff noted there are too many unknown factors and no definitive plan. He cautioned the commission to tread lightly with the minimal information the petitioner has provided. Wolff's concern is they say today they are merely a staging site and next month they are a full production facility. He further noted by rezoning to I-1 with Special Use, there will be more control to maintain the petitioners proposed request.

McCloud made a motion to recommend City Council submit a letter of no objection to Whiteside County with reference to the petition from Sand and Sea, LLC to rezone property located at 25460 Deer Run, Sterling, Illinois from B-3 to I-1 with a Special Use Permit and include an objection to rezone from B-3 to I-2. The motion was seconded by Freed. Voting – Ayes: Schwingle, Strabala-Bright, Morris, Freed, McCloud and Munson. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Chair Morris opened a Public Hearing at 7:55 p.m. to hear the recommendation to Annex/Zone property contiguous to the city; Steelton Subdivision – Group 12.

Zollinger noted this was the continuance of annexing these properties and we are getting real close to the end. There are 6 properties in this group for consideration, if approved they will be classified with a SR-8 zoning.

Wolff noted these properties are currently zoned as R-2, a SR-8 zoning will be the best to keep these properties legal and conforming.

Andrew Franklin, 902 West Avenue, is the caregiver of the resident/owner at this location. Franklin stated the owner does not want to be annexed, does not recall signing a pre-annexation agreement and claimed to be on septic.

Zollinger noted there was a pre-annexation agreement on file that may have been from a previous owner. Zollinger noted we would check the validity of the agreement.

Wolff noted all pre-annexed properties are connected to city sewer.

With no further business to discuss by staff, commissioners or guests, Chair Morris noted publications were made, fees were not applicable, notification requirements were met, signage was not applicable and there were no phone calls or written comments received.

The Public Hearing was closed at 8:10 p.m.

Freed made a motion to approve the Annexation and Rezoning of the properties contiguous to the City, in Steelton Subdivision – Group 12. The motion was seconded by McCloud. Voting – Ayes: Strabala-Bright, Morris, Freed, McCloud, Munson and Schwingle. Nays: None. Motion carried.

The next Plan Commission meeting is December 17, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. We will continue the Public Hearings for the Steelton Subdivision; Group 13 and continue discussion with the Comprehensive Plan. Hopefully we will be able to meet in person.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 8:12 p.m.