

On Thursday, January 16, 2020, at 7:05 p.m., a regular meeting of the Plan Commission was called to order. Roll Call. Present: Doug Freed, Aurelio Gallardo, Skip McCloud and Jamie Schwingle. Absent: Chair Rene Morris, Dick Linville and Steve Munson.

Also present were: Building and Zoning Superintendent Amanda Schmidt, Attorney Tim Zollinger, City Manager Scott Shumard, 1st Ward Alderman Retha Elston, 2nd Ward Alderman Christine Wilen, Alderman at Large Jim Wise and Assistant City Clerk Monique Castillo.

Schwingle made a motion to approve the minutes of December 19, 2019 as presented. The motion was seconded by McCloud. Voting – Ayes: Gallardo, McCloud, Schwingle and Freed. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Schmidt noted the annexation of all 31 wholly surrounded properties was approved by City Council.

Co-Chair Freed opened a Public Hearing at 7:08 p.m. to hear the recommendation from Greg Majeski, property owner, to VACATE 10' OF THE RIGHT-OF-WAY IN THE 400 BLOCK OF 17TH AVENUE; along 17th Avenue between the properties and the back of the sidewalk.

Majeski stated he is requesting to vacate a portion of the ROW in the 400 Block of 17th Avenue from East 4th Street to East 5th Street. He noted this request is similar to a vacation of ROW, South of 17th Avenue, done in 2016.

Wolff mentioned in 2016, the request was to vacate a portion of the ROW, the city later decided to vacate all of it, on both sides. Here, he noted we would only be vacating the East side.

Wolff also mentioned there are trees that line the residence at the end of this block; 412 17th Avenue. A majority of the trees are currently the responsibility of the City. If vacation is approved, the owner of this parcel will gain these trees which are unruly and in need of pruning. If vacation is approved, it is the recommendation of Wolff and staff to include in the motion a contingency factor for the maintenance/pruning of these trees.

Majeski did note he has had several discussions with the owner of this residence. In discussion the option of Majeski purchasing said property was raised but the two are unable to find a mutual agreement on the selling price.

With no further discussion by staff, commissioners or guests, Co-Chair Freed noted publications were made, fees were paid, notification requirements were met, signage notifying the public of the hearing was placed at the site for at least two weeks and no written or verbal comments were made.

McCloud made a motion to approve to VACATE 10' OF THE EAST SIDE OF ROW IN THE 400 BLOCK OF 17TH AVENUE CONTIGENT ON A TREE MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT WITH THE OWNER OF 412 17TH AVENUE AND CITY OF STERLING. The motion was seconded by Gallardo. Voting – Ayes: McCloud, Schwingle, Freed and Gallardo. Nays: None. Motion carried.

The public hearing was closed at 7:22 p.m.

Co-Chair Freed opened a Public Hearing at 7:24 p.m. to hear the recommendation from Greg Majeski, property owner, to REZONE THE PROPERTY AT PIN #11-22-260-001 FROM SR-8 (SINGLE FAMILY) TO CB (COMMUNITY BUSINESS).

Majeski noted he owns six lots on this block, of the six, the one in question is the only one that is zoned residential. By changing the zoning on this parcel, he would be able to expand his current inventory and build a detailing center for his customers. The proposed plan would reflect what he currently has on the opposite side of the street.

Schwingle inquired about fencing or other alternatives to deflect noise and added traffic. Majeski stated he would comply with whatever is required. He does anticipate fencing the area and will most likely add trees and other landscaping.

Wolff noted the importance of evaluating the findings, reviewing the different zonings in the area and considering if this request will be harmonious with the comprehensive plan.

Wolff mentioned this request does meet all of the guidelines, including the integration of new business as outlined in the comp plan, but we have to consider if there is a buffer to protect the lower intensity (residential) from the higher intensity (commercial). Unfortunately, with the added lighting, signage and traffic, this request does not appear to be harmonious with the residences on 18th Avenue, as it would create an adverse impact on the adjacent properties.

Wolff suggested Majeski re-locate in order to enhance his success, stating he has simply run out of room. Wolff noted the City would be willing to assist Majeski in finding a suitable location that would favor his growth and the City of Sterling equally.

Wolff noted while the City commends Majeski's success and hopes for continued success, the City opposes the request to rezone.

Victor Erickson, 412 17th Avenue, raised concerned about added traffic and lighting. Erickson noted he is an electrician at trade and understands how the added lighting will impact the residential neighborhood. He opposes the request to rezone.

Alderman Wise asked Majeski if he anticipated creating additional jobs with this proposed expansion. Majeski stated not at this time, but could be a possibility in the future. For now, his

intent is to provide a workspace for his current employees and create additional space for more inventory.

Majeski further noted, with response to the traffic concerns, there is already added traffic during school hours. With regard to the additional lighting, he will comply with the city's guidelines and rectify any complaints that may arise, as done in the past, at his expense. With regard to the residence that sits at the end of the block, he again mentioned he has discussed the possibility of purchasing the property, however, they are unable to mutually agree on a selling price.

Wolff again encouraged a possible relocation as it appears continued success will demand growth which will demand continued requests to rezone. We need to draw a line somewhere. Majeski stated he is content with his location, he has invested a lot of money into this area and he was adamant this would be his last request to expand. He further noted, if the rezone is approved, he would consider taking care of the maintenance/pruning of the trees at 412 17th Avenue.

Zollinger encouraged, with the low attendance of commissioners, this item be tabled to the next regular meeting where he anticipates a full commission.

With no further discussion by staff, commissioners or guests, Co-Chair Freed noted publications were made, fees were paid, notification requirements were met, signage notifying the public of the hearing was placed at the site for at least two weeks and there were no written or verbal comments received.

Schwingle made a motion to table the REZONE OF THE PROPERTY AT PIN #11-22-260-001 FRO, SR-8 (SINGLE FAMILY) TO CB (COMMUNITY BUSINESS). The motion was seconded by McCloud. Voting – Ayes: McCloud, Schwingle, Freed and Gallardo. Nays: None. Motion carried.

The public hearing closed at 7:57 p.m.

Carranza introduced Element 5 of the Comprehensive Plan, Transportation. He gave a brief overview of Sterling's existing transportation network, discussed proposed networks and explained the importance of utilizing the proposed network to enhance growth and connectivity.

Carranza noted there are three functional roadway classifications and he described how they relate to Sterling. 1) Arterials – high volume traffic with minimal access such as State Route 2, State Route 40, W Lynn Blvd E LeFevre and Lincolnway to name a few; 2) Collectors – high volume traffic with some access such as W 11th Street, Avenue L, 6th Avenue; 3) Locals – lower speed limits, limited access control and shortest distance between routes.

Carranza discussed the importance of a bicycle and pedestrian system for recreation and as an alternative method of travel. There are several multi-use paths in the area which are great for

non-discretionary trips and school aged kids but there are no dedicated on-road bike facilities such as bike boulevards or sharrows, which would benefit persons that have no other alternative of transportation other than biking or walking or persons that choose to transport by bicycle or walking.

Carranza gave a brief description of other transportation hubs that are available such as County Shuttles/Paratransit, Regional Passenger Rail & Bus Service, Freight (Rail, Air/Cargo, Water and Truck) and Airports (general and commercial aviation). Continued use of these hubs will enhance travel to and from our area as well as growth.

Carranza gave a brief overview of the Transportation element from the 2006 Comprehensive Plan and noted much of what it entails still remains true. Now we must incorporate these new findings to improve the transportation network which will be an ongoing effort. He noted one-way pair decoupling and extending the hours of operation for the Whiteside County Public Transport would be a perfect start.

Carranza touched base on some anticipated projects, all within Sterling's 5-year plan, such as the Roundabout projects at Lynn Blvd/W LeFevre (2020) and Wallace Road (2021). He inquired if there were any other projects. McCloud inquired about a Roundabout at 6th Avenue/Lynn Blvd. Shumard noted that is a very costly project, upwards of a quarter of a million dollars, he has discussed the possibility of Sterling Schools footing a portion of the bill. This project is not in the near future.

Carranza mentioned Whiteside County's 2014 comprehensive plan shares the same goals we have relating to intergovernmental issues and IDOT has a long-range transportation plan that focuses on our same efforts. Carranza noted it is important for us to stay consistent and have a good idea of the outcome we desire in order to stay ahead of what these organizations want.

Carranza noted next month he will focus on future roadway considerations/improvements and utilities/community facilities.

There will be a Special Plan Commission meeting on January 30, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Monique Castillo
Assistant City Clerk