

CITY OF OKOBOJI PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JUNE 3, 2019 – 5:30 PM
OKOBOJI CITY HALL

The Planning and Zoning Commission for the City of Okoboji met on the above date at 5:30 PM in the Okoboji City Hall. Commission members present were Les Marousek, Barb Mendenhall, Jane Shuttleworth, and Perry Pearson. Commissioner Hank Grant was absent and excused. Others present were City Administrator Michael Meyers.

Commissioner Perry Pearson chaired the meeting and called the meeting to order.

Motion made by Commissioner Mendenhall and a second by Commissioner Shuttleworth to approve the minutes from the previous Planning and Zoning Commission meeting held on April 8, 2019. The following Commissioners voted “YEA”: Marousek, Mendenhall, Shuttleworth, and Pearson. Motion passed 4-0.

Chairperson Pearson introduced and opened a public hearing for consideration of text amendments to the City of Okoboji Zoning regulations related to the creation of a CONSERVATION ZONING DISTRICT (New Article IV.B). There was no one present nor were there any formal submissions to comment in favor or against the proposed amendments.

City Administrator Michael Meyers gave an overview of the changes that have occurred between the April 8, 2019 meeting and this current one. Meyers advised that he worked with Northwest Iowa Planning and Development Commission to ensure that the Commission’s questions were addressed and answered in this revised draft. Meyers felt comfortable proposing this draft for consideration and recommendation from the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Chairperson Pearson asked if other communities have this sort of zoning district. Meyers commented that other Lakes Area communities have something similar and that this version largely uses foundational text that has been amended to fit the City of Okoboji specifically. Pearson inquired about the rezoning process if someone were interested. Meyers explained that this would and should be a voluntary effort initiated by the property owner. Meyers commented on the whole process.

Chairman Pearson asked about possible parcels of land that might consider rezoning to CN. Commissioner Mendenhall identified several high acreage parcels that may consider but also identified some smaller pockets of town which might be considered. Mendenhall explained that this would be for property owners who really want to protect the natural environment of the land which they own. Mendenhall commented that she felt it made a statement to the community that the City is committed to the conservation and protection of the natural lands in the community.

Chairman Pearson expressed concerns about the potential for spot zoning. Meyers explained that after discussion with the City’s third party zoning consultant that he did not believe that would be

an issue. Meyers explained the bigger issue would be creating a checkerboard of parcels zoned CN. Meyers further explained that was the rationale behind having a 1 acre minimum to be zoned as such.

Chairman Pearson asked if there was any administrative concerns relating to this zoning district. Meyers commented that this zoning district and the availability of this option for zoning hinders future development for the City of Okoboji. Meyers advised that with recent developments at Brooks Golf Course and at the old Inn Golf Course that the City has very little room to grow and develop. Meyers advised that if larger privately owned parcels were zoned CN it would create another hurdle for future development. Meyers recognized that to some this may be preferred but advocated that if the City were to approve this that we ensure property owners truly have conservation in mind as opposed to restricting development. Meyers advised that he was not attempting to diminish the conservation nature of the district but was thinking about the long-term viability of the City.

Chairman Pearson asked if there was any idea that the County Conservation Board would be a willing participant with their property. Mendenhall commented that several permitted uses were included in this zoning district in an effort to allow the Conservation Board to consider without much hurdle. Meyers commented that the City has had past conversations with the Conservation Board.

Commissioner Mendenhall asked if Council could alert the community of this new zoning district. Meyers commented the Council would have to consider this as an ordinance change that would require a public hearing. Meyers added that information could be put on the website, bulletin boards, newsletter, and other avenues.

Commissioner Marousek inquired about the inclusion of campgrounds as a conditional use. Commissioner Shuttleworth advised that it should be 'primitive camping' and not campgrounds. Commissioner Mendenhall agreed that the inclusion concerned her. Meyers agreed with the Commissioners concerns and offered the idea to simply strike out campgrounds entirely and not even worry about primitive camping. Meyers reminded that this is still a conditional use and would need to go through the process to be approved in the first place.

Commissioner Mendenhall liked the idea of defining primitive campground and having that as a conditional use as opposed to a campground. Commissioner Marousek agreed.

The Commission discussed whether or not to include a 'dog park' as a use of the CN zoning district. Meyers advised on the existing Lakes Area Dog Park and that it was open to the public.

Meyers asked that the Planning and Zoning Commission come up with a definition of primitive campground before motioning to recommend to the Council for approval. After discussion the Commission agreed upon, "facilities or an area providing spaces for two or more tent sites for temporary occupancy with necessary incidental services, sanitation, and recreational facilities to

serve the public”. Meyers commented that the two or more provision would disallow one person from pitching a tent and camping on property.

Chairperson Pearson discussed the inclusion of ‘dirt track racing’ and expressed concern about what this potentially could lead to. Pearson believed that ‘non-motorized’ should be included with this term. Commissioner Mendenhall agreed that it could be dirt track racing for non-motorized bicycles. Pearson was concerned about racing and other events. Pearson advised he did not have an issue with non-motorized bicycles such as mountain bikes. Meyers offered the definition “non-motorized dirt track course” eliminating the term racing and off-road courses and adding in non-motorized.

Motion made by Commissioner Mendenhall and a second by Commissioner Shuttleworth to add the definition of primitive campground, change the conditional use from ‘campground’ to ‘primitive campground’, re-define Section 2.2.5.11.A to strikeout off-road courses, strike out racing, and add in the word non-motorized before dirt and recommend to the City Council for approval to creation of a Conservation Zoning District. The following Commissioners voted “YEA”: Marousek, Mendenhall, Shuttleworth, and Pearson. Motion passed 4-0.

Administrator Meyers advised that this would be considered at the July City Council meeting and requested that someone from the Planning and Zoning Commission would be available to report to the Council relating to this zoning district. Commissioner Mendenhall agreed to report out to the Council.

Chairperson Pearson introduced and opened a public hearing to discuss the proposed text amendments to the City of Okoboji Zoning Regulations relating to Section 11.22, “LAKESHORE LANDSCAPING AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS”. There was no one present nor were there any formal submissions to comment in favor or against the proposed amendments.

Administrator Meyers gave an overview of the changes being proposed. Meyers explained the redefinition of the word ‘stone’ including ‘split stone’ and ‘manufactured stone’. Meyers advised that these redefinitions allow applicants additional flexibility in choice of stone but still excludes bricks, concrete blocks, paving bricks, pavers, and related.

Meyers presented to the Council a brochure outlining Rosetta Stone products as an example of an engineered block made to resemble native field stone and other natural stones. Meyers explained that there are lakeshores where this is likely the most preferred use of stone due to the steepness of the banks.

Meyers presented to the Commission a proposed plan relating to the use of Rosetta Stone as well as a product called Strata Web. The Commission discussed said plan in detail and asked that the contractor present the plan to the Commission at a later point.

Meyers commented that the changes in the ordinance allow for more flexibility in future decision making and pointed to other issues where the Commission has given variances. Meyers felt that the redefinitions provided latitude to approve nice projects using a different type of stone. Commissioner Mendenhall commented that she was concerned about the plant cover and ensuring that the walls were minimally noticeable after plants have fully grown over the retaining walls. Chairperson asked about imposing a percent screening into the ordinance and Meyers commented that the ordinance already has provisions relating to the promotion of green face.

Chairperson Pearson inquired about the other changes to the ordinance. Meyers discussed changing the 500' notification to 200' and removing the Board of Adjustment from the process. Meyers explained that the Planning and Zoning Commission would now be making a recommendation to City Staff which should reduce processing time for City staff, appointed boards, and residents to get applications approved. Meyers explained that neighboring residents would still be notified of the Planning and Zoning Commission meetings.

Commissioner Mendenhall expressed concern with the manufactured stone but again reiterated her desire for continued promotion of green facing. Meyers explained that the definition of manufactured stone clearly eliminates what the Commission does not desire and reads colored to look like marble, granite, or any other natural stone.

Meyers also discussed the addition of lakeshore elevators and lakeshore lifts. Meyers advised that he would also like to see text added into this section relating to platforms for landing at the bottom of an approved elevator. Meyers suggested 'including any necessary platforms' be added into the text as to avoid future confusion.

Motion made by Commissioner Mendenhall and a second by Commissioner Marousek to add language into the ordinance relating to necessary platforms on elevators and to recommend for approval the changes presented to the Lakeshore Landscaping Ordinance. The following Commissioners voted "YEA": Marousek, Mendenhall, Shuttleworth, and Pearson. Motion passed 4-0.

Chairperson Pearson adjourned the meeting at 7:22 PM.

ADJOURNMENT.

MICHAEL MEYERS
CITY ADMINISTRATOR
CITY OF OKOBOJI