

CITY OF OKOBOJI PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JULY 13, 2020 – 5:30 PM
OKOBOJI CITY HALL, 1322 HWY 71 N., OKOOBJI, IOWA 51355

The Planning and Zoning Commission for the City of Okoboji met on the above date at 5:30 PM via Zoom. Commission members present were Perry Pearson, Barb Mendenhall, John McMahon, Jane Shuttleworth, and Hank Grant. Others present were City Administrator Michael Meyers.

Chairperson Pearson called the meeting to order.

NEW BUSINESS

Pearson presented the minutes of the June 1, 2020 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting. Motion made by Commissioner Mendenhall and seconded by Commissioner Grant to approve the meeting minutes. The following Commissioners voted AYE: Grant, Shuttleworth, Pearson, Mendenhall, McMahon. Motion was approved 5-0.

Pearson presented a proposed text amendment to the City of Okoboji Zoning Regulations relating to Section 11.4 STEPS, DECKS, AND PATIOS. City Administrator Meyers explained the proposed changes to the zoning text. Meyers opined that the current regulations were broad and unclear in his estimation. Meyers explained current interpretation of the language. Meyers gave examples of where it is difficult to interpret. Meyers advised that the changes would include the allowance of concrete walkways in the side yard of R-1 and R-2 properties and the allowance of pervious walkways in R-3 properties. Meyers also advised this clarifies issues pertaining to driveways and stairs. Meyers also identified that the language changes allow for 10' front and rear yard encroachment for patios and decks in R-1 and R-2 zoned properties.

Motion made by Commissioner Mendenhall and second by Commissioner Shuttleworth to recommend the proposed text amendments to the City Council for consideration with text amendments in Section 11.4.2 providing a driveway width of 32', Section 11.4.4 to remind of open space requirements, and Section 11.4.5 to be similar to 11.4.4 in the allowance of decks to encroach 10'. The following Commissioners voted AYE: Grant, Shuttleworth, Pearson, Mendenhall, McMahon. Motion was approved 5-0.

Pearson presented a proposed text amendment to the City of Okoboji Zoning Regulations relating to Section 11.5 FENCE AND HEDGES. City Administrator Meyers explained the proposed changes to the zoning text that would allow the Zoning Administrator instead of the Board of Adjustment to approve alternate fence material.

Motion made by Commissioner Mendenhall and a second by Commissioner Grant to recommend the proposed text amendments to the City Council for consideration. The following Commissioners voted AYE: Grant, Shuttleworth, Pearson, Mendenhall, McMahon. Motion was approved 5-0.

Pearson discussed existing language in Section 13.7 SIGN REQUIREMENTS IN ALL OTHER ZONED DISTRICTS. City Administrator Meyers gave an overview of the existing language and expressed challenges in enforcement specifically in section 13.7.1.C. Meyers advised that multiple people interpret the sign language differently and that it needs to be clarified. Meyers gave an example of a recent Board of Adjustment hearing that was also split in the vote relating to interpretation

The Commission reviewed and discussed adjacent communities' zoning ordinances. Commissioners advocated for striking Section 13.7.1.C from the ordinance in its entirety. Commissioners felt that the City of Arnolds Park had a good model for signage and that the City of Okoboji might consider utilizing some of their language. Pearson felt that the City of Spirit Lake's sign ordinance should also be examined for unity purposes. Meyers advised that if the ordinance was change dramatically he would consider obtaining input from local businesses.

No action taken, Meyers advised he would re-write and bring back at a future Planning and Zoning Commission meeting.

Pearson opened discussion on issues of lakeshore landscaping. Commissioner Shuttleworth recalled from previous meetings discussions about when it is or is not appropriate to utilize herbicide on lakeshores. Shuttleworth felt as though there needed to be a decision making tool in an effort to make decisions pertaining to this issue. Shuttleworth gave detailed information on what she felt might be most appropriate. Shuttleworth explained that she met with a previous applicant of lakeshore landscaping and that she was given permission to utilize and potentially fine-tune the tool on their lakeshore. Shuttleworth advised that she is and has shared the tool with representatives of various different protective organizations.

The Commission discussed contracting with someone in the County to review lakeshore landscaping plans pertaining to the many different vegetation variabilities involved.

No action taken.

Pearson opened discussion on the creation of a Conservation Zoning District. Commissioner Mendenhall advised that she went through the previously existing Conservation Zoning District and removed many of the things that the City Council felt unnecessary. City Administrator Meyers advised that the A-1, Agriculture District, has many conservation minded uses in them. Commissioner Mendenhall felt that the A-1 zoning district and Conservation Zoning District should be separate of each other in order to better promote conservation. Commissioners agreed that the two zoning districts could be considered separate of each other.

Meyers advised that he would work with Commissioner Mendenhall on separating the two districts.
No action taken.

REPORTS

City Administrator Meyers thanked the Commission for their efforts. Meyers advised that he was still needing to work on Comprehensive Plan updates and line-of-sight amendments. Meyers advised he would work on getting Commissioner McMahon and Shuttleworth through Planning and Zoning training through Iowa State University.

Commissioner Pearson asked about the rules pertaining to political signage and flags. Meyers advised on the rules and the protected speech pertaining to political signage.

A motioned was made by Commissioner Shuttleworth and a second by Commissioner Mendenhall to adjourn the meeting. The following Commissioners voted AYE: Grant, Shuttleworth, Pearson, Mendenhall, McMahon. Motion was approved 5-0.

ADJOURNMENT

Michael Meyers
City Administrator