MINUTES OF THE CITY OF OKOBOJI PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
MEETING HELD ON JULY 31, 2023 AT 2:00 PM

The Planning and Zoning Commission of the City of Okoboji met on the above date at 2:00pm at the Okoboji City Hall. Commission members present were Perry Pearson, Doris Welle, Barbara Mendenhall, and Hank Grant. Commission member John McMahon was excused from the meeting. Others present were City Administrator Michael Meyers, Rod Simonson, Rick Thaden, Sue Thaden, Don Prilipp, Sandy Prilipp, Wanda Rockman, Brad Sanderson, Eric Allen, Steve Nelson, Jeff Nelson, Dan Sanders, Diana Anderson, Gary Anderson, Harley Wittkopf, Doug Stock, Laura Weaver, Sheri De La Motte, Richard Arndorfer, Terry Monk, John Stevens.

NEW BUSINESS

Motion made by Commissioner Mendenhall and a second by Commissioner Grant to approve the meeting minutes from the July 10, 2023 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting. The following Commissioners voted "YEA": Mendenhall, Pearson, Welle, Grant. Motion passed 4-0.

Chairperson Pearson opened a public hearing and discussion pertaining to an application for a Conditional Use Permit pertaining to the property located at 1320 Highway 71 N., Okoboji, Iowa from Commons Holdings LLC to convert the current use "HOTEL MOTEL" to the proposed conditional use "CONDOMINIUM".

John Stevens, representing Commons Holdings LLC, provided an overview of the proposed conversion. This includes unfitting the existing structures into condominiums, the addition of other structures and the addition of other amenities.

Stevens provided an overview of the floorplan discussing the size of the condominium units advising they were not overly spacious. Stevens commented that they were roughly 852 square feet for a one-bedroom condominium. The larger three-to-four bedroom units would be about 1400 square feet.

Stevens discussed the properties encumbrances with the Dickinson County Trails Board. Stevens discussed that the back patios would be removed in an effort to clear up these issues.

Stevens advised that this property would not be hosting weddings, would not have restaurants. He did comment on common areas, swimming pools, and pickleball. Stevens advised it would not be a destination for anyone outside of the property.

Discussion took place pertaining to the availability of dock space and number of hoists. Stevens commented seven hoists.

Stevens advised that the goal was to have 70 condominiums in total throughout all phases. Stevens advised that there would be multiple phases. The first phase would include renovating the existing hotel, install a swimming pool, build a pickleball court, and do hardscaping.

Chairperson Pearson discussed parking. The proposed plan shows 70 units with 94 parking spaces. Pearson advised that with 7 hoists, how were they proposing to handle all the additional boats and trailers that might be present. Stevens identified an area where trailers could go but advised that the reality is that all 70 units would not be occupied at once and that not everyone owns a boat.

Conversation took place pertaining to short-term rentals. Stevens represented that the covenants of the condominium association would prohibit short-term rentals, specifically rentals of 31 days or less.

Rod Simonson asked City Administrator Michael Meyers about the lake access point. Meyers commented that there are covenants on this part of the property that prohibit the commercial use of this dock but advised they could be used residentially.

Parking of the boats and boat trailers again was discussed. Steve Nelson, representing Commons Holdings LLC, commented that a lot of people will be using this as their residence, not necessarily bringing up a boats on the weekend. Other condominiums in the City of Okoboji were used as reference example specifically Brandonwood and Trailview Estates. Commissioner Welle advised that in Trailview there are only six permanent boat spaces and that the remaining need to find alternative locations. Welle did not feel like this would be a huge problem.

Stevens advised that these were not intended to be $650,000 condominiums. Stevens commented that they wished for these to be more affordable condos in the $250,000-$275,000 range at their starting point.

Stevens commented that currently you see transient guests in and out and now they will be individual property owners and would be good stewards of the property.

An audience member asked about the height limit within this area. City Administrator Meyers commented that it was 35'. Meyers advised that the applicant is currently coming to the City with 70 units and that in the event it ever changed into 90 units then they would have to come before the City again and go through this entire process all over again.

An audience member inquired about the density of traffic coming on and off of Highway 71. Stevens advised that they are not proposing to add any curb cuts and was not aware of any process that needed to be gone through.

Stevens discussed his conversation with adjacent land owners pertaining to the frontage road that serves this property.

An audience member asked questions pertaining to the private gravel road on the east side of the property. Stevens advised that their site plan was conceptual and that they would not utilize that road and would eliminate the connection to it acknowledging that it was a private road. Stevens commented that if it ever were there, it would be gated and not used for access.

Sue Thaden commented here concerns that the amount of traffic coming out of the property would create issues with the Stake Out Road traffic signal and overall traffic in this area.

Conversation continued pertaining to the traffic and parking on the site. Stevens commented that the condos were relatively small and could not host large amounts of people. Stevens again commented that these would not be short-term rentals.

An audience member asked about the developer group buying out the cottages adjacent to the property. Stevens commented that there were quite a few cabins and each one were individually owned. Stevens commented that it was essentially a pipe dream.

Commissioner Mendenhall inquired about the drainage from the site with the included impervious surfacing. Stevens commented that they were bound by Iowa law and this would all be part of their engineering processes. Mendenhall expressed concern about approving without knowing. Stevens again referenced Iowa law and Mendnehall commented on the City's own LID ordinances. An audience member advised of water run off presently and was concerned by the parking lot areas. Stevens commented that it won't happen and that they would intercept the water. Stevens advised that this would be taken care of at multiple levels. Meyers commented that the LID would be reviewed and approved by the City Engineer.

Sue Thaden asked questions pertaining to the City's parking regulations. Meyers discussed the off-street parking requirements being two spaces for the first twelve condominiums and ¼ for each thereafter.

An audience member asked about adding a boat ramp off of this property. The Iowa DNR advised that they could not do this and Stevens represented that this was not part of their plan.

Commissioner Grant again discussed water issues on the site and emphasized their importance to be resolved.

Dan Sanders expressed concern about the impact on property and hotel-motel taxes for the City of Okoboji. Sanders encouraged tabling of any action to allow the developers to come back with revised plans after hearing the concerns of the Commission and those in attendance. Discussion took place pertaining to the taxable valuations far exceeding what they currently are.

Chairperson Pearson went through the conditional use standards and restrictions as outlined in Section 18.5 of the City of Okoboji Zoning Ordinance.

Meyers commented that for any new construction, the City would submit the plans to the City of Okoboji Design Review Committee for the commercial corridor architectural overlay.

Chairperson Pearson commented that they are there to design the conditional use permit and make recommendations and/or conditions upon the permit before sending it to the Board of Adjustment. Pearson inquired with the Commission if they needed more detail prior to making a recommendation. Commissioner Mendenhall commented that she would like to see more.

Stevens attempted to summarize the perceived issues which they could work to address. Stevens commented on the road elimination, the parking issue even though he mentioned that the parking they have provided is three-times what the City requires, and issues of storm water. Stevens expressed hesitancy in investing too much with uncertainty as to whether or not they would get approved.

An audience member asked what was best for the City—to work with someone who is working to make this property an improvement for the area, or allow what is happening now, or who knows what the next person might suggest to use the property for.

Chairperson Pearson expressed concern about moving this to the Board of Adjustment with the documentation that they have received so far today. Stevens commented that the reason it is so basic is because they are not looking to build something, they are looking to get approval on a conditional use permit. Upon confirmation of a conditional use permit the developer could put together far more detailed plans.

Commissioner Welle commented that to find affordable housing in the area is very difficult. Welle felt the idea that we could have something affordable in an ideal area to live is hard for her to turn her back on. Welle commented that it is not fair to the developer to try and revise the parking ordinance. Nelson commented that he agrees the parking ordinance is likely not strict enough but advised that the code requires 43 parking spots and they were providing 96. Stevens advised that pertaining to issues of storm water that they do not have a choice, these are standards that they are required to meet.

An audience member asked for clarification on what a conditional use permit actually is. Meyers explained what a conditional use permit was and why it was necessary in this situation. Meyers explained the difference between permissible and conditional uses. Meyers represented several permissible uses that would not require several layers of review like this.

Commissioner Welle commented towards the permissible uses explaining to the audience of what it could be. Welle commented it could be a restaurant and bar without door music and asked if that would be preferred over condos.

More discussion took place pertaining to boats and boat trailer parking. Stevens commented that he felt people were overestimating the number of boats and trailers associated with the condominiums.

Commissioner Grant advised that he felt he needed to see more information pertaining to the storm water but felt that this was a good idea.

Nelson commented that this was all good feedback and expressed interest in working with the City to ensure a solid site plan moving forward.

Commissioner Pearson said they did not need to provide full blown documentation pertaining to the storm water, site plan and infrastructure but wanted to see as an overview what their intentions were. Pearson said he was highly concerned about the boats and trailers. Pearson commented that he would rather see this property be condos than some of the alternative options available.

City Administrator Meyers asked the Commission for very specific comments pertaining to what the developer needed for a future meeting. Discussion took place pertaining to covenants, specific to short term rentals, storm water management, clarification on hoists, elimination of the road coming off the property to the east, and better solutions for parking.

An audience member inquired what happens when the condo association seeks to change the bylaws in the future to eliminate the short term rental clause. It was discussed that this could be in violation of their conditional use permit. Nelson commented they could make it a clause within the deed of their property so it wasn't an option.

Chairperson Pearson commented on two letters that were received pertaining this project. One from Pat Hill and one from Terry & Debbie Monk.

Meyers recalled the process for approval and discussed future Planning and Zoning Commission meeting in the event this were tabled and future Board of Adjustment meetings.

Chairperson Pearson thanked those in attendance for their input.

Motion made by Commissioner Welle and a second by Commissioner Mendenhall to table to the proposed conditional use permit application.

The Commission discussed the aforementioned list of things they were hoping to see including covenants, specific to short term rentals, storm water management, clarification on hoists, elimination of the road coming off the property to the east, and parking.

The following Commissioners voted "YEA": Mendenhall, Pearson, Welle, Grant. Agenda Item 3B was tabled 4-0.

The Planning and Zoning Commission would meet again sometime the week of August 14, 2023.

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 3:58 PM.

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Michael Meyers
City Administrator