

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
Thursday, July 12, 2012
7:00P.M. – COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Members Present: Acting Chairman Debi Burke, Don Koehler, Chuck Koehler, Alderman Mark Vandersnick, Terry Wolf, Tony Sosi, Mark Searing – Building Inspector, Mayor Blanton and Sylvia Frey -Secretary.

Members Absent: Chairman Turnroth, Bill Groleau, Matt Lillpop, Sandy Henrekin (RFCD) and Robbin Blackert – City Administrator

Quorum was met and official business could be conducted.

First item of Business – Approval of previous month’s minutes – (02/9/12 & 5/10/12) Acting Chairman Debi Burke asked for the members’ approval of minutes for 02/9/12 and 5/10/12. A motion was made by Don Koehler, seconded by Terry Wolf to approve these minutes. Motion carried.

Next item of Business – Discussion – Residential Zoning – Ordinance Change – B-2 (Mark Searing): Mark Searing stated while the city is working on zoning ordinances for the newly developed riverfront there should be consideration given to bring the existing B-2 zoning district in downtown Rock Falls in line with future zoning on the riverfront. There are several businesses which have apartments located in the 2nd floor area of their buildings and if these buildings were to be destroyed by fire, they would not be able to be rebuilt with apartment housing on the 2nd floor according to current B-2 zoning codes. Mark stated with the upcoming development of zoning districts for the riverfront, this change would be conducive for future planning. A motion was made by Chuck Koehler, seconded by Tony Sosi, to make a recommendation to city council to allow 2nd floor residential (apartments) housing in B-1 and B-2 zoning districts in downtown Rock Falls. Roll Call Vote: Acting Chairman Debi Burke (yes), Chuck Koehler (yes), Don Koehler (yes), Alderman Mark Vandersnick (yes), Terry Wolf (yes) and Tony Sosi (yes). Motion Carried – 6 (yes).

Next item of Business – Discussion – 50’ lot width – Non-conforming Use (Mark Searing): Mark Searing asked the members for their help in making a change to the city’s ordinance pertaining to non-conforming use for numerous lots which do not conform to current residential zoning district yard widths. When the current ordinances were adopted, all lots not conducive to required yard widths were considered non-conforming. Owners have been required to approach the P&Z Commission and city council for permission to rebuild their homes if homes were destroyed by unforeseen disasters. Discussion was held among the members and they felt the city needs to provide assurance to its residents that they would be allowed to rebuild if the situation arises. Mark has spoken with city attorney and city ordinances can be changed to reflect any changes P&Z members would be considering at this time. A motion was made by Chuck Koehler, seconded by Don Koehler, to make a recommendation to city council to allow any existing 50’ lot width (non-conforming) in Residential Zoning Districts to be considered conforming to current zoning ordinances as of today’s date. Roll Call Vote: Acting Chairman Debi Burke (yes), Chuck Koehler (yes), Don Koehler (yes), Alderman Mark Vandersnick (yes), Terry Wolf (yes) and Tony Sosi (yes). Motion Carried – 6 (yes).

Discussion was held pertaining to difficulties with current accessory building ordinance for detached garages, additions to detached garages. Mark stated as the current ordinance is written, several owners were not allowed to construct new or extend existing accessory buildings. A motion was made by Acting Chairman Debi Burke, seconded by Chuck Koehler to make a recommendation to city council to allow construction on lots less than 60’ width with existing homes to be allowed to follow existing setbacks on accessory buildings with a minimum of a 3’ side yard setback. Roll Call Vote: Acting Chairman Debi Burke (yes), Chuck Koehler (yes), Don Koehler (yes), Alderman Mark Vandersnick (yes), Terry Wolf (yes) and Tony Sosi (yes). Motion Carried – 6 (yes).

Discussion was held in regards to Whiteside County Health Dept’s parking lot on the corner of 12th Avenue and W. 2nd Street which was considered employee parking only. The Health Department has completed the additional parking lot project just north of their building and their employees will begin parking in this new lot leaving the other smaller corner parking lot open to clients. Chuck Koehler expressed concern with vehicles exiting the corner parking lot and the potential of traffic accidents at this intersection. Members felt this issue should be addressed in the near future.

Mayor Blanton mentioned the owner of the trailer park is working on annexation at this time.

With no further discussion, a motion was made by Acting Chairman Debi Burke, seconded by Tony Sosi to adjourn meeting. Motion carried. Next meeting is August 9, 2012 at 7:00pm. The meeting was adjourned at 8:04pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Rick Turnroth