

FAIRBURY PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES

Meeting
January 11th, 2021
6:30 p.m.

Chairman bob Brackle read the statement regarding the Open Meetings Act, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and asked for roll call. Other members present were: Doyle Buchmeier, Cathy Kleine, Cody Moyer, Peter Renn, Karl Hoeting and Paul Schramm.

1. Next, was the approval of the minutes from the September 14th, 2020 Meeting. Discussion, taking of any necessary or desired action.

Member Schramm made the motion to approve the minutes of the September 14th, 2020 meeting. Member Moyer seconded the motion. By roll call, the vote was: 7 - "yes" (Buchmeier, Brackle, Moyer, Schramm, Renn, Hoeting and Kleine) / 0 - "no". The motion passed.

2. Next, was discussion and recommendation regarding the Downtown Revitalization Plan. Discussion taking of any necessary or desired action

Member Moyer spoke on behalf of the Downtown Revitalization (DTR) Committee. He noted that there was a good turnout for the townhall and a very good response to the online survey (roughly 406 responses). At the steering committee ways to direct traffic to the downtown district was presented as a priority. Things like better wayfinding signage and possibly some kind of tourism info at 14th and E. They also discussed ways to help existing property owners maintain their buildings and oversight for the funding of those programs. Quality of upper story living quarters was noted and doing something to make the downtown area a unique experience was discussed. Miller and Associates reached out to committee members individually as well and Moyer stated that during his interview with the planners, he discussed a need for more of an online presence and maybe some help for the businesses in that area. It was noted that there would be another steering committee meeting coming up to review the final draft before it is presented to the public for comment and review and that Beldan would like to get any comments from the planning and zoning commission to Miller and Associates so that they can work that information into the plan before they finalize the draft for the final steering committee review. Member Brackle emphasized the need to clean up the corner at 14th and E and possibly build something there that would help to draw traffic to the downtown district. He also mentioned flags on E street that would lead to the downtown district. It was agreed by all that better directional signage was needed and that a better website presence was important. Kline stated that in the previous comprehensive plan upper story living was listed as a downtown priority. The commission agreed that it was important and that if funds could be allocated to upper story living then it would be critical for the living areas to comply with code. Bedlan asked that the commission members contact her within the week if they had anything else they wanted to add to the information that she will pass to the Miller and Associates planners and stated that she will keep them posted on the DTR planning process. This item was informative only and there was no motion made.

3. Next, was discussion and recommendation regarding the proposed Highway 136 Road Diet. Discussion; taking of any necessary or desired action.

Chairman Brackle gave the history on the proposed road diet. Stating that he has reached out to the state several times in the past and the district engineer has now proposed a way that the city might be able to work a road diet project with the state. Brackle and the committee discussed their concerns about people walking in the driving lanes on highway 136 because there are no sidewalks on either side of the road, the visual obstruction issues due to how close the existing structures are located to the lanes of traffic on 136, pedestrian accidents that have happened there in the past, near accidents when one car stops for pedestrians and the other lane continues on not able to see the pedestrians, the inaccessibility of the certain business due to the median, and the looks of the median. They agreed that removal of the median on highway 136, reducing it to 3 lanes along with the addition of sidewalks on both sides of the roadway would make this stretch of highway much safer for vehicle and pedestrian traffic, more conducive to business in the area and it would enhance the entrance to town. Bedlan stated that she has also spoken with Tom Goodbarn the district engineer for Fairbury and that Mr. Goodbarn requested that the city put together some letters of support for a physical road diet so that he can start a file on this project. Bedlan asked that the commission send her some letters in support of this project which she will pass on to the state and Klein suggested that Bedlan also look into the traffic reports on this stretch of road. This item was informative only and there was no motion made.

4. Next were discussion and recommendation regarding Fairbury Zoning Regulations- 2013 Edition. Discussion; taking of any necessary or desired action

Bedlan referred to the information in the packet and explained that there has been several requests in the past to allow for shipping containers to be used as storage units on private lots and until recently she has turned these request down because it clearly states in the 4.12.02 of the regulations that this is not allowed. However, the most recent request is a little bit of a different situation because it is located in the RCF district, on a mixed use property, less than a block from existing storage units and the owner is considering attaching it to the existing structure. Because of the specifics of this situation and due to the volume of request Bedlan wanted to present this to the Planning and Zoning commission for their opinions prior to it being presented at the next meeting for a hearing to make changes to zoning. The commission asked about the material of the structure that the storage unit might be attached to. The condition of the types of units that would be allowed was discussed. Members were concerned about these being allowed in residential districts stating that neighbors would not like them. There was discussion about how these structures would be taxed and it was determined that they would not generate property tax unless attached to the lot. The commission was also concerned about the safety of these structures and if they are considered part of the primary structure then how will the city deal with them when people want to live in them. The definition of storage container was also discussed. Schramm asked if allowing for these under the conditional use permit and then taking them case by case was an option. Bedlan stated currently they are not allowed even as a conditional use in the residential or commercial districts however, the Planning and Zoning commission could make that change to zoning and then require each individual request be reviewed prior to allowance. After much discussion she again stated that this was just brought to the commission for review and that at the property owners request it may be on the next agenda as a hearing. This item was informative only and there was no motion made.

5. Next, was discussion, annual review of current zoning and land use ordinances to ensure there are no discriminatory policies or practices as required by the Department of Economic Development to meet requirements of the federal fair housing laws and as part of the CDBG program. Discussion; taking of any necessary or desired action

Bedlan explained that this was the yearly review of the comprehensive plan and zoning / land use ordinances to assure that there are no discriminatory policies or practices in the them. The commission reviewed the plan and noted that they did not find any discriminatory policies or practices in the plan or ordinances. Member Renn made the motion to confirm no discriminatory policies or practices in the zoning and land use ordinances. Member

Schramm seconded the motion. 7 - "yes" (Buchmeier, Brackle, Moyer, Schramm, Renn, Hoeting and Kleine) / 0 - "no". The motion passed.

6. Next, were comments from the public on non-agenda items.

With no comments from the public on non-agenda items member Moyer made the motion to adjourn. Member Kleine seconded the motion. By roll call, the vote was: 7 - "yes" (Buchmeier, Brackle, Moyer, Schramm, Renn, Hoeting and Kleine) / 0 - "no". The motion passed

Laura K. Bedlan
Planning Commission Secretary