

CITY OF PLANO
MINUTES OF PLAN COMMISSION/ZBA
August 1, 2016
7:00 PM

The regular meeting of the Plan Commission/Zoning Board of Appeals was called to order on Monday, August 1, 2016 at 7:00 PM by Chairman Dave Teckenbrock at City Hall.

1. Roll Call:

Members in Attendance:

Dave Teckenbrock, Chairman
Cara Brummel
Ed Carter
Kurt Dreisilker
Cliff Oleson
Eric Oleson

Members Absent:

Kim Droysen -excused

2. Approve June 6, 2016 Minutes

A motion was made by Member C. Oleson, seconded by Member E. Oleson to adopt the minutes of the meeting of June 6, 2016 as printed.

Roll Call:

Voting "Aye": Teckenbrock, C. Oleson, E. Oleson, Carter, Brummel

Voting "Nay":

Absent: Droysen

Abstain: Dreisilker

Motion Carried

3. Variation -216 W Dearborn – 5-6E-3 Allow 4200 SF Buildable Lot and 5-6E-2 Allow 20'-9" rear yard

A motion was made by Member C. Oleson, seconded by Member Carter to open a public hearing.

Roll Call:

Voting "Aye": Teckenbrock, C. Oleson, Carter, Brummel, E. Oleson, Dreisilker

Voting "Nay":

Absent: Droysen

Abstain:

Motion Carried

The petitioner, Arturo Arreola of 104 N. Cedar St. in Sandwich IL, was sworn in to state his case.

Tom Karpus stated that Mr. Arreola bought the property with the intention of remodeling the home, but as the work began limited demolition showed that the house did not have a foundation, so the petitioner would not be able to do the intended work. Mr. Karpus stated that after looking over the plans submitted by the petitioner, he found that [with these two proposed variations] the petitioner could build the house that he intended to build on the lot. Mr. Karpus stated that the front and side-yard setbacks could be met so all he would need is a variation for the minimum lot size and a variation to allow a 20'9" rear yard.

Member C. Oleson asked if the 1-car garage was part of this property. The petitioner stated that there is a small garage on the property, with another garage behind it which belongs to the neighbor. Mr. Arreola stated that he inquired with the neighbor about purchasing some of the adjacent land, but said that the asking price was too high.

Member Dreisilker asked the petitioner what the area of the proposed house is in comparison with the area of the old house. The petitioner stated that the new house will be smaller –he stated that the old house was a one-story, but that he would like to build a two-story to save lot space.

Member C. Oleson asked what the square footage is of the new proposed house. The petitioner said he believes it will be around 1000 sq. ft. Mr. Karpus stated that the footprint is 27x28.5.

Member Dreisilker asked if there was anything that could be done with the footprint of the home that would allow for all of the setbacks to be met. Tom Karpus explained that the side-yard setbacks are met, but the issue is with the front to back. Mr. Karpus stated that the petitioner can match the front setback of the house next door, but that would shorten him up in the back. Chairman Teckenbrock stated that he would much rather see the setback in the front yard accommodated and the rear-yard shortened, than see the front setback shortened.

Chairman Teckenbrock stated that he personally feels that the petitioner is eradicating a problem, and that he does not have an issue with the variance for the rear setback.

The petitioner stated that if he is allowed to build, it will help to improve the appearance of the neighborhood, rather than just leaving an empty lot.

A motion was made by Member Carter, seconded by Member Dreisilker to close the public hearing.

Roll Call:

Voting "Aye": Teckenbrock, Carter, Dreisilker, C. Oleson, E. Oleson, Brummel

Voting "Nay":

Absent: Droysen

Abstain:

Motion Carried

Chairman Teckenbrock polled the Members on the following:

Standards for Variations:

1. The zoning board of appeals shall not recommend to the city council variation of this title, unless it shall make findings based upon the evidence presented to it in each specific case that the standards for hardships set forth in the Illinois municipal code are complied with and the following:

a. Because of the particular physical surroundings, shape or topographical conditions of the specific property involved, a particular hardship to the owner would result, as distinguished from a mere inconvenience, if the strict letter of the regulations were carried out.

Member Dreisilker stated that it would cause a hardship due to the size and shape of the lot in question.

Chairman Teckenbrock added that the petitioner explored expanding the lot and is not able to do so at a reasonable return.

The Members agreed that carrying out the strict regulations would result in a hardship to the petitioner.

Unanimous Yes

b. The conditions upon which the petition for a variation is based are unique to the property for which the variation is sought and are not applicable, generally, to other property within the same zoning classification.

Chairman Teckenbrock stated that there are other lots like this, but this is the property currently in question and it is a unique situation. The Members all agreed.

Unanimous Yes

c. The alleged difficulty or hardship is caused by this title and has not been created by any person presently having an interest in the property.

The Members all agreed that the hardship was not created by the petitioner.

Unanimous Yes

d. The granting of the variation will not be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to other property or improvements in the neighborhood in which the property is located.

The Members all agreed that the granting of the variation will not be detrimental or injurious.

Unanimous Yes

e. The proposed variation will not impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property or substantially increase the congestion in the public streets, or increase the danger to the public safety, or substantially diminish or impair property values within the neighborhood.

Chairman Teckenbrock stated that the petitioner will be improving the property.

The Members all agreed that the proposed variation will not impair light/air, diminish property values, or increase danger to the public safety within the neighborhood.

Unanimous Yes

A motion was made by Member C. Oleson, seconded by Member Carter to recommend to the City Council approval of the request to allow a 4200 sq. ft. buildable lot and a 20'9" rear yard at 216 W. Dearborn.

Roll Call:

Voting "Aye": Teckenbrock, C. Oleson, Carter, Brummel, E. Oleson, Dreisilker

Voting "Nay":

Absent: Droysen

Abstain:

Motion Carried

4. Comprehensive Plan Workshop

Mike Hoffman with Teska Associates was present to talk with the Members about updating the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Hoffman gave a PowerPoint Presentation and explained that during this first workshop the goal is to assess where Plano is with the existing plan, discuss things that need updating, and discuss things that may need changing or to be done a bit differently.

Mr. Hoffman explained the timeline of the project and asked for help from the Members on getting the word out to the public in order to get as much feedback as possible. He also asked the Members to let him know if there are any people/groups that he should be speaking to.

Some of the key points of interest that Mr. Hoffman has gathered and will be using as a starting point for things to focus on are as follows:

More senior housing; vacant lots; expand commercial tax base (industrial & retail); Rte. 34 corridor needs facelift; historic downtown vacancies/appearance issues; high property taxes; more restaurants (specifically dinner options); new public works facility; streets need work; Eldamain corridor is key industrial opportunity; continue to pursue Metra extension; do a better job of telling Plano story; Monarch Foundation site; playground on South side of Rte. 34; addition of a splash pad in town; outdoor recreational space for older adults.

Mr. Hoffman asked the Members for any comments/feedback, or if they disagreed with any of the above items.

-Chairman Teckenbrock stated that he does not disagree with any of these but that the Metra is something currently out of their control.

-Member Brummel stated that it is a great list.

Mr. Hoffman showed the members some slides which analyzed different trends such as population, traffic, building/growth in neighboring communities, etc. He asked the Members to think about how large they want Plano to grow and how fast.

-Chairman Teckenbrock stated that some of feedback they have received from the Public in past meetings is that the philosophy is the residential has to be there before the commercial. If there is not enough rooftops to support the commercial, businesses will not want to invest in building in the area.

-Member Brummel asked Mr. Hoffman if he thinks Plano being more of a “commuter” or “bedroom” community has anything to do with it not expanding as much as some of the neighboring communities. Mr. Hoffman stated that every town needs to define who they are. He stated that one of the unique qualities about Plano is the natural environment surrounding the area –the boundary of the two creeks and the State Park.

-Member Dreisilker asked how much conversation throughout this process there will be with other communities throughout the region. Mike Hoffman stated that he will definitely be touching base with Yorkville, Sandwich and the county as far as discussing their plans and how they do/do not fit together with Plano’s and try to match up where necessary (i.e.: a road expansion, Metra, etc.).

-The Members discussed getting away from the “industrial” city brand and moving more towards a “green” community.

-Rich Healy stated that as Little Rock Township has such high taxes, if we are looking for residential growth, it will need to go hand in glove with other tax-generating revenue, which would be commercial and industrial. Mr. Hoffman had a slide comparing Plano’s taxes with those in neighboring communities, and it showed that Plano’s were the highest in the area.

Mr. Hoffman asked the Members to review the current mission statement and think about how it can be updated.

-Member Brummel stated that she believes Plano grossly understates the state park, and should start thinking of how to better utilize that feature.

-Member Dreisilker stated that he believes people enjoy going to areas with trail systems, and he believes the state park might help to anchor a regional trail system which could be a great way to make Plano more desirable to new residents. Mr. Karpus added that Plano has Stuart Park in town which is not highly used. Member Dreisilker stated that he sees people wanting to use asphalt trails for biking/walking/etc., which Stuart Park does not currently offer. He added that he is suggesting something of a regional trail system, not any major construction of the existing park. Mr. Karpus stated maybe Plano should promote what it does currently have –the numerous parks and outdoor natural settings that are currently under-utilized.

-Scott Mulliner stated that the Members may want to consider the mission statement currently used for the Emergency Operation Plan as a possible alternative.

-Chairman Teckenbrock stated that he likes the idea of utilizing the natural points that Plano already has to offer. He asked Mr. Hoffman if he sees that in other communities. Mr. Hoffman stated that he likes the idea that each community sets themselves up from the others, and right now Plano has the natural environment that sets them apart from the other communities in the area.

Mike Hoffman asked the Members if there are any other things that should be more closely looked at when planning for Plano.

-Member Brummel stated that Eldamain should still be a focus, as far as new commercial or industrial growth to generate revenue and help to offset the taxes.

-Rich Healy suggested finding a way to embrace the railroad to make it a positive as opposed to a perceived negative, such as adding a feature that would bring people into town to enjoy the historical aspect of the railroad.

-Member Brummel agreed that there is some need for tasteful downtown attraction(s).

-Scott Mulliner added that he had heard an idea for the old grain elevator to convert it to some sort of a viewing station over the train tracks –to serve as a feature to bring people into town.

Mike Hoffman led the Members through an activity to identify Plano’s key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

-Member Dreisilker asked Mr. Hoffman if there was a study to show crime rates in Plano in comparison to other communities. Mr. Hoffman stated he has not looked into it at this point, but will do so.

-Tom Karpus stated that Plano is currently thought to have a bad reputation –he suggested we look into why, and what can be done about it.

-Scott Mulliner stated that he believes we need to try changing the image of the City, down to the point of changing the logo and improving the current resident’s attitude/opinion of the City.

-Member Brummel stated that there are a lot of “transplants” into Plano that are of lower-income and don’t necessarily come into town to be part of the community or to help improve the area, but to live in lower-income housing. She believes that this does not help with Plano’s overall image as it is becoming a large portion of the town, and needs to be evened out with more higher-income residents.

-Scott Mulliner agreed with Member Brummel and stated that somehow the quality of the houses needs to be brought up in order to bring in the next level of income.

There being no other business to come before the Commission, a motion was made by Member E. Oleson, seconded by Member Carter to adjourn the meeting. A unanimous “Aye” voice was heard. The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Kiara Beckman, Recording Secretary