

PLANNING & ZONING COMMITTEE

MARCH 13, 2019

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 p.m. by Chairman Tim McCarthy. Committee members present were Tim McCarthy, Jonathan Smith, and Becky Williams. Also present were Bridgette Kabat, City Administrator, Laura Alkire, Law Director, Brody Walters, Planning and Zoning Administrator, and Mark Easterling, Deputy Planning and Zoning Administrator.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Patrice Spitzer, 315 E. Front Street, was present on behalf of the Historic Landmarks Commission to ask that the Planning and Zoning office initiate a code amendment to require applicants requesting a demolition in the Historic District to get the opinion of three different structural engineers. The applicant would be required to pay for all three opinions, but two of the engineers would be chosen by the City. She said that the Historic Landmarks Commission fears that the recent decision to allow a demolition in the district has set a terrible precedent. Ms. Williams and Mr. Smith said that the decision to allow the demolition was not taken lightly, and they agreed that the Code needs to be changed, however not necessarily in the manner suggested by Ms. Spitzer.

DRIVEWAY – 816 LOUISIANA AVENUE

Sara Halaoui of 816 Louisiana Avenue explained that she shares a driveway with her neighbor, but the shared driveway has two different materials. Ms. Halaoui had the concrete on her side removed and had stone put down to match her neighbor's side. The Code as written does not allow for stone driveways. Ms. Halaoui said that she has reached out to several contractors about putting in concrete, but only one contractor will even do half of a driveway. The Committee referred this issue to the Planning Commission to consider a potential amendment to the Planning and Zoning Code regarding shared driveways. The Planning and Zoning Office has agreed to stay any enforcement action until the issue is resolved.

CEMETERY FENCING

Mr. McCarthy said that the cemetery fencing was discussed at the Finance Committee meeting, and the Committee felt that there would be funds available in the budget should an amendment be needed in the course of the year to pay for the cemetery fencing. Ms. Williams asked if the cemetery board made a decision about the fencing. Mr. Walters said that he got a quote for masonry pre-cast columns with 4x4 posts and rails that are PVC covered. The materials for 1,300 linear feet parallel to West South Boundary Street would be approximately \$70,000. Mr. Smith said that the board talked about doing one side per year. Mr. Walters said that the proposed fence reflects the spirit and intent of the Code for the Corridor Overlay, it improves the aesthetics, and is low maintenance compared to some other options. There was discussion regarding

taking the fence down and not replacing it, or planting bushes instead of a fence. Mr. McCarthy commented that he supports the notion of the City helping with the costs of upgrading the fence, but that \$70,000 per year for three or four years was getting pretty high. Tom Friess said that the existing fence has been there about 100 years, and he would like to repair and paint it. The Cemetery Board will continue to discuss the issue.

LAND USE PLAN

Mr. McCarthy asked Mr. Walters to give a brief explanation of the land use plan that is in the budget. Mr. Walters said that this is a carryover item from the 2018 budget for \$45,000 for consulting fees to develop a plan on how we want the City to grow and how to react to that growth. The land use plan is used as the first step toward developing a Comprehensive Plan, which then serves as a roadmap to achieving the goals set in the land use plan.

ABILITY CENTER PRESENTATION

Katie Thomas of The Ability Center was present to provide information about the Americans with Disabilities Act and the downtown area. Ms. Thomas said that there are 22 businesses downtown on Louisiana Avenue that have steps going into their business. The Ability Center has received numerous complaints over the years about the accessibility of the downtown businesses. The City has put together a proposal to assist the building owners to bring the entrance to their buildings into compliance with ADA laws. Ms. Kabat said that the building owners can use the right of way in different ways and so instead of a hodge podge of remedies, the City wants to acknowledge that this is the Historic District and develop a cohesive, consistent plan to maintain the functionality of the right of way for events. Ms. Kabat said that this proposal would get people into the buildings, but the building owners are responsible for modifications inside the building. There was also a brief discussion about ingress/egress to the Municipal Building.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Tim McCarthy, Chairman
Planning & Zoning Committee

Next meeting: Wednesday, April 10, 2019 at 5:30 p.m.