

OWATONNA PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES FOR JULY 27, 2021

The Owatonna Planning Commission met in regular session at 5:30 pm in the Council Chambers of the City Administration Building with President Kelly Rooks conducting the meeting. Present at roll call were Commissioners John Eickhoff, Mark Meier, Nicholas Peake, Kelly Rooks, and Rachel Springer-Gasner. Commissioner Mark Wilson was absent. Community Development Manager Greg Kruschke and Planning Technician Kristen Kopp were also present.

A motion was made by Meier and seconded by Eickhoff to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of June 8, 2021. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion carried.

Original Town Block 3 Alley Vacation, which is a request by Vesterby Real Estate Investments LLC, Caramel Development LLC, Clayton & Victoria Anderson, and Rick & Debra Gnemi to vacate a portion of a public alley on the west side of 100 Block of Cedar Avenue North, was presented by Community Development Manager Greg Kruschke. (Refer to report on file.) Public hearing opened at 5:32 pm. Greg Schultz was present to represent all applicants. He said that he's available to answer any questions the Commissioners might have. Public hearing closed at 5:33 pm. Meier asked how they planned to close the alley off. Schultz said that they will be cleaning it out and putting up a gate. As the streetscape is going on, they'd just as soon keep people out of there. Rooks asked if the City has removed snow from that alley. Schultz said that it's never been dedicated to the City or to the public. They City has not done anything in the alley, and it kind of became a no-man's land. Rooks asked if they'd continue that maintenance without an issue. Schultz said that they would probably be improving the maintenance. A motion was made by Springer-Gasner and seconded by Peake to recommend City Council approval of this alley vacation with the condition that a utility easement be dedicated over the alley. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion carried.

Cedar Avenue / West Vine Street Parking Designation was presented by Community Development Manager Greg Kruschke. (Refer to report on file.) Kruschke said that they're recommending a section of West Vine Street be changed. With the North Cedar Avenue Parking, they want to get people downtown and to stay downtown. He said that anything less than two hours is most likely unenforceable. One-hour designation has been talked about, however, staff feels that is essentially the same as the 30-minute designation. Two-hour parking would be assigned to a majority of the stalls. It allows you to stop in a few stores and get something to eat, although it still doesn't encourage employee parking. The other option discussed was four-hour parking, but that encourages employees to park in those stalls. They want this to be for patrons, not employers or employees. He said that four hours is the one that staff is most adamantly against. They're recommending the two-hour designation for the entire corridor, minus the ADA stalls. Eickhoff said that it looks like there's not much of a change. Kruschke said that they are losing 17 stalls with the redesign, but just a few 30-minute stalls will be changing over. Peake asked about Pearl Street north of the new hotel. Kruschke said that they looked at that, but from a staff side, they decided to wait. Those houses are still there and they have limited access. That street is essentially closed down with the construction right now. There is a need to accommodate those residential properties through there. That's why they decided to leave it off this request. He said they want to take a holistic look at this entire map. They want to be accommodating. He said they want to be able to research it. The police department will be monitoring these lots overnight. A motion was made by Eickhoff and seconded by Springer-Gasner to recommend City Council approval of two-hour parking designation to be adopted on Cedar Avenue and West Vine Street as discussed in the memo. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion carried.

Kruschke updated the Commissioners on previous items. He said City Council approved the request for the variance about the multi-family residence.

Kruschke highlighted the Building Permit Reports for June. He said that they've done almost 200 more permits than they had at this time last year. We've issued 20 single family homes at this point with three house plans in review. We're around 100 vacant lots on the market ready to be built on.

Kruschke said that Dan Boeke was promoted to City Council, so he will no longer be with us. We have an at-large seat to fill, which has been posted on the City website. He told the Commissioners if they know of anyone who is interested, to let them know.

Kruschke said that the next meeting, scheduled for August 10th, will be cancelled as no requests came in.

Schultz, the City Council President, said that on behalf of the City Council he wanted to say thank you for all the Commissioners do. Council appreciates everything they do and make a lot of decisions based on their recommendations.

There being no further business to come before the Planning Commission at this time, a motion was made by Meier and seconded by Springer-Gasner to adjourn the meeting at 5:58 pm. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Greg Kruschke
Community Development Manager