

(These minutes are not approved until the next Commission meeting.)

City of West Branch Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting
January 26, 2021
West Branch City Council Chambers, 110 North Poplar Street

An Electronic Meeting (pursuant to Iowa Code Section 21.8) of the Planning & Zoning Commission of the City of West Branch, Cedar County, IA was held on Tuesday, January 26, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. because a meeting in person was impossible or impractical due to concerns for the health and safety of Commission Members, Staff and the Public presented by COVID-19.

Until further notice, all of our Planning & Zoning Meetings will be held electronically. Persons may still attend, observe and participate in the meeting at the Council Chambers, City Office, 110 N. Poplar St, West Branch, Iowa. Social distancing practices shall be observed for any persons attending the meeting in person at City Hall.

Chairperson John Fuller called the Planning & Zoning Commission meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Roll call (via Zoom) Commission members: John Fuller, Ryan Bowers, Emilie Walsh, Jim Hoffman and Brad Bower. Matt Can Scoyoc and Sally Peck were absent. City Staff present: Deputy Clerk Leslie Brick, and Terry Goerd and Mayor Roger Laughlin. Via Zoom: City Administrator Redmond Jones.

APPROVE AGENDA/CONSENT AGENDA/MOVE TO ACTION.

Approve the agenda for the January 26, 2021 Planning & Zoning Commission meeting. /Move to action. Motion by Bowers, second by Bower to approve the agenda. Absent: Van Scoyoc and Peck. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Approve minutes from the November 24, 2020 Planning & Zoning Commission meeting. /Move to action. Motion by Walsh, second by Bower to approve the minutes. Motion carried on a voice vote.

PUBLIC HEARING/NON-CONSENT AGENDA

Approve _____ as Chairperson of the Planning & Zoning Commission. / Move to action. Bowers nominated Fuller for chairperson for 2021. There were no other nominations. Motion by Bowers, second by Bower to approve Fuller as Chairperson of the Planning & Zoning Commission for 2021. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Approve _____ as Vice Chairperson of the Planning & Zoning Commission. / Move to action. Bower nominated (Ryan) Bowers for vice chair for 2021. There were no other nominations. Motion by Bower, second by Walsh to approve (Ryan) Bowers as the Vice Chairperson of the Planning & Zoning Commission for 2021. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Public Hearing – Amend Chapter 165- add Section 50 – Swimming Pools.

Fuller opened the public hearing at 7:03 p.m. Mayor Laughlin said he was happy to see the commission compromise and not require permits or fencing for above ground pools as he was against that type of limitation and the burden for residents. There were no public comments. Fuller closed the public hearing at 7:04 p.m.

Approve language for Ordinance 780 – Swimming Pools and recommend forwarding to the West Branch City Council. Move to action.

The commission had no further comments on the ordinance language as written.

Motion by Walsh, second by Bowers to approve Ordinance 780 as written. Motion carried on a voice vote. (This moves the Ordinance to the City Council for approval.)

OLD BUSINESS: None.

STAFF REPORTS:

Brick advised the commission the current Building Incentive Program is scheduled to sunset on June 30, 2021. Brick recapped the program that started in 2015 to encourage growth of the city. Brick said program includes discounted building permit fees and a \$5000 (city) tax rebate to property owners and added that there have been 98 new homes constructed that are eligible for the program so far. Fuller asked if an economic impact study was done to determine continuing the program. Brick replied that a study had not been conducted and Laughlin added that the program did what the City wanted it to do, but it was now time to end it.

Goerdt reported that he had received a call from a Des Moines area developer who is interested in building in West Branch and indicated that they would be applying for permits this spring.

Laughlin suggested the Commission explore reviewing the building permit fees once the incentive program sunsets and asked for the subject to be discussed at the next meeting.

COMMENTS FROM CHAIR AND COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Walsh, a realtor said she has received some inquiries on commercial property in West Branch and indicated that there is new interest in the community.

Bowers asked if there was an update on the (former) Croell property. Laughlin replied that the City was at a standstill.

Adjourn

Motion by Walsh, second by Bower to adjourn the Planning & Zoning Commission meeting. Motion carried on a voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

Submitted by:

Leslie Brick

Deputy City Clerk