

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

City of West Branch Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting
May 25, 2021
West Branch City Council Chambers, 110 North Poplar Street

Until further notice, all of our Planning & Zoning Meetings will be held in-person and electronically. Persons may still attend, observe and participate in the meeting at the Council Chambers, City Office, 110 N. Poplar St, West Branch, Iowa.

Chairperson John Fuller called the Planning & Zoning Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
Roll call: Commission members present: John Fuller, Ryan Bowers, Jim Hoffman, Matt Van Scoyoc, Brad Bower, Emilie Walsh and Sally Peck. City Staff present: City Administrator Redmond Jones II, Deputy Clerk Leslie Brick, Terry Goerdts, Mayor Roger Laughlin and City Engineer Dave Schechinger.

APPROVE AGENDA/CONSENT AGENDA/MOVE TO ACTION.

Approve the agenda for the May 25, 2021 Planning & Zoning Commission meeting. /Move to action.
Motion by Bower, second by Walsh to approve the agenda. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Approve minutes from the March 23, 2021 Planning & Zoning Commission meeting. /Move to action.
Motion by Van Scoyoc, second by Hoffman to approve the minutes. Motion carried on a voice vote.

PUBLIC HEARING/NON-CONSENT AGENDA

Review and discuss West Branch Village Expansion Site Plan

Joseph Mailander, Clearwell Engineering presented the residential expansion proposal which consists of 66 new lots on the southwest corner of the property and will be accessed by Reagan Blvd, via N. 4th St. Mailander said he had been discussing the proposed site plan with City Engineer Schechinger and said they were working toward having the new lots tie into the city's sewer system. Schechinger added that city staff had also reviewed the proposed site plan and raised several concerns and made several recommendations such as storm water run-off, stormwater fees, landscaping (trees, shrubs, etc.), trail connection, adequate parking, snow removal / storage, additional emergency shelter, street lighting, sidewalks and a potential second access point. The Commission asked about emergency vehicle access and Laughlin said the Fire Chief reviewed the plan and had no issue with the design. The Commission raised a couple of concerns regarding increased traffic on N. 4th Street with the added homes and the location of the second access point. Peck asked if the current residents had been advised of the expansion and Mailander replied that the project was being communicated to their residents. Fuller was pleased to see the opportunity for more affordable housing in West Branch and asked if additional amenities were planned such as a playground. Mailander said there was nothing formal planned at the time, but would take all comments back to the property owner for discussion.

Review draft Ordinance 781 – Annexed Territory

Jones presented an ordinance he prepared amending Chapter 165 regarding the city's annexation process. He said the language was taken from the Tiffin City Code and would be used to provide framework for future annexation in West Branch.

Approve proposed language for Ordinance 781. / Move to action.

Motion by Bowers, second by Walsh to approve the proposed language of Ordinance 781. Motion approved on a voice vote. Motion carried.

Discuss sign requirements for the HCI District

Deputy Clerk Brick explained that the city receives several calls a year regarding signage requirements in the HCI District (the HCI District is south of I-80). Brick said the current city code does not clearly indicate the requirements and therefore leads to many requests for permits. Brick said the city received a letter from

the Iowa Department of Transportation in 2019 that indicates that they have responsibility to control the erection and maintenance of advertising signs along interstate and primary highways. Schechinger recommended adding additional language to the city code from State Code chapter 306B may be helpful. Goerdt also suggested that permits be required for signs as well.

Discuss Comprehensive Plan – Chapter 9 -Transportation

Fuller opened the discussion regarding the 2019 West Branch Comprehensive Plan and asked the commission to suggest items that the City Council could implement. Bowers asked for the Council to allow the Planning & Zoning Commission to comment on future street improvements so that bike lanes can be considered in the planning of them. He also asked for an update on the completion of the Greenview Drive connection. Schechinger said the project is moving along and that grading was expected to be complete by the end of June. Bowers also asked the status of round-a-bout planned for West Main Street and Cedar-Johnson Road as a part of the Herbert Hoover Highway improvements. Schechinger said the Council recently gave up on the idea of installing a round-a-bout due to the rising construction cost of the project. Schechinger said that Johnson County is still working on the design and connection to West Main Street. Fuller suggested that the city could possibly use some of the American Rescue Funds be used to help fund the project. Peck brought up concerns of speeding traffic of N. Downey St. again. Bowers said he's noticed an increase in speeding cars on Ohrt Street as well and wondered if speed bumps could be added. Fuller said he would like to see the city focus on a trails map, more bicycle parking, seek federal funding opportunities for projects such as car charging stations and more enforcement on speeding violators.

Review Future Land Use Map

The commission made no recommendations for changes at this time but asked if the map could be updated to reflect the residential property in the Cedar's Edge Subdivision and Parkside Hills.

OLD BUSINESS

Update on rezoning former Croell property

Jones said the city had received some interest in the property, but the property on the corner of East Main and North 4th Street is posing a problem. Jones said he was working with ECIA for ways to encourage the current owner to sell the property. Laughlin added that he reached out to some of the surrounding property owners about rezoning their properties to a Planned Unit Development zoning classification and said he received no opposition but will check back before moving forward.

STAFF REPORTS:

Brick gave an update on the City Code recodification process and said she hoped to have it completed by the end of 2021. Goerdt said building permits have not slowed down and that D R Horton has purchased several lots in the Loethen Ridge Estates subdivision.

COMMENTS FROM CHAIR AND COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Fuller asked if the city should consider an ordinance regarding off-street loading, referring to the trucks often unloading on Main Street at West Branch Ford.

Jim Hoffman asked if the commission or city have any concerns on if developers have design standards on the housing to avoid a cookie cutter look. He also noted that in the Loethen Ridge subdivision, the R-2 lots were small and wondered if the commission should review the size requirements. The commission briefly discussed the idea of design standards and said they would support developers including designs standards in their covenants.

Adjourn

Motion by Walsh, second by Bower to adjourn the Planning & Zoning Commission meeting. Motion carried on a voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Submitted by:

Leslie Brick

Deputy City Clerk