

I. CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Planning Commission was held on Monday, February 8, 2021, commencing at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall. Chairperson Asmus called the meeting to order.

A. ROLL CALL:

Chairperson	Shannon Asmus	Present
Commissioner	Michael Flaata	Present
Commissioner	Judy Hudson	Absent
Commissioner	Larry Dahl	Present
Commissioner	Eric Mathwig	Present
Commissioner	Jeff Woods	Present
Commissioner	Tom Zens	Absent
City Planner	Hannah Rybak	Present

B. ANNOUNCEMENT OF ADDITIONAL ITEMS - None.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Commissioner Dahl, seconded by Commissioner Flaata, to approve the minutes of the December 14, 2020 meeting. Upon roll call vote, all members present voted aye.

Motion Carried.

III. SCHEDULED ITEMS

A. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

- CHANGE OF ZONING REQUEST** – *by Zion Lutheran Church at 504 N Gilman Avenue
Change of Zoning from R-1 to B-1 to allow the property to operate a commercial kitchen
in addition to the existing church operations*

City Planner, Hannah Rybak, provided an overview of the request. She reviewed the consistency of the request with the standards for granting a Change of Zoning.

No comments were received.

Staff recommendation and potential action were reviewed.

Commissioner Asmus asked why the need for a change of zoning. City Planner Rybak explained a commercial kitchen is not a permitted use in R-1.

Commissioner Asmus asked what we are getting into for possible changes allowed in a B-1 versus R-1. Rybak explained that B-1 is intended to be complimentary to residential districts so there shouldn't be any issues.

Commissioner Asmus opened the Public Hearing.

This being the time, date, and place set, with all mailed and published notices given as required by law, the hearing was opened at approximately 5:39 p.m., February 8, 2021, to consider a Change of Zoning Request by Zion Lutheran Church at 504 N Gilman Avenue.

Pastor Troy Pflibsen and Don Hoffmann, representing Zion Lutheran Church, were present to answer any questions and explain their request.

Commissioner Dahl asked if Zion is planning on taking over Meals on Wheels or just partner with them. Donn Hoffmann explained that Lutheran Social Services (LSS) would be running the kitchen to prepare those meals. Ecumen has previously been doing it but no longer wants to.

Hoffmann also explained that the kitchen will be an asset to the daycare center located in the church.

Commissioner Asmus asked if there would be full-time staff. LSS will have three staff members operating the kitchen.

Commissioner Woods asked if this would become an issue with funerals. Hoffmann explained that it will not. LSS will cater funerals or there's a small kitchenette off the commercial kitchen that could be used.

Darlene Kotelnicki from 425 N Gorman stated that she sees no issues with any kind of traffic flow.

Commissioner Asmus asked about Meals on Wheels traffic volume. Troy Pflibsen said in the past there were 3 drivers through Ecumen so he would assume it would be the same.

Commissioner Flaata asked if senior dining will now be held in-house at the church. Pflibsen said the plan is yes it will. Pre-covid there was approximately 10-12 attendees. The current drive through service closer to 30. He is not sure if it will stay that way after Covid-19 or not.

No further comments were heard and the hearing was closed at approximately 5:48 p.m.

Commissioner Flaata said he thinks this is a good project. The multiple options to access traffic flow is a benefit.

Commissioner Woods stated he thinks this looks good.

Based upon the submitted plans and findings of facts, Commissioner Woods made a motion to recommend approval of the Change of Zoning request by Zion Lutheran Church at 504 N Gilman. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Dahl. Upon roll call vote, all members present voted aye.

Motion carried.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. POTENTIAL ORDINANCE AMENDMENT DISCUSSION

City Planner Rybak reviewed potential ordinance amendments for the Commission to discuss. These included amendments to the current fee schedule, the possibility of adding escrow account requirements, and amendments to park dedication fees.

Park Dedication Fees

Rybak explained with the park dedication fee that we are seeing smaller divisions which are not subject to any fee. An option would be to add in a fee per newly created buildable lots for the smaller divisions or a percentage fee for larger divisions.

Commissioner Asmus asked if the fee would be required to pay up front or as the lots were sold. Rybak said it would depend upon the process the City would set up. Asmus then stated that we have one opportunity with the new developments to make things nice for our community. He feels we are on the low end for fees.

Commissioner Dahl commented that part of the Commission's job is to plan for the future. They are always talking about green space and the park dedication fee is a good place to start with that. He feels the 5% is a good rate. Commissioner Flaata stated he is okay with the 3-5% range. Commissioner Asmus said people like green space and they like to be outside. He leans more towards the higher side of the fee.

Fee Schedule/Escrow Accounts

City Planner Rybak explained the best way to go with the fee schedule is to require the same flat fee for all applications. Escrow accounts could be used for larger projects. All commissioners were in agreement. They felt an estimate of escrow should be given and if used up and the project is not complete, the applicant would be required to add more into the escrow account.

Commissioner Asmus stated he was okay with a flat fee for all sign permits. He then asked for a definition on a temporary sign to which City Planner Rybak explained that the temporary sign fee needs to be removed because they are not regulated by the Ordinance. Asmus again asked what is considered a temporary sign. Rybak described it as a banner sign or any sign not fixed to the ground or the wall of a building. After discussion, the Commission felt the sign ordinance should be reviewed.

Commissioner Flaata pointed out that some fees went down with the new proposed fee schedule. Commissioner Woods asked why the PUD fee would be reduced. Rybak explained that the fee would be the application fee then there would be the escrow account on top of the application fee to pay for the expenses.

No formal action was taken.

B. PLANNING, ZONING, BUILDING INSPECTIONS, & CODE ENFORCEMENT DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW

Commissioner Asmus explained how the Council is doing a departmental review and has requested from the Planning Commission 2.5 representatives, with Commissioner Mathwig being the .5 since he is the Council representative on the Commission.

Commissioner Woods accepted the offer to be one of the representatives provided most meetings be held in the morning.

No other commissioners present were interested in being the second representative. Commissioner Asmus will reach out to Commissioner Zens and Hudson to see if they would be willing to fill that vacancy.

C. HPC/PC JOINT MEETING DISCUSSION

Commissioner Asmus gave an overview of the meeting with Mid-Minnesota Development. He said there was a lot of good discussion. Mid-MN has explained it will be approximately a nine-month program/process to get to where they need to be. City Council member and HPC representative, Darlene Kotelnicki, added to the conversation that they want the end result to be better.

Mid-Minnesota has requested two members from the Planning Commission attend meetings. Commissioner Asmus attended the first meeting and said he would be one of the representatives. Commissioner Flaata agreed to be the second.

Commissioner Woods attended the first meeting and expressed that he feels there is still misconception on the involvement of the Planning Commission as it relates to the HPC and Downtown Council. Who represents building and zoning when it comes to downtown and why is the Planning Commission involved in downtown planning? Commissioner Asmus commented that they all need to work together and be proactive.

Keith Johnson approached the Planning Commission with the question of has any building permit with a zoning issue downtown come before the Commission. The Commission stated that there has not been one yet. Johnson then addressed Kotelnicki to which she said the HPC only cares about how the buildings look. City Planner Rybak explained the process to Johnson that an HPC approval is required before the zoning and building permit is reviewed.

V. OLD BUSINESS

VI. ADDITIONAL ITEMS

Commissioner Asmus explained to the Commission that Gregg Schilling's development may be on the next meeting agenda. He requested that they all start thinking of questions and to be prepared in case it is on March's agenda.

Commissioner Woods had a resident request a follow-up on the CUP for the kennel license. City Planner Rybak explained that the applicants have decided to move out of Litchfield.

HPC Meeting

Commissioner Flaata gave the Commission an overview of the last HPC meeting. The Downtown Council would like to see benches, bike racks and additional lighting downtown. There is a CLG grant available to pay for the benches. There was also discussion on façade grants.

VII. SET HEARING DATES AND TIMES

The next scheduled meeting is Monday, March 8th, 2021, at 5:30 p.m.

VIII. REVIEW OF COUNCIL ACTIONS

**A. CONDITIONAL USE REQUEST DENIED – by Brenda Lindom at 321 N Swift Avenue
*Kennel license for five (5) personal dogs***

Commissioner Mathwig commented the City Council went both ways on this request. Councilperson Loch had explained to the Council that the kennel license would go with the property, not the applicant, so the property owner should've been the one to apply. Based on that reason, the City Council denied the request.

**B. CONDITIONAL USE REQUEST DENIED – by Keith Schulte at 518 E 1st Street
*Retroactive request for a structure move onto the property***

Commissioner Mathwig explained the Council didn't want to set precedent on approving retro-active applications, so they denied the request.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Asmus adjourned the meeting at approximately 6:43 p.m.

Hannah Rybak
City Planner