

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

A meeting of the Planning Commission was held on Monday, August 8, 2022, 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	Absent
Commissioner	Larry Dahl	Present
Commissioner	Eric Mathwig	Present
Commissioner	Jeff Woods	Present
Commissioner	Tom Zens	Present
Commissioner	James Ellingson	Present
City Planner	Hannah Rybak	Present

**B. ANNOUNCEMENT OF ADDITIONAL ITEMS**

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

It was moved by Commissioner Mathwig, seconded by Commissioner Dahl, to approve the minutes of the July 11, 2022, meeting. All members present voted aye.

Motion Carried.

**IV. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATES**

Planner Rybak presented an update on the ordinance amendment process. The signs table, uses table, and zoning district standards table were presented in final form, based on input received at prior Planning Commission meetings.

A listed version of all additional setbacks was presented, with intent to place all additional setback requirements in one place, following the Zoning District standards table. These requirements were pulled from various sections of the existing code.

Planner Rybak presented the draft version of Accessory Structure requirements. Commissioner Mathwig asked about a situation he is aware of, outside of Litchfield, where people are residing on their property in a camper while building their future house. Planner Rybak responded that would not be permitted in town. The City restricts the use of an accessory building or camper as a residence.

Commissioner Ellingson asked if a “shouse” (shop-house) would be permitted in Litchfield. These are typically large garage with living quarters. Planner Rybak responded that garages, attached or detached, cannot exceed 1,200 square feet within the City, and that a “shouse” is not a type of construction you would see within a city.

The Planning Commission continued discussion from the July meeting regarding whether or not to require garage space for newly created residential dwellings. Commissioner Asmus stated that he feels that anyone who is living in a dwelling should have a garage to store their belongings in. Properties need to provide for vehicle storage, snow removal, lawn care and a variety of other equipment. If constructing a new garage is not feasible, the owner can ask for a conditional use permit.

Commissioner Zens asked if a building permit for a new structure typically contains plans for an accessory structure. Planner Rybak explained that new-builds will always have an attached garage. Beyond that, typically accessory structures are added later on under a separate building permit. However a person could add an accessory structure to a building permit for a principal structure if they wanted to.

Commissioner Ellingson asked if the requirement would be satisfied by a detached garage. Commissioner Asmus responded yes, the required garage space could be attached or detached.

Commissioners Mathwig, Zens and Ellingson expressed concern that imposing this requirement will require additional expense for the property owner.

Commissioner Woods stated that when buildings are constructed, we need to consider future use, not just present use. Generally, dwellings should have a garage. I do see both sides.

Following discussion, the Commissioners came to the recommendation that every newly created single and two-family dwelling unit shall be required to have use of a 12 x 24 foot garage space, attached or detached. A property owner may request a conditional use permit if compliance with this requirement is not possible. The garage space requirement shall not apply to multifamily/apartment housing.

Planner Rybak presented information on vacant and foreclosed property registration. The City of Litchfield may benefit from this type of program for the following reasons: the City would be aware of all properties that are vacant upfront, the City would have contact information for a responsible party, the City can require a maintenance plan and also a plan to resume occupancy, and banks/property owners are less likely to leave a property sitting vacant for a long time if they are required to pay fees as part of a registration program.

The Planning Commission discussed the information presented and directed staff to prepare a preliminary draft of a code provision that would work for the City. The Planning Commission is supportive of a program that would target nuisance properties, but would also not negatively impact snow birds and others who do not reside at their well-maintained properties year round. The Planning Commission would like to see a program that is easily enforceable.

**VI. ADDITIONAL ITEMS**

**VII. SET HEARING DATES AND TIMES**

The next scheduled meeting is Monday, September 12, 2022, at 5:30 p.m.

**VIII. REVIEW OF COUNCIL ACTIONS**

- A. CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT GRANTED** – *by William K Weide at 412 N Marshall Ave.  
Conditional Use Permit to allow a structure to be moved to the property.*

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Asmus adjourned the meeting at approximately 6:32 p.m.

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Hannah Rybak  
City Planner