

PLAN COMMISSION

Time and Date: The Plan Commission met on Wednesday, February 17, 2021, at 5:00 p.m. in the Common Council Chambers of Wausau City Hall.

Members Present: Mayor Katie Rosenberg, Eric Lindman, Patrick Peckham; *By WebEx:* Tom Neal, Bruce Bohlken, Andrew Brueggeman, Mic'Kayla Ross

Others Present: Brad Lenz, Mary Thao, Bruce Grau, Gary Gisselman, Lou Larson, Tom Kilian, Andrew Halverson, Todd Mowrer, Mike Howley, Bill Scholfield; *By WebEx:* William Hebert, Anne Jacobson, Becky McElhaney, Matt Thomspson, Larry Hemauer, Nick Bancuk, Debra Ryan

In compliance with Chapter 19, Wisconsin Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and transmitted to the *Wausau Daily Herald* in the proper manner.

Mayor Rosenberg called the meeting to order at approximately 5:00 p.m. noting that a quorum was present.

Discussion and possible action on authorizing a public hearing for 1300 Cleveland Avenue to amend the zoning from MI, Medium Industrial Zoning District to MRL-12, Multi-Family Residential-12 Zoning District.

(This item was taken out of order on the agenda.)

Lenz said that this item is to authorize a public hearing for 1300 Cleveland Avenue and there is some information in the packet. The property was zoned to industrial with the 2019 zoning code change. Mayor Rosenberg added that the property zoning has been changed multiple times in the last several years. Lenz said that the city owns the property and the residential zoning request was for a proposal at the time.

Mayor Rosenberg said that multiple comments were received and have been forwarded to the commission members.

Mary Thao, 506 Sherman Street, said that the Common Council had unanimously approved the residential zoning for 1300 Cleveland Avenue. The developers were interested in constructing an apartment at the location. Thao encouraged the commission to approve the public hearing, honor the 2018 approval and to think about the neighborhood.

Bruce Grau, 1115 North 10th Street, said that he supports the public hearing and it was intended for residential development in 2018. There is a need for affordable housing. A lot of the housing in the city is not affordable. There is thallium in the ground and bringing industry in will not help the problem. It is time to reconsider the intent of the proposal.

Gary Gisselman, 319 Park Avenue, said that he was a member of the Plan Commission and Common Council when the item was passed and it was pretty obvious and clear that it was a unanimous vote for residential zoning. Gisselman said that the property should be residential and supports the public hearing.

Lou Larson, 904 South 21st Place and Alderperson for District 10, said that the city needs to do the right thing and rezone the property to residential. The property owners on 1st Avenue do not want industry in the neighborhood. Larson said that he supports the public hearing.

Tom Kilian, 133 East Thomas Street and Alderperson for District 3, said that this item would begin to correct the error. The public deserves the correction. The adopted zoning map is flawed and contained mistakes. Kilian said that just because it is legal does not make it honorable or right. The mistake needs to be corrected. Kilian said that he fully supports the constituents and community wishes to authorize the public hearing.

Becky McElhaney, 4050 Ashland Avenue and Alderperson for District 6, said that she was part of the council when this was voted on in 2018. There is a large history of cleaning up from industry use and is part of a strategic plan to remove industry. It needs to be reverted back to residential zoning, which is what was intended in 2018.

Peckham motioned to authorize a public hearing for 1300 Cleveland Avenue to amend the zoning from MI, Medium Industrial Zoning District to MRL-12, Multi-Family Residential-12 Zoning District. Brueggeman seconded.

Peckham asked that when the zoning map was being changed, was this was property looked at and changed from residential to industrial. Lenz said no. Peckham said that it seems clear that it was intended to rezone the property to residential in 2018 and asked why the process needs to happen. Lenz said that public hearings were held for the zoning change based on the draft map and it was officially adopted. Hebert added that the rezoning process should be followed.

Lindman said that the rezone was done in 2018 because there was a proposal. Lindman said that he would like to see a proposal for a rezoning.

Mayor Rosenberg asked if the zoning effects the required clean up. Matt Thompson, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, said that zoning does effect the options, but it will not affect the investigation. Thompson said that they are in the early stages. Once the process is complete they will identify the options. The zoning will be looked at during this time. The DNR can put a land use restriction on the property. Kilian asked that in the immediate future, does the DNR have the authority to make the clean up more rigorous. Thompson said that it could be requested to justify to the industrial standard. Kilian said that if the community wants residential, could the city be required to do that type of clean up. Thompson answered that it depends on the input and it is too early in the process to identify the requirements.

Peckham asked if this could be voted on and go to Common Council to act on to guide a future decision. Lenz said that it could be voted on to authorize the public hearing. Peckham asked if the public hearing would bind the decision. Lenz said that Common Council has the final say since Plan Commission makes a recommendation.

The motion carried 6-1 by roll call vote. Lindman voted against the motion.

Approve the minutes of the January 19, 2021 meeting.

Neal motioned to approve the minutes of the January 19, 2021 meeting. Peckham seconded, and the motion carried unanimously 7-0 by roll call vote.

PUBLIC HEARING: Discussion and possible action on approving and conditional use at 3701, 3805, 3815 & 3901 Stewart Avenue to allow for a larger scale medical facility, in a SMU, Suburban Mixed-Use Zoning District.

Andrew Halverson, Ellis Construction, said that he is available to answer any questions.

Mayor Rosenberg closed the public hearing.

Lenz said that the conditional use process is to have a public hearing to take testimony and come back at the next meeting with findings. He said this building will be over 50,000 square feet, so it is considered a large development, requiring a conditional use. The other parts of the zoning are met – the use is permitted and setbacks are met.

PUBLIC HEARING: Discussion and possible action on rezoning 201 Devoe Street from LI, Light Industrial Zoning District to UMU, Urban Mixed-Use Zoning District.

Todd Mowrer said that he owns the property and plans to turn it into a mixed use building. Mowrer added that they would like to be part of the River District and will spruce up the property.

Mayor Rosenberg closed the public hearing.

Lenz said that this is a small parcel and is adjacent to UMU zoning; it fits in with the area.

Lindman motioned to rezone 201 Devoe Street from LI, Light Industrial Zoning District to UMU, Urban Mixed-Use Zoning District. Ross seconded.

Peckham asked if this will be converted to residential. This was confirmed.

The motion carried unanimously 7-0 by roll call vote. This item will go to Common Council on March 9, 2021.

PUBLIC HEARING: Discussion and possible action on rezoning 2101 and 2105 Grand Avenue from UMU, Urban Mixed-Use Zoning District to PUD, Planned Unit Development Zoning District and approving the General Development Plan to allow for two 16-unit apartment buildings.

Larry Hemauer, Emmerich and Associates, said that he is available for any questions.

Nick Bancuk, Marathon Technical Services, said that this is two parcels and they would like to combine into one parcel with two buildings. The PUD zoning is needed since there would be two buildings on one lot and the parking would be reduced. The units will all be one bedroom.

Mayor Rosenberg closed the public hearing.

Lenz said the existing zoning would allow the project, except for the two buildings on one lot and some of the combination of shared services – it is not a big change from what is currently permitted.

Neal motioned to rezone 2101 and 2105 Grand Avenue from UMU, Urban Mixed-Use Zoning District to PUD, Planned Unit Development Zoning District and approve the General Development Plan to allow for two 16-unit apartment buildings. Brueggeman seconded.

Peckham asked what the approximate rent will be. Hemauer answered that it will be roughly \$600/unit. Peckham asked if guardian services will be done. Hemauer said that the negotiations have been ongoing for that. Peckham said that there will be fewer parking spots and asked if the number of vehicles for each unit can be controlled. Hemauer answered that it is hard to control but believe they have sufficient parking. The required parking is 48 spots and 45 spots are planned. Hemauer said they are trying to preserve green space and a snow storage area.

Debra Ryan said that this will provide affordable housing for at least five years and she supports this proposal. Ross said that she agrees and supports this item.

The motion carried unanimously 7-0 by roll call vote. This item will go to Common Council on March 9, 2021.

PUBLIC HEARING: Discussion and possible action on approving a conditional use at 221 Scott Street to allow for a wireless telecommunication facility, in a DRMU, Downtown High-Rise Mixed-Use Zoning District.

Mike Howley, representing T-Mobile, said that this will be the fourth carrier on the rooftop. This proposal is in harmony with the Comprehensive Plan. Howley said that they have also spoke to the state to make sure these improvements are done in accordance with the historic nature of the building. The equipment will be housed in an existing housing room.

Mayor Rosenberg closed the public hearing.

Peckham asked about the antenna location. Howley answered that there are separate locations for the antenna, but the equipment will be housed in a separate area.

Discussion and possible action on amending the General Development Plan at 200 South 17th Avenue and 200 South 18th Avenue to allow for the expansion of indoor storage.

Lenz said that the general development plan was already adopted and when the specific plans were presented to staff, the storage area was increased from the previous plans. The storage area on the new plan takes up additional space and limits other future uses of the building.

Bill Scholfield said that the storage business is growing and there isn't a large demand for retail at this time. There will not be any internal walls and it will have a double door. Scholfield said that there is still the intent to have retail space. The storage use has shown a greater demand. This plan makes economic sense. Scholfield said that they are staying flexible, but still building business correctly and said that they are asking for this flexibility as well. Scholfield said that there is pressure to use the entire building for storage.

Neal motioned to amend the General Development Plan at 200 South 17th Avenue and 200 South 18th Avenue to allow for the expansion of indoor storage, as proposed. Peckham seconded, and the motion carried unanimously 7-0 by roll call vote. This item will go to Common Council on March 9, 2021.

Discussion and possible action on approving the Specific Implementation Plan at 200 South 17th Avenue and 200 South 18th Avenue to allow for indoor storage and future retail and office space.

Lenz said that to meet the zoning code, every 70' needs articulation of the façade. Lenz said that if islands are taken out of the parking lot, this will need to be monitored in other phases of the landscaping plan.

Scholfield said that in order to meet some requirements, the islands were taken out. He said that he has plans to meet the 70' articulation requirement. A door will be re-centered. Scholfield said that they are also planning on painting the building and the color can be changed for a different feel. A canopy will be added to the north side and will be detailed. The signage proposal will not change. Scholfield said that they are getting positive reaction about this proposal.

Peckham motioned to approve the Specific Implementation Plan at 200 South 17th Avenue and 200 South 18th Avenue to allow for indoor storage and future retail and office space. Neal seconded.

Peckham asked if another specific implementation plan will come back in the future. Scholfield said that there will be additional buildings on the Shopko lot. Some businesses are interested in drive-ups.

Lindman said that an adjustment was made to the south elevation and he asked if the rest of the façade

would be improved. Scholfield confirmed this. Lindman asked if any changes to the proposal would come back. Lenz said that this amount of storage is the maximum that can be done – if it were increased, it would need to come back. Scholfield said that he would like to have retail at this location and is aware that he has to come back if more storage is requested. Lenz said that the city can be flexible and lenient in some aspects, but there needs to be a benefit somewhere in the overall site.

Debra Ryan said that a number of neighbors have expressed concerns of affordable housing and asked if there were plans for building any apartments in the future. This would be a good location. Scholfield said that they looked at residential for this site initially. This site is best for national brands and the Mountain Lanes project had just started.

The motion carried unanimously 7-0 by roll call vote. This item will go to Common Council on March 9, 2021.

Next meeting date and future agenda items for consideration.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 16, 2021.

Adjournment.

Brueggeman motioned to adjourn, seconded by Peckham. The motion carried unanimously 7-0 and the meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

The Plan Commission is next scheduled to meet at 5:00 p.m. on March 16, 2021.