

PLAN COMMISSION

Time and Date: The Plan Commission met on Tuesday, May 21, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. in the Common Council Chambers of Wausau City Hall.

Members Present: Mayor Doug Diny, Sarah Watson, Bruce Bohlken, Eric Lindman, and George Borneman.

Members Absent: Lou Larson and Andrew Brueggeman

Staff Present: Brad Lenz, Brian Stahl, and Samantha Kulig.

Others Present: Jessica Bretl, Sid Sorenson.

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

Approve meeting minutes of March 19, 2024 meeting.

Motion/second by Bornemann/Bohlken. Approved 5-0.

PUBLIC HEARING: 1011 N 5th St, Discussion on rezoning 1011 N 5th St from an MRL-12, Multi-family Residential-12 Zoning District to an NMU, Neighborhood Mixed Use. [The Hagar House]

Mayor Diny opened the public hearing.

Jessica Bretl, executive director and founder of the Hagar House. The Hagar House opened in recent years and has been doing well in their mission. They have acquired the property next to the Hagar House: 1011 N 5th St. On that property, there was an old building that was in disrepair. It was recently razed to eliminate safety concerns of the building. Now that it is cleared, Hagar House sees the potential use of the property as a great storage and office space. The Hagar house hopes to rezone it to NMU to utilize it more for commercial use but also keep its current state.

Mayor Diny closed the public hearing.

Discussion and possible action on rezoning 1011 N 5th St from an MRL-12, Multi-family Residential-12 Zoning District to an NMU, Neighborhood Mixed Use. [The Hagar House]

Brad Lenz stated that currently the property is MRL-12 and is not ideal due to being a small, odd-shaped lot near the railroad tracks. In the surrounding areas, most properties are zoned as Urban Mixed Use, Neighborhood Mixed Use, or Single-Family Residential. Staff recommends the approval of the rezoning to an NMU.

Motion/second by Bohlken/Bornemann to approve the rezoning of 1011 N 5th St from an MRL-12 to an NMU. Approved 5-0.

Discussion and possible action on approving the Specific Implementation Plan for 402 and 406 N 28th Ave. [Walkabout Orthotics]

Lenz stated that the property was previously rezoned to PUD. The general plan was approved for a parking lot. He said this is the specific implementation plan. The maximum parking standards don't apply since it is smaller than 25 spaces. The staff report recommends approval.

Motion/second by Bohlken/Brueggeman to approve the Specific Implementation Plan for 402 and 406 N 28th Ave. Approved 5-0.

Discussion and possible action on approving the Specific Implementation Plan for 415 S 1st Ave. [Gorman]

Lenz said this property is the former Westside Battery. He said the general plan was previously approved and amended for the apartment building; this is the specific implementation plan. He said the package of plans is complete, but it is noted that a lighting plan should be submitted for staff review. He also noted that the petitioners are seeking setback reductions, but in this case, the parcel is not adjacent to any developable parcels so there won't be any infringing on the neighbors. Lenz said that the other thing they are looking to flex is the parking. He said the lot across the street was approved with a conditional use for a parking lot – we are just waiting for a parking lot permit that would come in separately.

Bohlken said he is supportive of the project and is glad it is coming through.

Mayor Diny asked if the setbacks would require a variance. Lenz said that the PUD is a flexible zoning district, so by approving the plans it effectively acts as a variance without going through the actual variance process of a straight zoning district.

Motion/second by Bohlken/Bornemann to approve the Specific Implementation Plan for 415 S 1st Ave. Approved 5-0.

Discussion and possible action on the revised Preliminary Plat for Green Tree Meadows.

Lenz said that this is a revised preliminary plat – there was a preliminary plat that went through plan commission and city council. The difference is that the revised plat contains new land that was sold to the developers for additional residential lots. He highlighted the area at the southwest corner of the plat. He said it was approved by the Infrastructure and Facilities Committee and would go to city council for approval; a final plat would come back.

Bohlken asked how many lots there are. Lenz said that there are 145 buildable lots, plus out-lots. Bohlken asked how the street names were decided. Lenz wasn't sure but said that they would need to be approved by Emergency Management to make sure there were no duplicates or other issues. He said they may change on the final plat.

Bornemann asked if the existing infrastructure, water/sewer, is sufficient to handle the development – if there is a process to determine that. Lindman said that it is going through City Engineering, and water and sewer is involved.

Sid Sorensen said that he owns the land directly to the east. He was not informed of this development, even though he has visited Engineering. He is concerned about the road leading out the east side of the plat that would run into his property. He would prefer that it not be full access, but a sidewalk. He said a street straight through connecting to Birchwood would lead to speeding traffic down the hill towards the school. He suggested moving the street north so it isn't a straight shot through, but said he'd rather not see a street at all. He said he is supportive of more lots in the city.

Lenz showed an aerial photo where the streets are being proposed. He said the plat is just showing right-of-way and not actual street design, so there could be some traffic-management built into the design of the streets. He agreed that there should at least be bike and ped access due to the proximity to the school, and to the new trails in the Business Campus. He said the full street could be debated, but generally more access is better for safety and circulation.

Mayor Diny asked if this would go to Council. Lenz confirmed and said that a final plat would also come back.

Sorensen asked about gated access for emergency vehicles. Lenz said that a gate that he is aware of has had issues in the past. Stahl agreed, and said that the keys for the boxes need to be managed.

Bornemann asked about standards for streets/cul-de-sacs and number of units, since it seems it could be problematic for emergency access. Lenz said that the only standard he is aware of is the maximum length of cul-de-sacs, which is 500 feet. He said that technically there are only two cul-de-sacs being shown, but he agrees that access is important.

Mayor Diny asked about street names and if there would be a conflict if Arborvitae ran into Birchwood. Lenz thought that it could be in the future, depending on how Birchwood to the east is extended.

Motion/second by Watson/Bornemann to approve the revision on the Preliminary Plat for Green Tree Meadows. Approved 5-0.

Discussion and possible action on dedication of right-of-way at 404 Franklin Street.

Lenz said this comes from the I&F committee. The Y is looking to dedicate a six-foot strip of land along Franklin and 4th Streets. The sidewalks would bump out to the new right-of-way line and the grass terrace would be eliminated. Angled parking would be installed for the Landing expansion.

Lindman said he is abstaining from voting on this since he is on the YMCA Board.

Bornemann asked about alternatives to parking, particularly McIndoe which is wider since it used to be Highway 52.

Lenz said that it was looked at. What's not in this packet is the overall parking plan, which would include angled parking along McIndoe, where the terrace would also be eliminated. It would also include 4th Street north of Grant Street along the park. The same treatment would happen there. Lenz said that there are 40-some spaces being installed. Tom Radenz confirmed that it is 51 spaces total. Lenz said that the two blocks not being shown did not require right-of-way dedication, so are not included here – they were reviewed by the I&F committee.

Motion/second by Bohlken/Bornemann to approve dedication of right-of-way at 404 Franklin Street. Approved 4-0. 1 abstained vote.

Plan Updates: Safe Routes to School Plan, and North Riverfront Redevelopment Plan RFP

Lenz said that in the packet are a couple items for information. He said that a draft of the Safe Routes plan is available, and a presentation was made at the last I&F meeting. He said a grant was received from DOT a few years ago. The plan involved input from city stakeholders, the schools, and parents. It contains a variety of information and recommendations. The Council will be taking it up for adoption next week.

Lenz said that a draft RFP for planning the North Riverfront is in the packet. He said it is for a planning and engineering consultant to help fit the different pieces together and help with decision-making. It will go to Council before it is released.

Mayor Diny asked if it went through the Economic Development committee. Lenz confirmed and said the vote was split 2-2, but it will go to Common Council.

Next meeting date: Tuesday, June 18, 2024.

Next meeting will be Tuesday, June 18, 2024. Bohlken stated that he will not be able to attend this meeting.

Adjournment

Motion/second by Bohlken/Watson. Motion approved 5-0, and the meeting adjourned at 5:43 p.m.