

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof a meeting of the Planning Commission in and for the City of Albany, Stearns County, Minnesota, was called to order by Commission member Joseph Wedel at 6:30 o'clock in the evening on Thursday, April 13, 2023, at City Hall, 400 Railroad Avenue for the said City.

Other Planning Commission members present for the meeting were: Todd Horton, and Nathan Ronning. Chairman Bill Scepaniak and Allison Dudek, Acting Chair, were absent. Councilor Adam Rushmeyer, Liaison, was present for the meeting.

Commission member Joseph Wedel called for any additions or corrections to the minutes of January 23rd and hearing none declared them approved.

Chris Ramler, President and Eric Ramler, Vice President, Ramler Trucking, Inc., were present for the meeting.

Pursuant to due notice, Commission member Joseph Wedel called the public hearing into session at 6:30 o'clock in the evening on a request by Ramler Trucking, Inc., 400 13th Street, Albany, MN for a variance to relax the front yard setback of thirty (30') feet to allow for the construction of a 30' x 32' office expansion to facilitate business operations within an M2 Zone. Chris Ramler informed the commission their business is growing and in need of additional office space and due to the current layout of the office it made the most sense to expand to the south rather than add a second level, which provides for an effective office design. Chris Ramler noted a variance was granted for the first office expansion in 2006 and the proposed second office expansion will not be any closer to 13th Street than the existing front yard building line. Eric Ramler informed the commission the monument sign will be moved across the street to their lot where their cold storage is located and it will meet the front yard setback of thirty feet. Chris Ramler also noted any new wall signs attached to their office expansion will meet the regulations of the sign ordinance. Mr. Schneider noted a proper notice was published in the Star Post on March 29th and no written comments were received. Commission member Joseph Wedel closed the public hearing at 6:40 PM. After due discussion, a motion was made by Todd Horton and seconded by Nate Ronning to recommend to the council the request by Ramler Truck and Trailer Repair, 400 13th Street, for a variance to relax the front yard setback of thirty (30') feet to allow for the construction of a 30' x 32' office expansion to facilitate business operations within an M2 Zone be approved based on the following findings:

- A certificate of survey depicting the proposed office addition was submitted with the application.
- Variance request is to allow the company to increase employment and expand their business operations. A variance for an office expansion was approved by the city in 2006.
- The variance request is consistent with the comprehensive plan in that it encourages new construction, increase employment, and increased property tax base.
- The variance will not be detrimental to the public welfare.
- The variance will allow business to grow and improve office efficiencies and opportunities.
- The variance is not sought solely for reasons of increased financial gain.
- Existing construction of the building and interior shop equipment prevent office expansion within building. The new office expansion will not be any closer to 13th Street than the existing front yard building line.
- The front yard setback is reduced from 30 feet to 14 feet 6 inches.

All voted for the motion and it carried. Commission member Joseph Wedel, with the consensus of the commission, thanked Chris and Eric Ramler for attending the meeting and their continued business growth, expansion, increased employment, and being a major employer in the city.

Mr. Schneider informed the commission he is considering a zoning ordinance amendment to Section 80.11, Subd. 22, Electronic Signs, for the purpose of repealing language that regulates the maximum allowable square footage for electronic signs, which is a percentage, within the commercial and industrial zoning districts. Mr. Schneider noted the current language requires property owners to overbuild a free-standing sign in order to meet the regulations which is an added expense not necessary and, in many cases, it's not known whether the footings and integrity of the structure were designed to handle the additional weight and other attached signs. Mr. Schneider noted the building code requires free standing

signs to be designed and constructed to withstand maximum wind bursts over a period of time and the ordinance should not require a property owner to overbuild a sign. Mr. Horton noted the language in the ordinance may have made sense years ago and it may make sense to consider an amendment. Mr. Schneider recommended to the commission he be given authorization to invite an individual from a sign company to the next meeting to discuss electronic sign regulations and designs to determine if an amendment is necessary. Mr. Wedel, with the consensus of the commission, directed Mr. Schneider to contact an individual from a sign company to attend the next meeting.

Mr. Schneider presented the following 1st Quarter building permit information:

- 13 building permit applications received and approved.
- \$182,000 total new construction value.
- \$2,086 permit fees collected (Inspectron, \$1,565 & City \$521) 75%-25% split.
- Plan review fees paid to Inspectron: \$592.
- The state sur-charge fee was \$59.

Commission member Joseph Wedel adjourned the meeting at 6:55 PM.

Tom Schneider
Clerk/Adm.