

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 Chairman Adam Rushmeyer at 6:30 o'clock in the evening on Thursday, September 24, 2015 in the Council Room at 400 Railroad Avenue for the said City.

Other Planning Commission members present for the meeting were: Joseph Wedel, Todd Horton, and Keith Heitzman. Will Seiler was absent. Councilor John Greer, Planning Commission Liaison, was present for the meeting.

Chairman Adam Rushmeyer called for any additions or corrections to the minutes of September 1st and hearing none declared them to be approved.

Others present for the meeting: James Kastanek, owner of Total Agri-Business, 301 Railroad Avenue, and Jean Pundsack, 211 Railroad Avenue.

Pursuant to due notice, at 6:32 PM, Chairman Adam Rushmeyer called a public hearing into session on a request by the Albany Planning Commission to amend Zoning Ordinance 80.21, Exterior Material Requirements, Section 80.21, Subd. 1 through Subd. 7 of the Albany City Code. A proper notice was published in the Albany Enterprise on September 9th and no written comments were received. Mr. Schneider noted that the present ordinance allows owners of commercial properties within a C1 and C2 Zoning District to use alternative exterior building materials if a building is not expanded at or over fifty percent (50%) of the existing square footage or building value, whichever is less. Mr. Schneider noted that the proposed amendment will require owners of commercial buildings to obtain a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) if they wish to consider alternatives not listed as approved exterior building materials. Mr. Rushmeyer noted the proposed amendment is not to create a financial hardship for commercial business owners, but allow the proposed improvements to be presented, reviewed, and discussed before the Planning Commission and City Council. Mr. Rushmeyer noted that exterior improvements are expensive and difficult to finance due to the historical nature of the older buildings on Railroad Avenue. Mr. Schneider noted that the City's Economic Development Authority (EDA) has a deferred loan/grant program to assist business owners in commercial building renovations or other improvements; whereby after the seventh year the entire deferred loan is forgiven. Mr. Kastanek informed the Board that he recently improved the exterior of his commercial building, but could not meet the exterior building materials listed in the City's ordinance due unique characteristics of his building. Mr. Kastanek noted that the exterior building materials are too restrictive and should encourage property owners to do renovations. Mr. Wedel noted that each commercial building should be considered on a case by case basis because many exteriors differ in so many ways including the age of buildings. Mr. Horton noted that the aforesaid EDA program offers an alternative funding source to commercial property owners and discussion during the CUP process may result in exterior building material options. Ms. Pundsack informed the Board that the proposed language preserving the historical character and enhancing the pedestrian experience on mainstreet is acceptable language, but the City should reduce the parking requirement from forty-eight (48) hours to twenty-four (24) hours or reinstall no parking signs 2AM to 6AM that had been on each electric pole prior to the mainstreet reconstruction improvements. Mr. Greer informed the Board that the Police Department has worked closely with Ms. Pundsack to alleviate some of her concerns related to parking on mainstreet (Railroad Avenue). Ms. Pundsack also noted that there are properties on mainstreet with overgrown landscaping and weeds which does not enhance the pedestrian experience. Mr. Rushmeyer informed Ms. Pundsack that her concerns are valid and thanked her for attending the meeting. Chairman Adam Rushmeyer closed the public hearing at 7:05 PM. After due discussion, a motion was made by Todd Horton and seconded by Joseph Wedel to recommend to the Council to approve the amendment to Zoning Ordinance 80.21, Exterior Material Requirements, Section 80.21, Subd. 1 through Subd. 7. All voted and the motion carried.

Pursuant to due notice, at 7:07 PM, Chairman Adam Rushmeyer called a public hearing into session on a request by the Albany Planning Commission to amend Zoning Ordinance 80.11, Signs in the C-1 Core Commercial District, Section 80.11 Subd. 17(c) of the Albany City Code. A proper notice was published in the Albany Enterprise on September 9th and no written comments were received. Mr. Schneider noted that the purpose of the amendment is to increase the maximum square feet in total area of a Wall Sign from sixty-four (64) square feet in total area to one-hundred twenty (120) square feet in total

area if the property has a least fifty (50) lineal feet of property frontage. Chairman Adam Rushmeyer closed the public hearing at 7:10PM. After due discussion, a motion was made by Joseph Wedel and seconded by Todd Horton to approve the amendment to Zoning Ordinance 80.11, Signs in the C-1 Core Commercial District, Section 80.11 Subd. 17(c). Mr. Greer questioned if both the property owner and sign company could be fined for any signs installed in violation of the ordinance because in some cases the property owner may not be knowledgeable in the sign regulations. Mr. Rushmeyer directed Mr. Schneider to research the question and report back to the Planning Commission at a future meeting. All voted for the motion and it carried.

Mr. Schneider presented to the Board a draft of a new ordinance establishing a Storm Water Drainage Utility. Mr. Schneider noted that the purpose of the said ordinance is for the retention and management of storm water, and the purchase, operation, maintenance, and repairs of storm water facilities. Mr. Schneider noted that the proposed fee is \$2.00 per month for each active water account (\$24 annually) and is estimated to generate nearly \$20,000 in annual revenue. Mr. Greer noted that by adding a line item to each water bill invoice for a storm water utility fee at least it should generate awareness of the problems associated with depositing leaves, grass clippings, oils, and sediment in a storm drain.

Chairman Adam Rushmeyer announced the next Planning Commission meeting to be held at 6:30 PM on Tuesday, October 6th and adjourned the meeting at 7:25 PM.

Tom Schneider
Clerk/Adm.