

**CITY PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
AUGUST 13, 2019**

**1. CALL TO ORDER** – Hutcheson called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Members Present: DeMasi, Halm, Holm, Hutcheson, Rew, Scott, Stroebele and Van Houten  
Absent: Disalvo, Haner and Rater  
Staff: Garrett, Gibbons, Monrroy and Wade

**3. ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Motion by DeMasi, second by Holm to adopt the agenda as presented. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

**4. APPROVAL – MINUTES OF JULY 9, 2019 MEETING**

Motion by Holm, second by Rew to adopt the minutes as presented. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

**5. PROOF OF PUBLICATION** – Gibbons provided the proof of publication.

**6. REVIEW OF MEETING PROCEDURES** – Hutcheson

**7. PUBLIC HEARINGS** - (*Refer to the taped recording of these proceedings for official verbatim minutes*)

- A. CASE #ZT-19-005: Public hearing on the request of the Community Development Department to amend several sections of Title 15: Zoning of the Municipal Code (Zoning Ordinance) by enacting Chapter 15.12 MCR/Mixed Commercial Residential District; amending Chapter 15.27, Zoning Districts to add “MCR/Mixed Commercial Residential District” as a new commercial district; and amending Chapter 15.33, Signs, to establish sign standards for the MCR/Mixed Commercial Residential District.

Garrett provided an overview of the request. Garrett provided a statistical and historical background of the 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue Corridor and stated it provides an opportunity to link Council Bluffs with the rest of the Omaha Metro Area. Garrett also stated the purpose of the proposed MCR/Mixed Commercial Residential District is to promote density and allow for mixed-use development, with high consideration on design, along the 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue Corridor and other areas of the City where it may be deemed appropriate.

No one spoke in favor or in opposition of the request. Hutcheson closed the public hearing.

DeMasi asked if there was a maximum density set in the MCR District. Garrett stated that there is no maximum density in the MCR District, but the number of units may be restricted when considering other standards, such as minimum required number of parking spaces, as well as due to economic controls.

Rew stated that population growth in Council Bluffs has stagnated and thanked Staff for addressing the issue. Rew asked if establishing a new zoning district would confuse developers and if it would be more appropriate to rename the district to the R-5 District. Gibbons stated that Staff originally intended to amend the R-4/High Density Multi-Family Residential District, but opted against it since it would have created several nonconformities throughout the City. Gibbons also stated that the MCR District infuses residential uses in commercial settings and establishes design standards that set the minimum expectations for development in the district. Rew asked whether the drafting of the proposed zoning text was completed

in-house or if a consultant was hired. Garrett stated the zoning text was drafted by Staff after consulting with the Omaha Planning Department regarding the implementation of their Urban Design Handbook.

Rew asked if surface and on-street parking would be discouraged in the MCR District. Gibbons stated the preference would be to have parking be an integral component of the building, but if it is not feasible, surface parking would be permissible, subject to landscaping, screening and placement requirements. Rew stated underground storage tanks used for retention are usually found underneath surface parking lots, thus it might be difficult for designers to prepare plans if surface parking is not provided. DeMasi stated she was concerned about the parking maximum because most apartment complexes only provide one parking space per dwelling unit, limiting the amount of parking for guests, which is important for tenants to feel at home. Gibbons stated public transit will be an important component of the MCR District, thus it is reasonable to assume that people living in this type of development will use transit, which will reduce the need for cars and parking. Gibbons also stated the intent is for density and design to guide development, as opposed to parking being the primary concern for development.

Rew asked if bike ridership is projected to increase in Council Bluffs. Garrett stated that 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue will be a high amenity corridor, thus attracting people who are more willing to use different modes of transportation, such as biking, transit or walking.

Rew asked how deterioration of the type of high-density development proposed would be avoided. Garrett stated the Permits and Inspections Division conducts rental inspections to ensure renter-occupied units are maintained in good condition. Garrett also stated that establishing a “business owner association,” similar to a homeowner association, could help generate the funds for maintenance of amenities along the 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue Corridor.

Holm stated he liked the direction Staff is taking, but argued that minimum setback requirements, separation between buildings and the minimum number of parking spaces required should be increased to ensure development is aesthetically pleasing, as well as facilitate the maintenance and repair of utilities. Holm cited Valley View Apartments and Dudley Court as examples of what development along 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue should look like. Hutcheson stated he disagreed with Holm and stated that development along 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue should be high-density and commercially oriented. Hutcheson also stated that minimum design standards would ensure development is aesthetically pleasing.

Halm stated the 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue Corridor is an opportunity to implement urban, transit-oriented development in Council Bluffs, which can attract young professionals to the City. Halm also stated the required 50 square feet of site amenity space per unit provides an active open space for residents. Scott asked why Staff decided on 50 square feet of site amenity space per unit. Garrett stated Staff wanted to ensure amenity space was more than just a balcony or patio. Scott asked if landscaping would be considered as amenity space, since including amenities as part of a mixed-used development could make it less affordable. Garrett stated incidental landscaping, such as screening, would not qualify as amenity space, but a garden that provides a place for residents to interact would be considered an amenity. Garrett also stated the required site amenity space could be accomplished through balconies, rooftop decks, dog parks and other cost effective methods.

Stroebele stated he was in favor of the request and concurred with Halm and Hutcheson that young professionals prefer smaller living spaces within walking distance of their doctor’s office or favorite coffee shop. Van Houten stated that this type of development is in line with what is happening in the rest of the country.

Holm asked how the MCR District would conflict with the Building Code in terms of lot coverage, minimum setback requirements and number of parking spaces required. Wade clarified that those site development standards are regulated by the City's Zoning Ordinance and the purpose of this request is to establish a new zoning district with its own set of standards.

Motion by Van Houten, second by Halm to recommend approval to amend several sections of Title 15: Zoning of the Municipal Code (Zoning Ordinance) by enacting Chapter 15.12 MCR/Mixed Commercial Residential District; amending Chapter 15.27, Zoning Districts to add "MCR/Mixed Commercial Residential District" as a new commercial district; and amending Chapter 15.33, Signs, to establish sign standards for the MCR/Mixed Commercial Residential District, as per staff's recommendation.

VOTE: AYE – DeMasi, Halm, Holm, Hutcheson, Rew, Scott, Stroebele and VanHouten. NAY – None. ABSTAIN – None. ABSENT – Disalvo, Haner and Rater. Motion carried.

- B. CASE #ZC-19-003: Public hearing on the request of the Community Development Department to rezone property legally described as being all of Blocks 7 and 8, Bryant and Clark's Subdivision and the vacated South 33<sup>rd</sup> Street right-of-way in between said blocks; and all of Block 6, Ferry's Addition; along with all vacated alleys adjacent to said subdivision blocks, from R-3/Low Density Multi-family Residential District to MCR/Mixed Commercial Residential District. Location: Between 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue from South 32<sup>nd</sup> Street to South 34<sup>th</sup> Street.

Gibbons provided an overview of the request.

No one spoke in favor or in opposition of the request. Hutcheson closed the public hearing.

Motion by DeMasi, second by Holm to recommend approval to rezone property legally described as being all of Blocks 7 and 8, Bryant and Clark's Subdivision and the vacated South 33<sup>rd</sup> Street right-of-way in between said blocks; and all of Block 6, Ferry's Addition; along with all vacated alleys adjacent to said subdivision blocks, from R-3/Low Density Multi-Family Residential District to MCR/Mixed Commercial Residential District, as per staff recommendation.

VOTE: AYE – DeMasi, Halm, Holm, Hutcheson, Rew, Scott, Stroebele and VanHouten. NAY – None. ABSTAIN – None. ABSENT – Disalvo, Haner and Rater. Motion carried.

- 8. OTHER BUSINESS** (*Refer to the taped recording of these proceedings for the official verbatim minutes*)  
A. City Council update: Wade provided an update of City Council actions relative to recent planning cases.

Wade introduced Rick Hoppe as the Mayor's new Chief of Staff.

- B. Other items of interest: Van Houten stated NP Dodge would be hosting an event on Thursday, August 29, 2019 to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Woodstock music festival.

- 9. ADJOURNMENT** – Hutcheson adjourned the meeting at 7:18 P.M.

*The recording of this proceeding, though not transcribed, is part of the record of each respective action of the City Planning Commission. The recording of this proceeding is incorporated into these official minutes of this Commission meeting as if they were transcribed herein.*