

CITY OF MENDOTA HEIGHTS
DAKOTA COUNTY
STATE OF MINNESOTA

Minutes of the Joint City Council – Planning Commission Work Session
April 24, 2023

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a work session of the City Council and Planning Commission, City of Mendota Heights, Minnesota was held at Mendota Heights City Hall, 1101 Victoria Curve, Mendota Heights, Minnesota.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Levine called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Council members Lorberbaum, Mazzitello, and Paper were present. Councilmember Miller was absent.

Planning Commission members present included Commissioners Field, Johnson, Petschel, and Udell. Commissioners Stone, Katz, and Corbett were absent.

Staff in attendance included City Administrator Cheryl Jacobson, Public Works Director Ryan Ruzek, Interim Planner Jennifer Haskamp and Jess Stone of Swanson-Haskamp Consulting, Assistant City Administrator Kelly Torkelson, City Clerk Christine Lusian.

Four members of the public were present.

ZONING CODE REVIEW DISCUSSION

Mayor Levine opened the meeting and Planning Consultant Jennifer Haskamp provided an introductory summary of the city's zoning code update purpose and process. She noted that the meeting was the first opportunity to review and discuss the full draft of the zoning code.

Planning Consultant Haskamp explained that the process has built off of the work of the Planning Commission, the City Council, residents, and existing and past city staff. She reviewed that the goals of the revision are to make the code easy to use, remove ambiguity and repetition, encourage reinvestment/investment while protecting existing character and development patterns, address non-conforming lots/areas, make roles and decision making clear, and generally to create a more usable zoning code. She noted that the Zoning Code should reflect the approved 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

Planning Consultant Haskamp explained that while the structure and organization of the chapter has changed, the majority of the policy and regulations have not changed and remain consistent with the current zoning ordinance.

Planning Consultant Haskamp stated that the Planning Commission has reviewed Chapter Two of the draft and that the meeting and discussion would focus primarily on that chapter. Before reviewing the Chapter Two updates, the group reviewed the other chapters and their significant changes.

Planner Consultant Haskamp stated that Chapter Three provides a central location within the code for all allowed and prohibited uses and introduces administrative permits. This is a new concept within the code meant to streamline the process for items that do not rise to the level of a Conditional Use Permit review. She requested that Commissioners and Councilmembers let her know if they think that something should be moved to an administrative permit.

Councilmember Paper asked for clarification regarding how cannabis legalization was addressed in the plan.

Planning Consultant Haskamp replied that the current draft did not address it at this time, as staff were waiting for guidance from the final law before incorporating it into the code.

Planning Consultant Haskamp explained that Chapter Four focuses on building, character and design standards. The requirements outlined in the draft strive to achieve architectural consistency and to ensure that development or redevelopment is compatible with adjacent and surrounding properties.

Planning Consultant Haskamp stated that Chapter Five relates to administration and conformance and establishes the general process and procedures for all land use applications that are contained in the city's zoning ordinance. She noted that by centralizing this process within a specific chapter, the draft will be better able to maintain consistency in how the process is administered and updates to the code will be able to be consistently applied.

Planning Consultant Haskamp explained that Chapter Six relates to the Critical Area Overlay District and no significant changes were made to the chapter.

Planning Consultant Haskamp reviewed Chapter Seven rules and definitions.

Planning Consultant presented information and changes included in Chapter Two relating to zoning districts and highlighted the re-named and modified zoning districts and those districts which were removed because they were not used in the previous ordinance.

Planning Consultant Haskamp reviewed the draft zoning map.

The Commission asked if there was a reason that the Somerset Neighborhood was excluded from the proposed zoning map.

Planning Consultant Haskamp clarified that it was an unintentional oversight and that it would be corrected in the draft moving forward.

Commissioner Johnson asked about how the city could set evaluation criteria for restrictions. Consultant Planner Haskamp gave the example that if the city was trying to protect the environment of the Rusty Patch Bumblebee that it could require an analysis from the applicant about the impacts on that species as a part of their application.

Planning Consultant Haskamp presented information on the proposed Traditional Neighborhood Overlay (TN-O) District, a new overlay district for the zoning code. She explained that the overlay district designates areas in the community that were developed prior to 1981 with a traditional neighborhood pattern that includes smaller lot sizes and reduced setback requirements.

Councilmember Mazzitello stated that the original goal was to have the TN-O cover the entire city.

The group discussed further the purpose of the TN-O to set guidelines for how impacted properties, which do not fit the R1 zoning standard, would be able to be changed moving forward in line with the character of the neighborhood. It was noted that the TN-O prohibits further subdivision that does not comply with R-1 dimensional standards.

Councilor Mazzitello discussed his interest in allowing property owners to replace what they already have. In addition, he wanted to maintain property owner's ability to make changes that would meet the standards outlined in the R-1 zone.

Commissioner Johnson asked about how structures on properties such as playgrounds, pergolas or swing sets would affect the calculation for impervious surfaces.

Planning Consultant Haskamp explained that it would depend if the structure included an impervious surface or not.

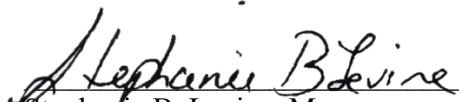
Councilmember Mazzitello expressed concern about the limits of the side yard setbacks.

Planning Consultant Haskamp explained that as written, the code says that if the structure is less than 100 feet set back then the average of the neighboring properties is used for the standard. She stated it was drafted this way to align with the stated goal for neighborhood consistency.

Planning Consultant Haskamp closed the presentation and discussion by inviting the Council and Commissioners to send her their handwritten notes and edits.

ADJOURN

Mayor Levine adjourned the meeting at 8:30 pm.


Stephanie B. Levine, Mayor

ATTEST:


Christine Lusian, City Clerk