

Heather Hanover
Chair

James Eshelman
Vice-Chair

Commissioners

Scott Dzurka, *Mayor*
Eric Hufnagel, *Commissioner*
Mark Holden
Melvin Renfrow
Eric Harger
Brian Mills
Vacant



PLANNING COMMISSION

MARCH 13, 2024
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the St. Johns Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Hanover at 5:33 p.m.

Members Present: Heather Hanover, Mark Holden, Eric Harger, Scott Dzurka, Eric Hufnagel, James Eshelman, Brian Mills
Members Absent: Melvin Renfrow
Staff Present: Chad Gamble, City Manager; Mindy Seavey, City Clerk; Chris Khorey, McKenna

Chris Khorey, McKenna, said the agenda should have approval of the minutes of the February 26, 2024 joint meeting as well.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Commissioner Dzurka seconded by Commissioner Holden to approve the agenda as amended.
YEA: Hanover, Holden, Harger, Dzurka, Hufnagel, Eshelman, Mills
NAY: None
Motion carried.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – FEBRUARY 14, 2024 MEETING & FEBRUARY 26, 2024 JOINT MEETING WITH CITY COMMISSION

Motion by Commissioner Hufnagel seconded by Commissioner Eshelman to approve the minutes as presented.
YEA: Hanover, Holden, Harger, Dzurka, Hufnagel, Eshelman, Mills
NAY: None
Motion carried.

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS - NONE

5. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Chicken Coop Allowable Materials – Potential Amendment

Chris Khorey, McKenna, discussed the proposal to make subtle changes to the chicken coop ordinance. He discussed making sure that the coops are completely enclosed and securely fastened.

There was a discussion of:

- The sides of the coop.
- Aesthetics.
- Pre-fabricated kits.
- Brightly colored material is subjective.
- It can't flap in the wind; must be free of rips and tears; securely fastened.
- Quality.
- Maximum allowable height.
- Fixed or mobile.
- Schedule a public hearing in April.

Alex Shinabarger was present. He discussed the difference between a tarp and a canvass.

Beverly Masarik was present. She said there are different mills for your tarp also.

B. Sidewalk Requirements – Potential Amendment

Chris Khorey, McKenna, discussed a new section of the ordinance; it is less clear with commercial development and this would be more specific; threshold of approval that applies; and it would strengthen our sidewalk requirement.

There was a discussion of:

- Committee site plan review or planning commission approval.
- City Commission/School Board joint meeting & Safe Routes to School Program.
- Point of Sale Ordinance
 - Change of real estate could trigger sidewalks.
- Being creative in financing of a sidewalk.
 - Special assessment districts.
- GIS sidewalk layer
- Gap closure issues.
- Sidewalk reimbursement program.
- Road millage.

Alex Shinabarger discussed the sidewalk on Morton Street.

City Manager Gamble said there are options for gap closure on our sidewalk network.

Alex Shinabarger discussed speeding on Morton Street.

Everett Thornton was present. He said they bought their second house on Wight Street in 1990. He said the City was offering to pay a certain portion of sidewalk and the neighbor did the concrete work and was happy with what the city paid him. He discussed not putting this on people that are buying their first home.

There was a discussion of:

- Is there anything that prohibits someone from removing a sidewalk.
- Replacement of sidewalk.
- Sidewalk assessment on taxes.
- Zoning amendment.
- Strategic approach from city commission.
- Long range.

C. Driveways – 1977 Paved Driveway Ordinance – Enforce or Update?

Chris Khorey, McKenna, discussed the section on driveway approaches/aprons.

There was a discussion of:

- Approaches and possibly require them to be changed from gravel to concrete as streets are being done.
- Handle the same way we will handle sidewalks.
- Non-paved approaches cause damage to streets & equipment.
- Rental units vs. owner occupied.

6. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Golf Cart Pilot Program Policy Brainstorm

Mayor Dzurka said there was some hesitation from the city commission, but they seem in favor of a Pilot project. He discussed defining what we are talking about when we say a golfcart. He said the city commission asked the planning commission to clarify and define what we may open up for a Pilot project.

Commissioner Hufnagel said there was concern about it being available during the Mint Festival. There was a discussion of a Pilot and to get some feedback on it.

There was a discussion of:

- Duration of a Pilot Program.
- Senate Bill #771 that was introduced March 7, 2024.
 - Changes to Motor Vehicle Code.
 - Expands the population.
 - Page 6, rules for how golfcart should be designed.
- City's liability.
 - Adhere closely to state law.
- Times of operation.
- Any road we don't want a golfcart on.
- Permit requirement.

Alex Shinabarger discussed: a photo of his golfcart; MSP statewide traffic crashes in 2022; 49 in Clinton County of go-carts or golfcarts; 1 fatal crash in Clinton County.

Chief Kirk said that report would only cover those on streets or roads, not private property. He said he was requested to talk to Owosso. They had 1 OWI crash and have had the ordinance for roughly two years.

Everett Thornton asked for a copy of SB #771. He asked if we checked with Elsea or Owosso. He discussed headlights, brake lights, and turn signals. He said he wouldn't allow the in the wintertime. He asked if there were incidents with golfcarts during the Mint Festival. He said Owosso copied Elsie's ordinance.

There was a discussion of:

- Length of Pilot program.
 - Weekends for 60 days.
 - Full summer.
 - Weekends from Memorial weekend through Labor Day weekend.
 - June 1 – September 30.
- Mint Festival and what would be allowed as far as vehicles.
- Crash helmet.
- Information to the public regarding a Pilot program.

Mr. Thornton said don't allow golfcarts on main street, you won't see a golfcart coming.

7. COMMITTEE SITE PLAN APPROVALS:

A. Cork and Bottle – 801 S. Old US-27

Mr. Khorey said the final approved site plan is in the packet. He said it is moving onto the county for permits.

Commissioner Mills asked about a sidewalk.

Mr. Khorey said 27 is MDOT and there is a drainage swale. He said this is a situation where a waiver may have been appropriate due to significant practical impediments.

There was a discussion of:

- A billboard.
 - They are going to ask for a variance and it would be headed to the ZBA (Zoning Board of Appeals).

8. PUBLIC COMMENT FOR NON-AGENDA ITEMS

There were no public comments.

9. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Holden said in 1974 when he moved into town, they had a skywalk in town right where Swegles School was.

Chairperson Hanover said she has heard comments about the Harris project and that it is very tall. She also asked about the required additional parking spaces.

Mr. Khorey said they are required and they have to do parking before they get the Certificate of Occupancy.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Eshelman seconded by Commissioner Dzurka that the Planning Commission adjourn the meeting.

YEA: Hanover, Holden, Harger, Dzurka, Hufnagel, Eshelman, Mills

NAY: None

Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 p.m.