

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

AUGUST 14, 2024
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the St. Johns Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Hanover at 5:32 p.m.

Members Present: Heather Hanover, Mark Holden, Eric Harger, Scott Dzurka, Eric Hufnagel (left at 5:50 pm), James Eshelman, Brian Mills

Members Absent: Melvin Renfrow

Staff Present: Mindy Seavey, City Clerk; Chris Khorey, McKenna; Ethan Walthorn, McKenna

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Commissioner Hufnagel seconded by Commissioner Dzurka to approve the agenda as presented.

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

NAY: None

Motion carried.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JUNE 12, 2024 MEETING

Motion by Commissioner Eshelman seconded by Commissioner Holden 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. Discussion on Rules for Corner Lots

Chris Khorey, McKenna, discussed: continuation of discussion in June; few proposed policy changes; Ethan Walthorn is here to discuss his survey; flagged potentially inefficient as applicant gets to choose what their front yard will be; proposal to change to the narrower lot frontage; some lots it is not as clear, but is an objective standard; secondary street frontage setbacks; talk about MC (Municipal Center) district; no side setbacks currently in GC (General Commercial).

Commissioner Harger discussed having front yard set by your address.

Ethan Walthorn from McKenna discussed: R-1 district, recommend a 20' setback would be a good compromise; R-2 district, recommend a 10' setback.

There was a discussion of:

- The non-conforming setbacks
- Standard front yard setbacks
- Average setbacks on the block in an older neighborhood
- Setbacks are an issue with older neighborhoods, not new houses.

Eric Hufnagel left at 5:50 p.m.

Ethan Walthorn, McKenna, discussed the MC (Municipal Center) district. This building is one of the only ones in the MC district that meets the setbacks.

Chris Khorey discussed a 10' setback in the MC district and it is consistent with R-3.

There was a discussion of:

- MC to 10'; R-1 to 20'; have not determined best way to decide what is the front yard.
- Share language with EMS?
- For existing properties, where your address is that is your front yard (would not be subjective).
- For new builds, go with the narrowest side.

6. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Continued Discussion on Accessory Buildings

Chris Khorey, McKenna, discussed: building height, change to the highest point of the building possibly; 23 out of 25 did it our way.

There was a discussion of:

- An A-frame house.
- Asymmetrical buildings.
- Storing a motorhome in an accessory structure.
- If changing to height from mean height, raise to 18' or 20'.
 - Take a look at accessory buildings that have recently gone up and what the peak height has been.
- Currently, our setback is 3' from any lot line; increase setback to 5'.
- All accessory buildings on a permanent foundation; that is not defined.
 - Consistent with RV's.
 - Maybe change to all accessory buildings over 200' require a permanent foundation.

B. Continued Discussion on Amending the Noise Ordinance

Chris Khorey, McKenna, said the highlighted sections were those that were changed from last time.

There was a discussion of:

- Changes created more consistency.
- Sunday and construction noises.
- Block party at the Mint Festival.
- Sound meter.
- Examples of sound at each decibel level.

- Set a public hearing for the next meeting.

7. COMMITTEE SITE PLAN APPROVALS - NONE:

8. PUBLIC COMMENT FOR NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Holly Thoms, Director of Capital Area Humane Society Spay and Neuter Clinic, was present. She said they were made aware of the amendment to Chapter 29 that was changed at city council meeting making it unlawful to feed stray cats. She said it did originate from your planning meeting. She discussed: they have the same goal of lowering the number of cats in your community; no one wants stray cats running around unwell; working with this since 2005; worked with Meridian Township on feral cats; four years later we are under 10; trap, neuter and return does work; feed bans don't work, smaller territory they stick around in; if you quit feeding them they don't go away, the cats become more visible looking for scraps.

Mayor Dzurka said our purpose was they are feeding other animals that are coming in such as skunks and raccoons.

Ms. Thoms said somebody on Meadowview got a ticket. She said they have been helping a resident over there and that woman has been ticketed. She said with the trap, neuter, and return they are not welcoming new cats into the community and over time the numbers will go down. They can't assist her with trapping due to the feeding ban.

There was a discussion of:

- Trap and return.
- They socialize cats under 3-4 months old and home them.
- What happens if a person takes a feral cat to a shelter?
 - They don't euthanize healthy, feral cats and the problem is indoor/outdoor cats.
- The TNR (Trap, Neuter, Release) program and if it is a formal agreement with the city?
- Pick up the food up at 8:00 pm., don't leave the food out.
- Follow-up with the city manager and enforcement officer.
- A city partnership that is proactive instead of reactive.

9. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Mills discussed moving public comments for non-agenda items to the top of the agenda; with the noise ordinance, he discussed in June that farmers live around him and after the meeting it was ironic that at 6:00 a.m. the farmer brought out a crop duster.

10. ADJOURNMENT

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

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

NAY: None

Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:11 p.m.