

On Thursday, April 16, 2020, at 7:15 p.m., a regular meeting of the Plan Commission was called to order via Zoom. Roll Call. Present: Chair Rene Morris, Dick Linville, Skip McCloud and Jamie Schwingle. Absent: Doug Freed, Aurelio Gallardo and Steve Munson.

Also present were: Planner Dustin Wolff and Brian Carranza of Mead and Hunt, Building and Zoning Superintendent Amanda Schmidt, Attorney Tim Zollinger, City Manager Scott Shumard, 1st Ward Alderman Retha Elston and Assistant City Clerk Monique Castillo.

Schmidt noted Council passed the requests to annex the wholly bounded properties and Steelton Subdivision – Group 4.

Schmidt also noted, at the Petitioners (Majeski) request, the Public Hearing to Rezone Lot #2 in the 400 block of 17th Avenue will again be tabled to the next regular scheduled meeting.

Chair Morris opened a Public Hearing at 7:17 p.m. to hear the recommendation to Annex/Rezone Properties contiguous to the City of Sterling, in the Steelton subdivision – Group 5.

Wolff noted 4 of the properties are single family we will rezone to SR-8, a commercial property at the corner of Oak/West 4th Street that will be given a community business designation and an apartment complex on Elm Avenue that will be given a MR-6 zoning designation. These designations allow us to keep all the properties legal and conforming.

Wolff reminded the commissioners the SR-8 zoning keeps these properties legal and conforming as they all have small/side setbacks. Noting with this zoning 4 foot setbacks are allowable.

Zollinger noted city is petitioner, all properties have sewer access and pre-annexation agreements, as did the prior groups of annexations. This process continues through the Steelton Subdivision and he recommends to proceed as in the past.

With no further discussion by staff, commissioners or guests, Chair Morris noted publications were made, fees were not applicable, notification requirements were met, signage notifying the public of the hearing was not applicable and no written or verbal comments were made.

The public hearing was closed at 7:20 p.m.

McCloud made a motion to approve the Annexation and Rezoning of the properties contiguous to the City, in the Steelton Subdivision – Group 5. The motion was seconded by Schwingle. Voting – Ayes: Linville, McCloud, Schwingle and Morris. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Munson appeared at 7:21 p.m.

Carranza reviewed the last time we gathered, we finished the Public Transportation element and touched base on Element 6; Utilities and Community Facilities. Carranza noted tonight we would continue our discussion with the Utilities and Community Facilities element.

Carranza provided a map to show boundaries and where the different types of utilities and community facilities are located. He discussed the importance of showcasing the available facilities such as healthcare, social services and parks and recreation.

Wolff noted this is an important component because it emphasizes quality of life and also shows areas where we may be lacking.

Carranza made note of the many facilities we have in social services, community promotion and cultural facilities and noted on a commendable level of 1-4 our facilities rate at 3.

Wolff commended our High School stating it is quite impressive and many visitors, including himself, have compared the facility to that of a college campus.

The school district includes a career center that represents 16 school districts and 4 parochial schools. The center offers 12 programs of study to approximately 600 students.

Parks and recreation availability is important to the quality of life factor because these facilities can offer economic benefits and enhance property values. Having gathering spaces not only strengthen neighborhoods and community bonds but can also provide municipal revenues and attract visitors.

It was noted there are currently 15 acres of park facilities maintained by the City. The recent focus is to upgrade the current facilities and add acreage along the riverfront.

Some of the upgrades include restroom facilities at Central Park/Grandon Civic Center, the addition of pedestrian/multi-modal connections and converting some of the tennis courts into futsal (a modified form of soccer) and sand volleyball courts. Wolff noted there is an overabundance of tennis courts, the idea is to add different attractions for all.

Wolff pointed out the Riverfront development always seems to come up in different conversations. McCloud noted the progress made to date is enormous. Wolff stated this is a very big space and things do not just happen overnight. It is important to highlight the little projects and accomplishments.

In addition to the parks maintained by the City, the Sterling Park District maintains 12 additional parks, a marina, a golf course and 2 recreation facilities.

Carranza noted while it is great to have such a wide variety the key findings from the public involvement forums emphasize a need to upgrade many of these facilities and offer a community

center strictly for family events, a new facility for the YWCA, more events downtown and improving the community organization partnerships to bridge the gap and work together instead of competing with each other. He also noted, Sauk Valley Community College is a critical source.

Carranza reviewed the vision statements and highlighted some key points such as considering the wants and desires of the residents/businesses, consider the desirability of new community facilities and continue to support our school systems.

As Carranza wrapped up, he noted there are a few more elements to cover then we will flush out the vision statements and look at specific plans. He feels it would be best to cover the vision statements when we are able to gather again, in person.

There was a brief discussion as to the delay with Majeski's petition. Schmidt noted it was tabled to gather additional information and then we were hit with Covid-19, both parties do not feel it is a high priority at this time. Hopefully all will be ready for the May meeting.

The next Plan Commission meeting is May 21, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. We will have more public hearings; Steelton Group 6, Majeski and a vacant property on West Fourth Street, across from Casey's would like to hook on to City sewer. As well as continue discussion with the Comprehensive Plan.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Monique Castillo
Assistant City Clerk