

Planning Commission Notes – March 1, 2022 – Submitted by Judd Vickers

The meeting of the Planning Commission was conducted in person and via WebEx.

Planning Commission voted to defer election of Chair and Vice-Chair for six months or until vacancies are filled and there is a full Planning Commission. There are currently two vacancies on the Planning Commission. Mary Losty will remain as Chair and Bill Craig as Vice-Chair during this interim period.

Old Business

PZ 2021-006 Planning Commission approved a preliminary plan amendment for 709 Pine Street, which will be a convenience store with residences above. The project represents a substantial investment in Pine Street revitalization.

New Business

PZ 2022 – 011 – Planning Commission voted to approve a Special Exception for a duplex located at 1102 Glover Ave. Next step is Board of Appeals approval. The structure was built in the 1950s as a duplex, meaning it shares a vertical party wall between the two units, each unit with a living space on the first floor and bedrooms on the second floor. There are a few of these types of older duplex structures, built in this manner before zoning was adopted. They are typically allowed to continue in the NC districts.

It is important to differentiate a duplex from a single-family home that was converted to a two or more family apartment use. Single family homes that have been converted to apartments are no longer a conforming use in the NC districts, and the use must cease when the apartments are vacant for 90 days.

PZ 2022 – 012 – Planning Commission approved Concept/Preliminary Plan for an addition at Brooks Appliance Store, which is located at 115 Maryland Ave.

Discussion

Continued discussion related to the expiration of approved, but dormant subdivisions. Zoning Officer is drafting a text amendment that would place certain perimeters around dormant subdivisions approved long ago. The City Council supports this effort. A subdivision would be required to have development activity within 5 years of approval, or a return to the Planning Commission would be required to renew approval. Concerns/issues raised with regard to recorded Plats/lots of records and how that would be handled.

Sign program – Planning Officer to draft a text amendment that would allow for more flexibility on signage when involved with a redevelopment project.

Continued discussion related to short term rentals. Discussion items are differentiated between owner occupied, vs non-owner occupied. Regulation poses enforcement challenges and the City could perhaps have a third-party consultant monitor the uses. Parking is an issue with short term rentals.