

MINUTES
City of Alpena Planning Commission
Regular Meeting (Council Chambers and Virtual)
April 11, 2023 Alpena, Michigan

CALL TO ORDER:

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Randy Boboltz, Planning Commission Chairman.

ROLL CALL: PLANNING COMMISSION

PRESENT: Wojda, Peterson, Boboltz, VanWagoner, Gilmore, Moses, Kostelic

ABSENT: Sundin

STAFF: Rachel Smolinski (City Manager), Montiel Birmingham (Planning, Development, and Zoning Director), Kathleen Sauve (Recording Secretary)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Agenda was approved as printed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Meeting March 14, 2023, minutes were approved as printed.

Boboltz explained the order of procedures for the public hearing.

PUBLIC HEARING AND COMMISSION ACTION: **Case # MAP 23-02** – Deborah Pernie, homeowner, requested to conditionally rezone 312 Huron Street from R-2 to R-T. The owner is currently undergoing downstairs renovation and will continue with the upstairs and egress to exterior if approved. Owner will reside in the lower level.

Birmingham presented the Finding of Fact report (see Appendix A) and Rezoning Standards (see Appendix B).

FAVOR: Andrew Lindahl, homeowner's contractor, said that the remodel will be beautiful from top to bottom, will all be completed up to code and it will be good for the neighborhood. Gilmore asked Lindahl what his timeline was for completion. Lindahl said he would like to have it done by the end of summer.

OPPOSITION: None.

OTHER: Ken Hubbard stated that he was neither for or against the request, but he was concerned about increased traffic. He asked the City to please keep that in mind in the future, as many of the residents living in that area have been there for many years in their single-family homes. He also voiced concern of having younger renters in the area, and changing single family homes into something that is a little bit different, it causes some problems, which is why there was one [written] objection.

Boboltz closed the public hearing at 6:10 pm.

Gilmore stated that his concern over parking was cleared up when Birmingham confirmed that the garage is deemed a parking space. Peterson said that was her concern as well. Boboltz stated that there has been a lot of pf publicity surrounding the difficulty finding housing in the Alpena area. He explained the adoption of Conditional Rezoning to the Zoning Ordinance, and that it helps provide more housing. He explained that, with respect to traffic laws, the more people there are in a given area, the greater the possibility there is for issues to exist.

Peterson ***motioned*** to approve the Conditional Rezone from R-2 to R-T at 312 Huron Street.

Moses ***seconded*** the motion.

Motion ***approved*** by unanimous vote.

Case # MAP 23-01 – Brian Peterson, property owner, requested to conditionally rezone 1224 North Second Avenue from B-1 to B-2, to allow all B1 uses, as well as B2 food related uses, such as an assembly hall, banquet hall, conference center, catering, food service, and the like.

Point of Order made by Gilmore as he motioned toward Commissioner Peterson.

Before proceeding, Ashley Peterson requested to recuse herself from the case hearing, as she is the spouse of the petitioner.

Point of Order well taken by Chairman Boboltz, and a vote was requested.

Wojda ***motioned*** to allow Peterson to conflict herself off of deliberation or voting on this particular application.

Kostelic ***seconded*** the motion.

Motion ***approved*** by unanimous vote.

Birmingham reviewed the Finding of Fact report (see Appendix C), the Site Plan review Standards (see Appendix D) and included some historical information about the hall for their reference in the meeting packet.

FAVOR: Brian Peterson, owner of Nowicki's Sausage Shop and the property in question, said that he has put a lot of time and effort with some community members [into this building], and

they have a lot of support for this project. He said that the building was built in the early 1900's as a German Hall. It had changed hands for different uses throughout its lifetime, and in 2020 he bought it from Phil Ludlow. He said they put a new roof on the building which cost him \$110,000.00. He said that he and his wife had their wedding there and had put a lot of work into it to make it useable. He went on to say that if the building was not located where it is with all the history, they would not be there right now; they have an awesome 125-year-old building. He said it could go two ways: rezone the building and work together as a community and in twenty-five years, they will have an awesome useable space, or they go the other way and continue down this path using it for storage and further deterioration and degradation and then they would wonder why they didn't take care of it while they had the chance. As a steward of the building, he asked if he could have the Commission's support and the community's help to bring the building back to a usable space that they can hand down to future generations. He said that on paper, that hall should not be in that neighborhood, but it is, so how should they proceed from there.

FAVOR: Jess Breckenridge, owner of LaCourse Rods and Promissory Consulting, said she would like to endorse the request to open the event hall above the thriving restaurant. She said that both Nowicki's Sausage and The Old Polish Corner provide much needed dining opportunities in the area and [Brian Peterson] has taken old buildings in the area that were deteriorating and prevented them from becoming eyesores, as well as giving people food and a place to gather. She said that seeing people meet at The Old Polish Corner on a Friday night and seeing everyone get together there, is the very heart and meaning of community, especially on the Northside. She thought that it would bring a lot of benefits to the community, beginning with the creation of new jobs, new taxes to fund public infrastructure, services – he makes money, the town makes money. She also said that it would enrich the cultural landscape and strengthen the bonds between our citizens, both on the Northside and in Alpena. Breckenridge went on to say that she works for a lot of people that do a lot of things in a lot of areas and supporting local businesses, especially in the next five to ten years, is absolutely paramount if we don't want this to turn into another Traverse City. She asked to support people like this, not people who are going to put in big box stores, bulldoze stuff and turn it into something that people don't recognize.

OPPOSITION: None.

Chairman Boboltz closed the Public hearing at 6:33 pm for deliberation.

Wojda asked Birmingham about what exceptions can be approved in the Noise Ordinance and what is the process for that. Birmingham said that there is a form and an approval process through City Council and they would approve it through a specific time in the evening on an instance-by-instance basis. She said it is typically for outdoor music for a longer period of time, not necessarily for music happening inside. Wojda said he is struck by the fact that nobody is opposed to the idea after notices went out to all neighboring property owners and nobody is saying that there is a problem, or they are concerned about this. He said that tells him

something about the appetite of the neighborhood for the project. He respectfully disagreed with Peterson's statement that there were many reasons why it should not be approved and said that he is struggling to come up with too many; they are preserving a historical use with other business uses in the area which seems consistent. Gilmore asked if the property owner was amenable to put some of the trees in as mentioned in the Site Plan Review Standards. Peterson said he had been debating doing that already. Boboltz said it would be a pretty good chunk of money to accomplish all the additional requirements and asked Peterson if he had any concern about the timeframe of the suggested requirements if approved. Peterson said he did and asked for a reprieve or a five-year plan to accomplish all of those things. He also said that the neighboring [property owners] do not have any complaints about headlights or fencing, so he wants to tackle the paramount projects first. Boboltz said he would be willing to waive the five-foot requirement to ultimately have a privacy fence put up where the chain link fence is currently because of the way the neighbor's house is setback away from the property line. VanWagoner inquired about whether the parking spaces are too narrow. Boboltz said if the traffic was two ways, it would be tight, but if only one way traffic, it wouldn't be a problem pulling into a space. Boboltz also said he thought that nine-foot striping is a little tight and he would prefer ten feet, but if nine foot is acceptable, he would not argue about that. Birmingham said she investigated that a lot, and it was very different depending on the community, but the average is as little as eight-and-a-half feet; one of the surrounding townships has nine feet in their Ordinance, whereas the City of Alpena has ten feet. Boboltz said he did not want to push the issue. He then asked the Commission what their thoughts were on the timeframe for completion of the additional requirements.

Wojda ***motioned*** to Conditionally Rezone and adopt the Findings [of Fact] with regard to the rezoning standards, allow five years to come into compliance and waive the setback requirement for the fencing based upon the layout of the property and that there is adequate public parking in the immediate area.

Kostelic ***seconded*** the motion to approve.

Motion ***approved*** by unanimous vote.

Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment – Article 2: Sign Definitions; Article 4: Signs – Boboltz said that this was the third reading of the proposed changes, and asked the Commissioners if they had any further input. Birmingham asked if everyone was aligned with the changes to the temporary signs. No further input from the Commission.

Wojda ***motioned*** to approve the Sign Ordinance as amended and submit to Council for approval.

VanWagoner ***seconded*** the motion to approve.

Motion ***approved*** by unanimous vote.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

COMMUNICATIONS OR REPORTS: None.

CONTINUING EDUCATION: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

MEMBERS' COMMENTS: None.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:54 p.m., by Boboltz, Planning Commission Chairman.

Clayton C. VanWagoner, Secretary