

MINUTES  
City of Alpena Planning Commission  
Regular Meeting (Council Chambers and Virtual)  
October 10, 2023 Alpena, Michigan

CALL TO ORDER:

Prior to calling the meeting to Order, Chairman Boboltz welcomed Logan Kemp as a new member of the Planning Commission.

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, Boboltz, VanWagoner, Gilmore, Moses, Kostelic, Sundin, Kemp

ABSENT: Peterson

STAFF: 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 September 12, 2023, minutes were approved as printed.

Boboltz explained the order of procedures for the public hearing.

**PUBLIC HEARING AND COMMISSION ACTION: Case # SU-23-04** – Miranda Plume, homeowner, requested to operate a group childcare (7-12 children) out of her home located at 1312 South First Avenue. The home is currently licensed as a family childcare for 1-6 children, which is permitted by right in the R-2 District.

Birmingham presented the Finding of Fact report (see Appendix A), Rezoning Standards (see Appendix B), and Supplemental Regulations (Appendix C) as included in the meeting packet provided to the public and all members of the Planning Commission.

**FAVOR:** Plume, applicant, stated that she has a special endorsement for seven children rather than six, and did not have anything else to add.

Jennifer Young spoke in favor stating that her and husband both work in Alpena County and have three boys. She said that finding childcare in this county is very difficult and finding someone that you can trust your children with is also very difficult; Miranda provides excellent care, and she is never worried about how they are going to be when they come home. Furthermore, if she can provide that service to more children in an area that she knows is needed, [Alpena] would be a lot better off. She went on to say that she takes very good care of her children, she has been a blessing to her family, and she hopes that she will be able to bless other families too.

OPPOSITION: None.

Boboltz closed the public hearing at 6:10 pm.

Sundin asked what the minimum staff requirement would be to care for twelve children. Plume said there would be two and verified that she does have the staff.

Wojda ***motioned*** to adopt the factual findings outlined in the report and approve the Special Land Use request with the requirement that she maintain and comply with all necessary licensing requirements through the State of Michigan.

Kostelic ***seconded*** the motion.

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

**Case # PMA23-05** – Kelco, Inc. requested to rezone a portion of the property located at 350 Pinecrest Street, from R-2 to OS-1 to allow the development of an individual and family services facility.

Birmingham reviewed the Finding of Fact report (see Appendix D), the Rezone Standards (see Appendix E) as included in the meeting packet provided to the public and all members of the Planning Commission.

Sundin asked if this would be considered spot zoning since the property to the north is not a PUD, but still single family residential, and therefore should have been a Conditional Rezoning rather than a full Rezoning. Birmingham said she reviewed this with Northeast Michigan Council of Governments, and they were not concerned.

FAVOR: Bill Kelly, property owner and part of the development plan with his son Mitchell, said that this property that they purchased was an abandoned church. He said that their purpose for the request is to accommodate a medical facility that is looking at either staying in the City or moving to the County. They are trying to keep them in the City, close to their clients. In reference to Greg's comment earlier, Kelly said that to the south of this property is about a 100-foot wooded area which is owned by the Power Company and it will never be developed. It goes out to Long Rapids Road, and it is an easement to access underground or overhead

utilities. There is a thirty-foot stretch that abuts a residential lot and the owner of that property came in to his business and said he does not have a problem with it because the use of it is not anywhere close to him as the building is back far enough onto the property. He said that they thought the best approach to do this would be to take a piece that could be functionally used for this and possibly allow for another one if the demand grew; just do this change because there is already so much office service and medical back in that area and along with that, there is so much residential across the street, multiple residential zones, because some of those people would be using this facility, plus it is close to the hospital as well as other medical facilities. That is why they made their decision to do it this way, to accommodate the situation.

Sundin asked if the building would be torn down or used. Kelly said that the building is in great shape and was well built about thirty years ago; just internal renovations will be done such as new paint, carpet, bathrooms, and things of that nature.

OPPOSITION: None.

Chairman Boboltz closed the Public hearing at 6:20 pm for deliberation.

Gilmore said he had the same impression that Sundin had, in that it did look somewhat like a spot zoning. Birmingham again said she consulted with NEMCOG and based on the uses that are very nearby and OS-1 is meant to be a transitional zone between residential and other uses, those other uses are already existing to the north, albeit not touching, so she felt that the intent was in line. She said the future of the property is to be determined. Wojda said that when he reads the description of the district they are looking at, it seems like it fits, it may not touch, but you can see some similar setups.

Wojda ***motioned*** to adopt the factual findings proposed in the report and approve the rezoning request subject to any additional notes and conditions contained in the report.

Moses ***seconded*** the motion to approve.

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS: 555 South Fifth Avenue Façade Request (Hope Network Project) – Birmingham explained that Hope Network recently went through City Council to update the PILOT that they had to extend it to December 31<sup>st</sup> of 2024. She said that they have been working diligently on many different pieces of financing to make this project go forward. She explained that it was the former Bingham School that is going to be used as a senior independent living facility with staff on site for people aged 55 and older. They are getting funding from a variety of sources such as a State appropriation, State Historic Tax credits, funding through MSHDA, grants from

the MEDC, and also some other funding where the PILOT comes into play as well as their own funds. From an expense perspective, costs have gone up from when they originally submitted their proposal. When the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), they have to meet the SHPO standards in order to receive those funds. Hope Network has an architecture firm working with the SHPO to ensure that the façade for the addition specifically, will meet the requirements of the SHPO. Birmingham said that she received confirmation today that they have a verbal approval agreement that their material choice that they are proposing does meet that standard. However, the SHPO is looking for differentiation. She said that the City has been working with an architectural historian recently for a [historic] district listing, and it is very common that the SHPO wants to maintain integrity between what the original structure was and any additions, so they do not want any additions to match or be very close to matching because they want to show what the historic portion looks like versus the new. Birmingham provided the members with pictures of the previous façade rendering, a brick façade rendering, and the newly proposed rendering of the façade on the addition. In addition, there were pictures of a completed project in Grand Rapids that used the same material along with brick as an example. She said that it is not a concern to her especially since the State Historic Preservation Office has given verbal approval, and because their standards would be high since tax credits would be part of that approval process. The reason that it coming before this board is because when it was approved, there was a condition that the new addition be constructed to a style consistent with the existing building with a flat roof and masonry exterior. She said that they are looking to amend that condition of approval. Hope Network was not available to represent themselves, so Birmingham said she is representing them.

Boboltz asked if the first set of drawings would still be possible in terms of being verbally approved by SHPO. Birmingham said that it was one of the original conditions for it to be changed to have a flat roof so the gables were removed, which is what they would see in the updated renderings. Wojda said he was concerned it may end up looking like the jail with the contrast of the original building and the new part, but the fact that SHPO gave approval, makes him feel more comfortable with it. Birmingham said the updated color scheme looks better. The siding material is called Boral Siding and is a quality product. Sundin said he was working for the City at the time the original was done and was involved in the discussions. He said he was surprised that SHPO approved the new renderings because they used to be so strict. He would like to see more brick incorporated such as around corners, trim or accents to it all ties together better but still distinctively looks not original. Boboltz asked if the new rendering is meant to be *the* final look. Birmingham said that she was unsure. Boboltz said he agreed with Sundin in that the new building is more of a stark contrast to the other building, as opposed to the [photos] of the other building that have a mixture of brick and other materials. Kostelic asked if there are windows missing in the rendering because it would look better if there were windows and mixed material; right now, it looks funky because it is a large empty space, but when you start breaking it up a bit, the overall look and feel will change. Sundin asked if the end of the building would have windows. Birmingham said she could get clarification. She also said

that this is a Planned Unit Development which is where the Planning Commission can throw in some conditions. Her concern was that if they did want something to come back in front of them to approve that has it very specifically laid out, [Hope Network] is trying to get all their financing completed and closed within the next few weeks and she did not want to delay that process if at all possible. Moses said they should be careful putting too many additions or restrictions because the whole idea was to reduce their costs. VanWagoner said a lot of the changes could be done with color; so that it is not all just one dark addition. Moses said it would be more cost effective. Kemp said as long as it is consistent with the rest of the neighborhood too. Birmingham said that the proposed façade changes will save them roughly a little over \$300,000. Wojda asked Birmingham if it would be possible to get a proposed rendering that would have some element of brick in it and come back for a special meeting. He said otherwise, they would be making a motion that is ambiguous. Birmingham asked what specific direction she could give them such as color variation or (inaudible, interference from speaker). Sundin said the white entrances do not relate to anything else. Moses asked if it requires a hearing process again if any modifications are made. Birmingham said no. Sundin said that even though some may have concerns, majority rules. VanWagoner said that he appreciates that they are trying to save money and it is a good use of the facility, but he is not excited about the color scheme and if they could make some adjustments to the colors so it does not look like a big brown or green chunk added on and try to get it to tie in more but their back is up against a wall and they have a couple weeks to get it done. Birmingham said she does not know the specific timing, but when they did the Ordinance update for the PILOT, they were about 4-6 weeks from closing and that was about 3-4 weeks ago. VanWagoner asked for [Hope Network] to give them a rendition of a different color scheme to try to tie it in to the existing building a little bit more. Birmingham suggested updating the conditions so that it wouldn't require a masonry exterior and could be administratively approved, but still get their feedback; so it would not be a motion per say, but she could at least get their feedback on options. Wojda said they would have to be very careful on how that feedback would be obtained. Birmingham said she agreed and that the feedback would have to be sent back to her individually. Sundin said that contradicts what was said earlier, that a change needs to be made at a meeting. Sundin said that another concern of his is that they did not see this last month after the PILOT was extended; why are they seeing it now a couple weeks before their closing. Birmingham said that she had discussed with them about having a special meeting, but they opted not to; they had the drawings 3 or 4 weeks ago but had to wait for a Planning Commission meeting. She said that there are a lot moving parts on this project and they are going through every single detail of the construction costs; they have reached out to confirm permitting fees and going through every line item. Gilmore said that the Boral siding could be custom fit with different colors. VanWagoner agreed. Boboltz recapped saying that they were not concerned about the Boral siding. They understand that this siding is available in different colors and textures, SHPO is okay with that and they are not concerned about this looking like a duplicate of the original building; they are concerned about the original Bingham School still having its historic appeal. Boboltz said he would be in favor of different colors and textures

also. He said he would like to entertain a motion. Kemp said that as soon as they tell them to start changing materials, the cost goes back up, which is what they are trying to avoid; but if they can have cohesion with the rest of the neighborhood, that would be ideal. Birmingham said she has confidence in the fact that it has been approved by the State Historical Preservation Office, but she did hear the concerns of the members. She said that she also knows that SHPO is extremely particular and if they feel that this fits, she feels good about it. Boboltz said that when they approved the site plan for the hospital big addition, they had indicated that they were going to stripe the parking lot with nine feet wide parking spaces; he compared them to the Aplex parking spots which are very tight. He said they did not demand it in their motion but suggested that the spaces be made wider, and they did stripe them wider, so they could take that approach. He asked if they knew for certain that [what they proposed] is exactly what they are intending it to look like with that color. Birmingham said she did not know for certain if it was an exact rendering. Moses expressed that it is important that they not jeopardize a housing project right now at a time when they just had a meeting about housing and how short of housing in this town; he would hate to kill a project just before fruition just because they put too many demands on them. VanWagoner said he would be in favor of approving it and just making a request that they try to have more of a mix of materials to make it more in harmony with the existing structure; if they don't, he is okay with that too, but it is a request.

Wojda ***motioned*** to update the condition to allow the new façade as requested and authorize Montiel Birmingham to communicate with the developers the intent of their discussion today and the requests that they have made.

Kemp ***seconded*** the motion to update the condition for approval.

Motion ***approved*** by a vote of 7-1.

Yay – Wojda, Boboltz, VanWagoner, Gilmore, Moses, Kostelic, Kemp

Nay – Sundin

COMMUNICATIONS OR REPORTS: None.

CONTINUING EDUCATION: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

MEMBERS' COMMENTS: None.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:03 p.m., by Boboltz, Planning Commission Chairman.

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Clayton C. VanWagoner, Secretary