

**THE REGUAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION BOARD HELD ON APRIL 18, 2016,  
AT 7:00 P.M., AT THE CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

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The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M., by Jack Edmonds. Members present were Jeff Reynolds, Jules Zimmer, and Faith Goenner. Staff present were Jolene Foss (Comm. Dev. Director) and Mary Lou DeWitt (Comm. Dev. Assistant).

**OATH OF OFFICE:**

Faith Goenner took the Oath of Office.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING ON MARCH 21, 2016**

ZIMMER MOVED, SECOND BY REYNOLDS, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MARCH 21, 2016. UPON THE VOTE, THERE WERE 4 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED.

**AGENDA ADDITIONS/DELETIONS:**

REYNOLDS MOVED, SECOND BY ZIMMER, TO APPROVE THE AGENDA. UPON THE VOTE THERE WERE 4 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED.

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

**A. Ordinance Amendment amending Chapter V (Zoning Districts) and Chapter II (Definitions) to allow pole type construction and materials**

Community Development Director Memo:

Numerous request for the allowance of alternative building materials have been directed toward the Planning and Zoning office in the recent past.

The three materials that have been most prevalent have been:

- 1) Pole types construction also known as post frame, customize steel building, wood frame, pole buildings, etc.  
It uses large poles or posts buried in the ground or on a foundation to provide the vertical structural support and girts to provide horizontal support. The method was developed and matured during the 1930s as agricultural practices changed, including the shift toward engine-powered farm equipment and the demand for cheaper, larger barns and storage areas. Unlike competing building methods, once the poles, girts, and rafters are put in place, much of the construction work on a pole-built structure can be handled by a single individual over the course of a month or season.
- 2) Fabric and frame structures also known as hoop buildings.  
Fabric structures are forms of constructed fibers that provide end users a variety of aesthetic free-forms building designs. Custom-made fabric structures are engineered and fabricated to meet worldwide structural, flame retardant, weather-resistant, and natural force requirements. Fabric structures are considered a subcategory of tensile structure.
- 3) Insulated Concrete Form or stay in place concrete forming systems. Insulating concrete form or insulated concrete form (ICF) is a system of formwork for reinforced concrete

usually made with a rigid thermal insulation that stays in place as a permanent interior and exterior substrate for walls, floors, and roofs. The forms are interlocking modular units that are dry-stacked (without mortar) and filled with concrete. The units lock together somewhat like Lego bricks and create a form for the structural walls or floors of a building. ICF construction has become commonplace for both low rise commercial and high performance residential construction as more stringent energy efficiency and natural disaster resistant building codes are adopted. ICFs may be used with frost protected shallow foundations (FPSF).

After discussion with the Building Inspector and the Public Works Director, as well as the City Engineer, Staff would like to propose for the allowance of these materials, provided they are inspected by a structural engineer at the time of construction, in the MN-1 Industrial and in the B-3 General Commercial District.

Upon further review, the City Attorney and previous Planner/Zoning Administrator, Kelli Bourgeois, has shared her insight and experience on this matter. Please see comments below:

*I'm thinking this has the potential to be a slippery slope to go down. It would seem to go backwards for the building standards in the Code. Princeton is ahead of many other small cities in not allowing pole structures in commercial and industrial zoned properties, and once they're allowed they'll be very difficult to remove (I literally spent years trying to prohibit them in Becker's commercial and industrial zoning districts). Also the statement regarding the "integrity of the surrounding structures" leaves a lot to the interpretation of the Planning Commission which could put them in a difficult position having to decide between competing views of landowners and it could open them up to a charge of making an arbitrary and capricious land use decision.*

City Administrator has voiced concern over this amendment, as well.

*"Princeton should not lower its standards and should stick with a pole building prohibition. While they are, indeed, a less expensive structure, the down side is that the County Assessor is going to peg the taxable value at a level conducive to the type of construction...regardless of whether it looks good."*

The Planning Commission has the opportunity to request changes be made, additional research be done or to approve or deny the proposed Ordinance Amendment.

\*\*\*\*\*End of Staff Memo\*\*\*\*\*

Foss said to maybe look at only in the Industrial and not commercial was brought up today. She added interior wording to the Insulated Concrete Form where it is permanent exterior and interior for walls, floors, and roofs.

Edmonds commented that the City Attorney is opposed or has reservations on this change.

Zimmer said the Administrator is concerned about this, not for the look, but for a less expensive structure and the County Assessor would have to put a tax value as such on it.

Foss commented that the property value would increase with something there instead of nothing.

Reynolds said the revenue as a tax base should not be intertwined with the property owner.

Foss said if we are only looking at tax base, then we are not looking at what the building is for, and the property owner may not be able to have it because they cannot afford a framed building. The Planning Commission has to approve the building and we can specify more of what is needed for each applicant.

Edmonds said we do need a structured Ordinance. We need guidelines so we are not going by case by case applications.

Foss understands and said that is what the City Attorney said. Having it more clearly in the Ordinance helps keep it easier to follow.

Edmonds was initially on board for it, but after reading the City Attorneys comments he is questioning it. Pole buildings can be attractive. Maybe look at being more restrictive in the Ordinance.

Zimmer asked if it would require more research from staff.

Foss said it depends what the changes are.

Edmonds opened the public hearing.

Butch Drews, 12380 283<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, said he likes what he hears from all the points from the attorney and such. He wants to protect his investment. If you are given rules to follow he will follow them. Foundation is probably the biggest hang ups what people have. You can sleeve the poles or put concrete pillars in the ground. We might want to leave that for options where the foundation has poles in concrete, stuff that is far superior for pole buildings. Steel buildings are allowed in certain areas could be a deterrent. Landscaping and parking are required, but we are required to dress it up more. We just need the rules for options.

Travis Leonard, 205 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, said he is looking at the industrial side of the equation. He needs a place where materials are contained and kept dried. He is looking at a businessman side and needs it economical. If he has to put up a steel building that would be ludicrous to do. He has seen the hoop buildings in different areas. Exploring of alternative ways to contain a business as cheaply and economically as possible is important. He would be forced to move outside the city if he expands and he does not want to do that. He wants his property to look nice. If there were regulations that would be approved by the Planning Commission he is okay with that. There is so much engineering that goes on with pole barns for construction material. They are more than adequate in the snow loads and wind tolerance.

Drews said he would like to see them allowed more than just the Industrial area. He would like to see them allowed in the commercial area with the proper requirements.

Goenner asked Drews what the pole building would be used for.

Drews said he would use the pole building for retail or offices.

Leonard asked why pole buildings were not allowed.

Edmonds said the materials and such.

Foss said they were cheap and ugly was probably the reason.

Leonard said construction is different now.

Zimmer asked how this came to light.

Foss said Leonard and Drews along with two other people said they would like to build a pole building.

Reynolds asked what about the mini storage unit that was built.

Foss said the Building Inspector said it was built as a pole building and should not have been.

Goenner said the safety and environment has to be looked at. Are products being kept dry in these or are people working in them.

Leonard said from a business stand point he knows of three other businesses that need to expand, but cannot afford to do a stick structure. Allowing a pole building would help make it where they can expand. He knows people that would like his building now, that it would work for them. It is a stepping stone to have a pole building, but you can make them look better. Great option to have in the Ordinance. He agrees it is better for the tax base to have a pole building on a property than have nothing on it. He could not build with a concrete building or a steel building.

Foss said we do not write ordinances for certain people. There may be businesses that are unique that we should consider all aspects of it. She knows the administration, attorney, and such are making comments and does not want to lessen their opinion, but she would like to have options for unique buildings. Leonard's site is by the Plastic Products business.

Edmonds asked if requiring cement pillars in the ground instead of the poles, is that too restrictive of a requirement.

Drews said he is willing to offer research time on this to look at different types of pole buildings and materials best used.

Foss said she would work with Drews on this and get his opinion.

Reynolds said he worked with pole barns and they are required to have all green treated. He talks people out of using the post in the concrete because it traps water.

Leonard said he has a builder from Woodbury that he works for and they do all green treated foundations.

REYNOLDS MOVED, SECOND BY ZIMMER, TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING. UPON THE VOTE, THERE WERE 4 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED.

Edmonds is okay with allowing pole buildings, but there needs to be tight restrictions. Would we allow it in all districts.

Foss said B-3, MN-1, and MN-2.

Zimmer asked if this would help get Aero Business Park to be developed.

Foss said it might stimulate growth.

Zimmer said it has been sitting there for quite some time and maybe it would help. Would this give more opportunity to give some growth in that area.

Foss said she thinks it would. She is cautious because the administrator is not in favor of this and it will have to go to the Council also.

Edmonds said the zoning districts he is okay with. He likes Drews idea. Her and the Building Inspector maybe can work together and please the administration.

Foss said it would be a longer process to bring it back and have another public hearing. Revising it would be better so it is not shot down by the Council.

Zimmer would like to look more into this and see where thoughts are. He would also like to talk more with Drews and Leonard and also the administrator and get more information on it.

Reynolds said maintain the structure of what is similar to what is there. How do we define that.

Zimmer said the concern is the notes says it is a temporary nature.

Edmonds said engineering has advanced and the product is made better.

Goenner is supportive to have this looked at, but it has to be more thoroughly looked into.

Foss will come up with more standards on descriptions on what is best for this.

Edmonds suggested having the poles on top of the concrete.

Goenner asked if this would come back to the Planning Commission if someone were to build this type of building.

Foss said yes, a site plan review would be done.

Drews suggested a standing seam roof.

Leonard said restaurants use that and high end homes also use that type.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:** None

**COMMUNICATION AND REPORTS:**

**A. Verbal Report**

Foss said she has no report.

**B. City Council Minutes for March, 2016**

The Planning Commission Board had no comments.

ZIMMER MOVED, SECOND BY REYNOLDS, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. UPON THE VOTE, THERE WERE 4 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED. THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:05 P.M.

ATTEST:

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Jeff Reynolds, Vice Chairperson

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Mary Lou DeWitt, Comm. Dev. Assistant