

**THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION BOARD HELD ON MAY 21, 2012,
AT 7:00 P.M., AT THE CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M., by Dave Thompson. Members present were Jack Edmonds, and Dick Dobson. Township members present were Jim Kusler, (Princeton Twsp.) and Randy Atwood (Baldwin Twsp.) Staff present were Carie Fuhrman and Mary Lou DeWitt.

Absent was Mitzi Mellott.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING ON APRIL 16, 2012

DOBSON MOVED, SECOND BY EDMONDS, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF APRIL 16, 2012.
UPON THE VOTE, THERE WERE 3 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED.

PUBLIC HEARING:

A. Amendment to Future Land Use Plan from Mixed Residential to Neighborhood Commercial at 601 6th Avenue North & 605 Rum River Drive North and Rezoning from R-3 to B-2 at 605 Rum River Drive North

Fuhrman informed the Planning Commission Board that Wesley Geurkink had submitted an application to rezone his property from R-3 to B-2 and to amend the Future Land Use Plan from Mixed Residential to Neighborhood Commercial for his property at 605 Rum River Drive North. An amendment to the Future Land Use Plan from Mixed Residential to Neighborhood Commercial at 601 6th Avenue North, the A.G.S. business, is also a part of this request.

Wesley Geurkink's property is approximately 9,500 square feet in size and triangular shaped. It has frontage on Rum River Drive North, with access off of Rum River Drive and the alley to the west of the lot. The property contains one building that is approximately 1,900 square feet in size and was built over 50 years ago. It was once used as a bait shop.

The neighborhood contains a variety of land uses from commercial to single family homes to multi-family homes. The commercial uses, with the exception of Northern Attitudes, are located on the southwest side of Rum River Drive, which is the same side of the road the subject property is located on. Being Rum River Drive is a higher classification roadway as a County Road, it offered a more conducive area for commercial development, versus if it were a side street. The southwest side of Rum River Drive contains Wholesale Auto, an auto repair business, the A.G.S. business, Geurkink's commercial building, a vacant commercial building, the vet clinic, Casey's General Store, and three single family homes interspersed throughout those uses.

According to the property owner, the building is currently being used as office space and storage. A recent inquiry regarding a potential use of the property led staff to research the zoning, and Mr. Geurkink was then made aware that the property is zoned R-3, Multiple Family Residential. Being it is currently zoned R-3, the office use is a non-conforming use; if the use is discontinued for one year or longer, then any subsequent uses must be conforming with the current zoning district, according to the City's Zoning Ordinance.

Mr. Geurkink is requesting to rezone the property to B-2 Neighborhood Business in order for the property to be sold and utilized in the future as a commercial property. Mr. Geurkink is concerned that the property is too small to construct a residential home on the property. The lot area minimum in the R-3 District for the establishment of a new single family lot is 12,500 square feet. Therefore, if Mr. Geurkink's lot were created today, it would not meet the minimum lot standards for the R-3 District. However, according to the Zoning Ordinance, existing lots of record are deemed buildable provided it has frontage on a public right-of-way and can meet all setbacks. Mr. Geurkink has not submitted documentation that a single family home could indeed not be constructed on the lot. If this lot were created today, it would also not meet the minimum lot standards for the B-2 District, 20,000 square feet. There is a concern regarding the available parking on a lot this small of size if it were to remain as commercial.

The Future Land Use Plan designates the entire half block southwest of Rum River Drive between 6th Street North and 7th Street North as Mixed Residential. This half block includes Geurkink's building and the A.G.S. business, which both front on Rum River Drive, and three single family homes with access on to 7th Avenue North.

Fuhrman said in order to rezone this property, the Land Use Plan should also be amended as a Zoning Map should align with the Future Land Use Plan. If the Planning Commission were to decide to amend the Land Use Plan and rezone the Geurkink property, Fuhrman recommends the Milford property, A.G.S. business, that is currently zoned B-2 and utilized as a commercial business, be designated on the Future Land Use Plan as Neighborhood Commercial. Mr. Milford has submitted a letter to give his permission to change his land use designation.

Jeffrey Milford, owner of A.G.S., was present and asked why there is a Future Land Use map.

Fuhrman said that was part of the Comprehensive Plan the City did in 2009. The Zoning Map should match the Future Land Use Map.

Milford asked if the Future Land Use Map would make it more difficult to sell his property and what is future.

Fuhrman said it is a guiding document for City to follow on how they want the land to be used. His property designation does not match the zoning.

Edmonds commented that the City does want his parcel to stay business and this will just clean it up.

Fuhrman said when the Zoning Map was changed it was not corrected on the Comprehensive Map.

Thompson agreed that it should have been done all at once and was overlooked.

Fuhrman is not sure why this half block was left residential, but this will clean it up.

Wesley Geurkink, applicant was present and said that Fuhrman's memo covered all the points and was pleased with her remarks.

DOBSON MOVED, SECOND BY EDMONDS, TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING. UPON THE VOTE, THERE WERE 3 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED.

EDMONDS MOVED, SECOND BY DOBSON, TO APPROVE AND FORWARD TO THE CITY COUNCIL THE FUTURE LAND USE PLAN AMENDMENT AT 605 RUM RIVER DRIVE NORTH AND ALSO 601 6TH AVENUE NORTH FROM MIXED RESIDENTIAL TO NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL BASED ON THE FINDINGS OF FACT THAT THE PROPOSAL COMPLIES WITH THE NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL CONCEPT, WHICH IS TO ALLOW LIMITED COMMERCIAL USES IN EXISTING COMMERCIAL THAT IS ADJACENT TO RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS, AND THE NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DESIGNATION IS COMPATIBLE WITH PRESENT AND FUTURE LAND USES OF THE AREA. UPON THE VOTE, THERE WERE 3 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED.

DOBSON MOVED, SECOND BY EDMONDS, TO APPROVE AND FORWARD TO THE CITY COUNCIL THE REZONING AT 605 RUM RIVER DRIVE NORTH FROM R-3 MULTIPLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL TO B-2 NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS DISTRICT BASED ON THE FINDINGS OF FACT THAT THE PROPOSED ACTION HAS BEEN CONSIDERED IN RELATION TO THE SPECIFIC POLICIES AND PROVISIONS AND HAS BEEN FOUND TO BE CONSISTENT WITH THE OFFICIAL CITY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, AND THE DESIGNATION IS OR WILL BE COMPATIBLE WITH PRESENT AND FUTURE LAND USES OF THE AREA. THE CONDITIONS FOR THIS APPROVAL IS THAT THE FUTURE USE OF THE BUILDING SHALL COMPLY WITH THE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS CONTAINED IN THE ZONING ORDINANCE AND TRAFFIC GENERATION AND ACCESS TO AND FROM THE PROPOSED USE SHALL BE WITHIN CAPABILITIES OF STREETS SERVING THE PROPERTY. UPON THE VOTE, THERE WERE 3 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED.

The Planning Commission Board reviewed the Findings of Fact:

1. Is the rezoning consistent with the Princeton Land Use Plan? Yes.
2. Have there been changes in the character of development in the vicinity? No, the area has been basically the same for at least the last 15 years.
3. Does the rezoning constitute spot zoning of the property? No, we do not recommend or except spot zoning if we can help it.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

A. People's Bank Sign Review

Fuhrman informed the Planning Commission Board that Pillar Signs and Graphics, Inc. on behalf of People's Bank, has submitted a permit application for the enlargement of two existing all mounted signs on the south and east wall elevations at 209 Rum River Drive South. People's Bank is located at the northwest corner of Rum River Drive South and 3rd Street South. The property is zoned B-1 Central Business. The Zoning Ordinance requires wall mounted business signs be permitted by the Planning Commission if they meet the ordinance requirements.

The applicant is proposing to enlarge an existing sign on the building elevation facing Third Street South and on the building elevation facing Rum River Drive South. Each sign will be 4.5 feet by 10 feet, or 45 square feet, in size after the enlargement. The signs both currently state "People's Bank" and the enlargement to the bottom of each sign will state "Drive Thru ATM and Deputy Registrar Motor Vehicle Registration". The sign additions will contain a white background and blue lettering.

The Sign Ordinance allows two wall signs when a building abuts two or more streets; one oriented to each abutting street is permitted, provided the gross surface area of the wall sign does not exceed ten percent the area of the building wall, including doors and windows, or 200 square feet, whichever is smaller. The proposed 45 square foot wall signs are both well under the Ordinance requirements as the south building wall is 1,395 square feet, and the east building wall is 696 square feet.

The applicants are also proposing other signs for vehicular traffic and directional sign, Drive thru open signage and drive thru ATM signage, that are permitted without a building permit. Fuhrman said the proposed wall signs appear to meet the zoning requirements, and she would recommend approval of the sign permit based on the condition that a building permit be submitted and approved prior to installation.

EDMONDS MOVED, SECOND BY DOBSON, TO APPROVE THE SIGNAGE AT PEOPLE'S BANK AT 209 RUM RIVER DRIVE SOUTH, WITH THE CONDITION THAT A BUILDING PERMIT BE SUBMITTED AND APPROVED PRIOR TO INSTALLATION. UPON THE VOTE, THERE WERE 3 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED.

B. Electronic Message Board Regulations

Fuhrman said she has received an inquiry recently regarding the installation of an electronic message board sign at Merlin's. After researching the Ordinance, it was discovered that the Sign Ordinance does not address electronic message boards specifically. The City contains a number of electronic message board signs already. But with the anticipated commercial growth out near Walmart, the Planning Commission may want to consider adding regulations for these types of signs. No action is requested at this time; just a discussion on the topic.

Thompson commented when Frontier Steak House had their review for their message board sign, the brightness of the message was a concern.

Fuhrman said that has to meet State regulations.

The Planning Commission Board directed staff to look into what other cities have in place for this and bring it back to the Planning Commission. It would be in the City's best interest to have wordage in place before the west side of the City develops.

COMMUNICATION AND REPORTS:

A. Verbal Report

1) Temporary Sign Permit Fee (Council Update)

Fuhrman said that the City Council directed staff to look into adding language regarding fees on the temporary signs to be waived for non-profit organizations.

2) Bergstrom House Update

Fuhrman said that the EDA Board is looking into purchasing this Bergstrom house with the NSP Funds and donating it to Habitat for Humanity. The building would be either torn down or burnt. It has to be tested for asbestos and the results would then determine if the Princeton Fire & Rescue Department will hold training there. If there is asbestos the building will then have to be torn down.

3) The "It Starts Here" Downtown Revitalization Project

Fuhrman said last Thursday, May 17th, was the kick off for "It Starts Here" Downtown Revitalization Project. The turnout was good, 58 people had come. There were 26 people that volunteered to help in the project. This is a joint effort with the EDA Board and Chamber. This project is to help fill downtown empty building spaces.

4) Comprehensive Park & Trail Plan Update

Fuhrman said that the first open house was held today before the Planning Commission meeting. The Park Board had worked on this to add sidewalks and trails. The open house went well.

Fuhrman just wanted to add that no one has applied for the open position of Ben Hanson's vacated spot for the Planning Commission Board. If the Planning Commission is aware of anyone that lives in the City limits that would be interested in being on the Planning Commission Board, please have them contact City Hall. One of the Planning Commission members said that Tim Siercks had applied for one of the City Board openings and maybe he would be interested in this position. Fuhrman said she will contact him and ask.

Fuhrman added that the City Zoning Ordinance amendment has been a work in progress since she had started working for the City. It was her understanding that the amendments had gone to the City Council for a final reading and it never had. Once the Council approves it, the Planning Commission Board will receive their own Zoning Ordinance book.

B. City Council Minutes for April, 2012

The Planning Commission Board had no comments.

DOBSON MOVED, SECOND BY EDMONDS, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. UPON THE VOTE, THERE WERE 3 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED. THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:47 P.M.

ATTEST:

Dave Thompson, Chairperson

Mary Lou DeWitt, Comm. Dev. Assistant