



Watertown Planning Commission Minutes

Donald Hendricks
Elizabeth Schulze
Jennifer O'Connell
James Rivord
Jim Sandquist
Jim Kasheimer
Ali Parsons-Towle
Councilmember Dan Schuette

1/26/2023 - Minutes

1. Call To Order & Roll Call:

Commission Chair Kasheimer called the Watertown Planning Commission meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. on January 26, 2023, in the council chambers of City Hall.

Commission Members Present: Donald Hendricks, Elizabeth Schulze, Jennifer O'Connell, James Rivord, Jim Sandquist and Jim Kasheimer.

Commission Members Absent: Dan Schuette and Ali Parsons.

Staff Present: City Administrator Jake Foster, Administrative Services Director Maggie Reisdorf, and City Planner Mark Kaltsas.

Others Present: Darren Schuler, Watertown-Mayer Public Schools, Nathan Anderson, Watertown-Mayer Public Schools, Jim Burns, Watertown-Mayer Public Schools, Chris Vogel, ICS/Watertown-Mayer Public Schools, Tim Jaszozak, Watertown-Mayer Public Schools, Justin Stohs, Watertown-Mayer Public Schools and Russ Rouck, Resident of Watertown.

2. Adopt Agenda:

SCHULZE MOVED TO ADOPT THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED. HENDRICKS SECONDED. MOTION PASSED 6-0.

3. New Business

3.A. 3A - Minutes - December 8, 2022

RIVORD MOVED TO ADOPT THE DECEMBER 8, 2022 MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED.

O'CONNELL SECONDED. MOTION PASSED 6-0.

3.B. 3B - 2023 Officers

HENDRICKS MOVED TO REAPPOINT JIM KASHEIMER AS THE CHAIR OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION FOR 2023. SCHULZE SECONDED. MOTION PASSED 6-0.

RIVORD MOVED TO APPOINT JAMES RIVORS AS THE VICE CHAIR OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION FOR 2023. HENDRICKS SECONDED. MOTION PASSED 6-0.

3.C. 3C - 1001 Hwy 25 Variance

Kaltsas introduced this item to the Planning Commission. He stated that Mayer Public School (Owner) and Chris Vogel (Applicant) have submitted an application requesting a variance on the property located at 1001 Highway 25 NW in Watertown.

He explained that the variance request includes allow more than 50% of a proposed accessory building to be constructed using metal siding and to allow a metal roof with exposed fasteners. He stated that the accessory structure would be located to the north of the site's High School building and will be used to store equipment and materials for the proposed new greenhouse that will be used for educational instruction.

Kaltsas reviewed the location of the property as being on the north side of Trunk Highway 25 and northwest of the intersection of CSAH 10 and TH 25 in the City. He stated again that the site is part of the Watertown-Mayer High School campus. He reviewed that the zoning of the property is P-2 (Public Building or Facility), is "institutional" as part of the city's 2040 Comprehensive Plan and about 69 Acres in size.

Since the greenhouse is designated as an accessory structure per the City Code, Kaltsas reviewed the City Code construction standards for such a building. He specifically highlighted the areas of the City Code in which the school is requesting a variance to the City Code. Kaltsas informed that the City Code states that accessory buildings can only be constructed with 50% or less building surface made of metal. He also reviewed roofing standards including that metal roofs shall not have exposed fasteners.

Kaltsas provided history on previous discussions with the school. He said that in 2022, Watertown Mayer Public Schools received approval from the city to add a new ingress/egress driveway that would provide access onto Quarry Ave. from the north side of the building. He said that the new access is part of the overall plan to construct a future greenhouse behind the school. He said that several meetings occurred between staff and the school to review the proposed greenhouse and accessory storage building that would house greenhouse equipment and materials.

Kaltsas reviewed that the initial plan was to have both the greenhouse and storage buildings adjoined as one structure. He explained that as one structure, the total percentage of the proposed building would have met the material requirements of the City's Code. He said that for a variety of reasons, it was determined that the buildings wouldn't be able to be constructed in an adjoined manner and therefore changed the proposal to having separate buildings next to one another. As a result, the percentage of external building materials does not meet the City Code requirements.

Kaltsas explained that the school is asking the City to consider a variance from the building material requirements to construct the detached accessory storage building out of steel panels with an exposed fastener roof.

Kaltsas reviewed in more detail the size of the building (1,440 SF) and the location.

He explained that staff has reviewed the proposal and that the location of the building allows it to be generally screened from all adjacent properties. He said that the proposed greenhouse and associated

storage building would support the current academic programs.

Kaltsas informed that City Code does not specifically address accessory structure in the P-2 Zoning District other than that "customary" accessory uses are permitted. He said that the City adopted provisions related to building materials as a way to maintain a certain level of architectural aesthetic and building quality.

He explained that the City's Code is "silent" on specific standards of the P-2 Zoning District, however it is interpreted that the standards applicable to the other districts and/or the P-1 Zoning District would be applicable to the P-2 District. He mentioned that this would include provisions related to metal siding and concealed fastener metal roofs.

Kaltsas recommended that the Planning Commission consider review of the building material standards in the near future to determine if any changes are needed as building materials change fairly quickly over time.

Kaltsas reviewed the considerations that the Planning Commission needs to contemplate when granting a variance request.

Kaltsas said that the Planning Commission is being asked to make a recommendation to the city Council relating to the requested variance and that if the Planning Commission should make that recommendation, that staff would recommend to include the following conditions:

1. The proposed variance request meetings all applicable conditions and restrictions stated in Chapter 62, Division 6, Variances, in the City of Watertown Zoning Ordinance.
2. The variance would allow more than 50% of a proposed accessory structure to be constructed using metal siding and would allow a metal roof with exposed fasteners.
3. The Applicant shall obtain the requisite building permits from the City.
4. The Applicant shall pay for all costs associated with the City's review of the requested variance.
5. Any future improvements made to the fencing on the property would need to be in compliance with all applicable standards relating to the P-2 Public Facilities Zoning District.

KASHEIMER MOVED TO CLOSE THE REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING AND OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING AT 6:46 PM.

School Superintendent, Darren Schuler, introduced himself to the Planning Commission. He also referenced Jim Burns, Schoolboard Vice Chair and Chris Vogel, Project Manager.

Jim Burns provided insight into the need and desire for the project and that the cost to comply with the City's Code requirements for the storage accessory building to not be 50% metal and to have a roof that hides the fasteners would increase the project cost by at least 50%. He stated that all surrounding properties are agricultural and that the building would be screened by trees and other school campus buildings. He referenced other buildings located with P-2 Districts not meeting the City's current code requirements as it relates to 50% metal and non-fastener exposed roofs. He stated that the buildings would support the school's Agricultural education programs and the FFA programs.

Chris Vogel explained the reasons that the two buildings must be constructed separately. He said that there was an attempt to design them together, but the design wouldn't work. He said that new proposal has the buildings separate with an 8 foot gap between to allow for maintenance around the buildings.

Commissioner Sandquist asked if the FFA was helping to fund any of the project.

Jim Burns stated that the FFA would be helping to fund part of the project.

Russ Ron, resident, former High School Agricultural instructor and current business owner in the City

explained that the current facilities are small and restricts the learning potential for agricultural coursework. He said that buildings are critical to support great programs.

Commissioner Schulze asked about the cost increase of 50% to the project.

Jim Burns stated that the cost to do external siding that is 50% other than metal and to do a non-exposed fastener roof, that the costs increase the project 50%.

KASHEIMER MOVED TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING AND REOPEN THE REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING AT 6:54 PM.

Schulze asked if the storage building would house heaters/coolers.

Nathan Anderson stated that there would be no heaters or coolers in the storage building.

Rivord referenced back to Kaltsas's recommendation to review the City Code as it relates to building materials some time in the future at a Planning Commission meeting.

Rivord stated that he is in favor of the variance request.

Schulze discussed the differences between exposed fasteners and non-exposed fasteners and why there are preferences and cost differences between the two.

Hendricks said that he supports the variance. He explained that the building is well screened and similar to other buildings on neighboring properties nearby.

Schulze asked if approval would be setting a precedent.

Rivord explained that he felt it would only set a precedent for others who want to do something within P-2 Districts. He said that this project is a unique situation.

Kaltsas agreed that it would only be setting a precedent in the P-2 District and that the P-2 District is very small in the City. He said it would also only set a precedent on accessory structures as well.

Sandquist stated that he believed the request met all variance requirements.

O'Connell said that she agrees that the project makes sense but also expressed concern about setting a precedent.

RIVORD MOVED TO RECOMMEND TO THE CITY COUNCIL THE APPROVAL OF THE VARIANCE REQUEST BY THE WATERTOWN-MAYER SCHOOL DISTRICT AS IT RELATES TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ACCESSORY BUILDING WITH THE RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS MENTIONED. HENDRICKS SECONDED. MOTION PASSED 6-0.

4. Staff Updates:

Foster reviewed two proposals from developers that were brought to the city recently in concept form for multi-family housing projects.

Foster stated that the developer for the current housing project off of County Road 10 will be presenting a concept plan to the Planning Commission in the near future for the expansion of Tuscany and Sugarbush sites.

Foster explained that there is a potential company that is looking to locate in the City and the staff is working with them on a concept plan.

Foster asked the Planning Commission if they were able to move the regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting to either March 16 or March 30. The Commission agreed to March 30.

Foster invited the Planning Commission to a joint meeting with the City Council and other commissions/committees at the City Council workshop meeting on February 14, 2023 at 5:30 pm at city hall.

5. Adjournment:

HENDRICKS MOVED TO CLOSE THE PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING AT 7:24 PM. SANDQUIST SECONDED. MOTION PASSED 6-0.

6. Public Hearing:

309 Lewis Avenue South; P.O. Box 279, Watertown, MN 55388