

**CITY OF BRIDGMAN
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
May 21, 2020
2:00 PM**

The regular meeting of the Bridgman City Planning Commission was held May 21, 2020 remotely by means of electronic conferencing and was called to order by Chair Parsons at 2:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Parsons, Richard Kading, Dorothea Crocker, John Truesdell, Eugene Herrman, Mark Hurray, Tom Woerdehoff

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Ganum, City Clerk Holm, Attorney Senica, Building Official Mattner

Pledge of Allegiance was led by the board.

APPROVE/AMEND AGENDA:

Motion by Member Herrman, seconded by Member Woerdehoff to approve the agenda for May 21, 2020 as presented,

Roll Call:

Yeas: Truesdell, Crocker, Woerdehoff, Parsons, Hurray, Kading, Herrman

Nays: None

Motion carried.

APPROVE MINUTES:

Motion by Member Crocker, seconded by Member Woerdehoff to approve the January 16, 2020 minutes as presented,

Roll Call:

Yeas: Crocker, Woerdehoff, Parsons, Hurray, Kading, Herrman, Truesdell

Nays: None

Motion carried.

HEARING OF CITIZENS:

- Ganum stated there were two people in the virtual audience. Tom Hickey said he will speak when the Habitat project is discussed.

NEW BUSINESS:

Staff update regarding development projects

Ganum brought the Planning Commission up to speed on a few projects since they last met in January.

Casey's

Three variance requests were submitted to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Shortly before the scheduled meeting, they decided to withdraw their requests. They are still wanting to move forward but have concerns with the three hurdles to overcome that could delay the project for a year. Senica, Ganum, and Mattner spoke with the representatives and feel that there is a need to amend the Zoning Ordinance. On the other side of the road, Dominion is proposing to build a new dealership and would need several variances as well.

Ganum explained the possibility of creating a new Zoning District and shared with the board what Mattner had created so far. It would modify a current Zoning District by creating an Interstate Gateway (IG). Approximately 23 properties would be carved out by the I-94 interchange and showed which ones would be included. This map would end just south of the AEP property on the west side of the road and just south of the Bridgman Inn on the east side. In this district, some of the standards could be relaxed and have more clarification on others. Ganum said the city should have a balance from being overly restrictive and chase future businesses away but still maintain a very livable and attractive city. There should be flexibility but not sell the city short.

Member Herrman went offline at 2:22 p.m.

Mattner explained the variance requests that were submitted and how the current ordinances such as parking and signage are a little too restrictive for businesses such as a gas station, car dealership, or fast food to build with the current Zoning Ordinance. Ganum showed examples as well.

Attorney Senica wants everyone to keep in mind what government is supposed to do and the roles we have. These are examples of businesses that the city wants in the area and need to look at the big picture to make things easier for businesses to open. Having a new district right off I-94 makes sense both legally and practically. When a city receives three variance requests, there is a need to look and see if the ordinances are too restrictive.

Member Herrman returned at 2:30 p.m. (computer crashed) Ganum recapped the information he missed.

The board discussed the information presented. Discussion included the proposed boundaries of the new district and maybe shifting it further north. There was also discussion on the current sign ordinance and new signage that could be allowed in that district.

Habitat Project

Ganum showed the board the 1.3 acres of property that Habitat is interested in purchasing. They have recently been working with an architect and engineer to create a site plan. The proposed site plan has a total of 8 houses which are 4 sets of duplexes.

Tom Hickey is the architect working on the project who lives here in Bridgman. His team includes Wightman who has developed a plan that includes 8 single family attached houses that share a common space. This property is currently zoned "Open Space" and would need to be rezoned to "Residential Central". Each house would have 3 to 4 bedrooms and a single garage. He showed some examples, explained the setbacks and how they came up with this layout to minimize the size of each lot.

Ganum talked about the original plan that was presented to council. It was more of a cottage court design with a band of houses on the northern and southern end of the property with a green strip in the middle to connect to Toth Park. This layout required an alley on the north side and an extension of Willow Street or alley on the south side. This would be putting a lot into roadways for such a small development.

The board discussed all the information presented at length. Some of their questions and concerns were the following:

- The original design presented is completely different that the one presented to council and might be met with resistance.
- Who would be responsible for maintaining the common area? Ganum stated the city could keep that part and maintain it as a pocket park.
- Too dense of a development and needs more space. The setbacks are unreal on those lots and there would be no place to install a shed.
- There are no sidewalks on the site plan.

Ganum said the proposed site plan is subject to discussion and should not stop from proceeding with the potential project. He has spoken with the new owner of Bridgman Estates and he is interested in donating the entire 66' right-of-way of Willow Street to the city. Attorney Senica explained the 45-day notice of intent has lapsed and the upcoming bid process. The board further discussed.

Townhouse Project

Ganum has been in touch with the developer and the architect of the proposed project and they are still interested. The city is going to obtain an appraisal for the council to proceed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Recreation Marijuana survey – status

Ganum stated the Community Buzz was not distributed this quarter so there was no mechanism to distribute the survey. It is still on hold and he just wanted to update the board.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Member Woerdehoff, seconded by Member Truesdell, to adjourn the meeting at 3:34 pm,

Roll Call:

Yeas: Woerdehoff, Parsons, Hurray, Kading, Herrman, Truesdell, Crocker

Nays: None

Motion carried.

Tom Woerdehoff, Secretary

Allyson Holm, City Clerk/Recording Secretary