

Russellville Planning Commission Minutes
July 27, 2020 @ 5:30 p.m.

The Russellville Planning Commission held a virtual meeting on Tuesday July 27, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.

Members Present

Chairman Wendell Miller
Vice-Chairman Don Jacimore
Secretary Nathan Barber
Luke Duffield
Larry Smith
Cody Black
Jim Lanier
Council Liaison Justin Keller
Justin Cothren

Members Absent:

Shirley Hatley

Also present: Mayor Richard Harris, City Attorney Trey Smith, City Planner Sara Jondahl, City Engineer Glenn Newman, Fire Marshal Richard Setian, Planner I Victoria Marchant, Public Work Director Kenneth DuVall, Flood Manager Ben Gray, Jim Lynch of City Corporation, Betsy McGuire, David Garza of Barrett & Associates, Ivory Pearson, Mary Cohoon, Lisa Huelle, Sarah Hann, Jason Hann, Suzanne Alford-Hodges, Lisa Huelle, Micheal Everett, Ira Wimer of HTW Architects, Engineers, and Planners, Bob Hiegel of HTW Architects, Engineers, and Planners, Chloe Devecsery, Tim Brimm, and Jim Bob Humphrey.

Welcome Visitors

The First Order of Business is a request to review and approve the minutes of the Planning Commission June 22, 2020 meeting.

Commissioner Duffield made the motion to approve the minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Black and approved unanimously.

The Second Order of Business is a special presentation by Staff regarding the 1 cent sales tax.

City Planner Jondahl shared a presentation discussing the upcoming 1 cent sales tax renewal.

The Third Order of Business is a public hearing requesting review and recommendation for a Special Use Permit to allow operation of a Travel Center in a C-2, located at 42 Bradley Cove Road. Submitted by Texas Republic Signs LLC on behalf of Flying J #605. (SP.20.06.187)

City Planner Jondahl said when Flying J was going through its Variance application last month staff discovered they had never been issued a Special Use Permit. In an effort to make sure the Flying J was in compliance, staff requested they go through the Special Use Permit process. This

application is being brought to the Planning Commission to allow continuation of the Truck Stop / Travel Center and Auto Service Station at its current location. As staff reviewed the property the site that is attached shows a driveway that was not permitted. There are no new uses, therefore sidewalks are not being requested.

Staff recommends approval of this special use permit with the following condition: 1. Obtain a Right-of-Way, Driveway, permit for the driveway providing access to Interstate Avenue. As a result of the findings below: 1. The building and use is comparable with other uses and structures in the area; and 2. Current traffic routes are constructed in such a way to handle the traffic from the business; and 3. Public Facilities already service this location.

Michael Everett with Texas Republic Signs said he had no comments and that he would answer any questions that Staff or the Commissioners had.

Commissioner Black made the motion to approve the request. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Duffield and approved unanimously.

The Fourth Order of Business is a public hearing requesting review and recommendation for a Special Use Permit to allow operation of a church in a R-1, located at 1210 Old Highway 124. Submitted by Parker Hill Holiness Church. (SP.20.06.186)

Planner I Marchant said this application is being brought to the Planning Commission to allow continuation of the church at its current location. Staff was working on a building permit for the applicant and realized that the church was not in compliance. Located in the Weir Road Development District, Parker Hill Holiness is an existing church that has been in operation for many years. It is surrounded by both R1 and C2 zoned properties which include a variety of uses, including both existing businesses and single family homes. Parker Hill Holiness was in operation prior to the annexation however, the church never got a Special Use Permit to come into compliance. During this review it was also discovered that Pope County Data shows 4-5 individual parcels that comprise this complex. The proposed use of the property being a church remains in line with the Land Uses for a Single Family Residential Area. Within this type of district you would expect to find a variety of different uses such as, single-family dwellings and related recreational, religious, and educational facilities normally required to provide the basic elements of a balanced and attractive residential area. You will note that adjacent uses include a variety of residential and commercial uses including single family homes, a tax shop, an auto body shop, and a mini storage facility. The table of permitted uses states that Churches or Other Places of Worship are special uses within the R1 zone. A special use permit has never been issued for the site. Certain uses may or may not be appropriately located within various districts throughout the City due to their unusual or unique characteristics of operation and external effects. Given their unusual character, special consideration must be given each application so as to provide for such reasonable conditions and protective restrictions as are deemed necessary to protect the character and integrity of the area in which uses are proposed to be located. The uses listed on the Table of Permitted Uses as “special permit uses” are so classified because they more intensely dominate the area in which they are located than do other uses permitted in the district; however, the nature of such uses make it desirable that they be permitted to locate therein. The

intent of Article 3.20 Commercial Building Design seeks to maintain good civic design and arrangement within commercial corridors by assuring a desired aesthetic environment. In review of the application these 4 questions must be answered: 1. Are designed to be in visual harmony with buildings either in the same vicinity or along the same commercial corridor. The front façade of the structure is proposed to be constructed of either brick or master line, flush metal paneling with concealed fasteners. These materials are included as part of the standard commercial building design standards and are in visual harmony with other buildings in the vicinity. 2. No discernible public benefit would be gained by requiring an alternative design; and 3. The size and bulk of the proposed building is comparable to other buildings within the immediate area; and 4. The proposed construction meets the spirit and intent of this section of the zoning code.

Staff recommends approval of this special use permit with the following conditions: 1. The Incidental Subdivision application is completed prior to the Certificate of Occupancy is issued. As a result of the findings below: 1. The property parcels do not align with the boundary provided; and 2. The building and use is comparable with other uses and structures in the area; and 3. The proposed construction meets the requirements of Article 3.20 Commercial Building Design.

Ira Wimer and Bob Hiegel of HTW Architects, Engineers, and Planners said they worked on this project and said they would answer any questions. They stated that everything they had designed meets the Zoning Code requirements.

Commissioner Duffield made the motion to approve the request as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Smith and approved unanimously.

The Fifth Order of Business is a public hearing requesting review and recommendation for a Special Use Permit to allow the addition of a crematorium to an existing funeral home in a C-2, located at 2801 West Main Street. Submitted by Barrett & Associates on behalf of Humphrey Funeral Home. (SP.20.07.188)

City Planner Jondahl said this application is being brought to the Planning Commission to allow an alteration of Humphrey Funeral Home to include Crematory Services. Located in the West Main District, Humphrey Funeral Home has been in operation at this location for several years and from all appearances the alteration will not affect the frontage existing conditions. This is a firmly established district with established businesses on either side of the funeral home as well as across the street. The property backs up to a residential neighborhood. The proposed use of the property being a Funeral Home to include Crematory Services is consistent with other service uses within this district. Within this type of district you would expect to find a variety of different uses, such as restaurants, hotels, churches, Gas Stations, Banks, and Professional Offices. Additionally, this location has been a funeral home for many years and is just expanding the internal services they provide onsite. Items provided to staff include a letter from Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) stating that they have “made a determination that the information certified in the NOI fulfills the required criteria for general permitting as specified in the Arkansas Plan of Implementation for Air Pollution Control (Regulation 19), the

Arkansas Pollution Control Code (Regulation 18), and other applicable regulations.” Humphrey Funeral Home has also received approval to construct the crematorium from The State Board of Embalmers. The table of permitted uses states that Funeral Home - Crematory is a special use within the C2 zone. The letter noted above provides a reasonable assurance that the business is being proactive in ensuring the external effects of the proposed operation are providing protective features to protect the character and integrity of the neighborhood. The application has been reviewed by staff and the proposed project being an alteration meets the requirements of Article 2.10. Staff recommends approval of this special use permit as a result of the findings below: 1. The State Board of Embalmers, Funeral Directors, Cemeteries, and Burial Services approved a permit to construct the crematorium on June 4, 2019; and 2. The ADEQ has made a determination that the applicant fulfills the required criteria; and 3. The building and use is consistent with other uses and structures in the area; and 4. The application meets the requirements of Article 2.10 5. Current traffic routes are constructed in such a way to handle the traffic from the business; and 6. Public Facilities already service this location.

Jim Bob Humphrey of Humphrey Funeral Home shared a presentation on their dignity cremation center and other crematoriums around the state.

Commissioner Smith made the motion to approve the request. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Duffield and approved unanimously.

The Sixth Order of Business is a request to review and approve a Large Scale Development along Lexington Avenue. Submitted by Barrett & Associates on behalf of the Arkansas-Oklahoma Training Trust Fund. (DV.20.07.167)

City Planner Jondahl said this is an application for the Arkansas Oklahoma Carpenter Training Facility to construct a 32,460 square foot training facility with onsite detention, parking and landscaping. This property is vacant and abuts the parking area of Pilot Travel Center, Shamrock Bolt and Screw and is across from Beezer’s fine Billiards. The Uses in this area are a mix of Auto Sales, Chain Stores, Travel Center and other similar commercial uses. In the review of this proposal in the East Main Commercial District Section 2.10.2 refers you to the table of permitted uses where School, Commercial or Trade is a Permitted Use however because of the size of the building it does require Large Scale Development. In the C2 zones a 25 foot setback is required from the front property lines, which is met on both Lexington Ave and Shamrock Blvd. Sidewalks in the East Main Commercial District Character Area are required to be five (5) feet and are shown in the proposed plan, so this requirement is met. The intent of Article 3.20 Commercial Building Design seeks to maintain good civic design and arrangement within commercial corridors by assuring a desired aesthetic environment. In review of the application these 4 questions must be answered: 1. Are designed to be in visual harmony with buildings either in the same vicinity or along the same commercial corridor. The façade of the structure is proposed to be constructed of Batten Wall Panel, this is not a material listed as an approved material, however, per the website is an architectural metal made to mimic board and batten construction. It is the opinion of staff that this would meet the intent of the standards, although not currently listed as an approved material, a sample has been requested to ensure that this meets the intent of the commercial building design, and will be a condition of building permit

issuance. Additional materials include wood slat rain screen, brick, and exposed rigid frame panels. These materials are in line with the standard commercial building design standards and are in visual harmony with other buildings in the vicinity. 2. No discernible public benefit would be gained by requiring an alternative design; and 3. The size and bulk of the proposed building is comparable to other buildings within the immediate area; and 4. The proposed construction meets the spirit and intent of this section of the zoning code. Location of Driveways, Parking, and Handicap Access – Parking is shown on the proposed plan, however, detailed information about how they are provided in accordance to Article IV of the Russellville Zoning Code remains due. Lighting proposed is straight down, night sky compliant and not directed towards any other property.

It is staff's recommendation to approve the Large Scale Development with the following conditions: 1. Verify by providing a sample of the Batten Wall Panel to ensure the façade of the structure complies with Article 3.20; and 2. Ensure the width of the driveways do not exceed 40 feet; and 3. Provide details of how parking requirements of Article IV will be met; and 4. Submit a detailed Storm water Management Plan per our Drainage Manual for review and approval prior to building permit issuance; and 5. Submit for review, approval, and recording an incidental subdivision plat.

David Garza of Barrett & Associates said he has been working with this group for around six months. He said this is going to be a really nice site and that the applicant wants the part in front of the interstate to stand out to attract potential business. Mr. Garza said this is going to be a state of the art facility. He said as far as calculating parking, they looked at the amount of classroom space, the number of instructors, and the number of employees and determined there would be around 72 spaces that would be required. However, they allotted for a little over 90 spaces on the design. Mr. Garza said there would be room in the future to expand the parking area if it was needed.

Ira Wimer of HTW Architects, Engineers, and Planners reiterated that the applicant wants it to be a nice building for drawing in people to come and get trained there. He said they are building these facilities all over the country and he thinks we are lucky to get one. Mr. Wimer said it is going to be a first class training facility. He said that they had visited other facilities that the applicant had built and they were really clean and nice facilities. Bob Hiegel of HTW Architects, Engineers, and Planners noted that this will be a regional facility and when they have training and meetings they will be probably filling up 15 hotel rooms on a regular basis.

David Garza of Barrett & Associates said this will bring some highly qualified workers to our area as we have more development and more industrial buildings being constructed. These businesses look at how they can get their building constructed and they will look at man power. Mr. Garza said having this training facility here gives them the comfort that there are highly qualified builders and contractors.

Chairman Miller said that having this training facility keeps everyone on the cutting edge. He said it is really neat that Russellville has the opportunity to get something like this.

Commissioner Barber asked if the applicant had any issues with the conditions that were listed. David Garza of Barrett & Associates and Ira Wimer and Bob Hiegel of HTW Architects, Engineers, and Planners both said they had no issues with the conditions and that they had already been working on meeting some of them. City Planner Jondahl confirmed that the only two conditions she was waiting on to be met was the parking count and the sample of the Batten Wall Panel to confirm Commercial Building Design was being met.

Commissioner Duffield told David Garza of Barrett & Associates and Ira Wimer and Bob Hiegel of HTW Architects, Engineers, and Planners said the building looked great.

Commissioner Duffield made the motion to approve the request as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lanier and approved unanimously.

The Seventh Order of Business is a request to review and recommend vacating a 15-foot utility easement between Lots 8 and 11 of Hilltop Summit Estates, Phases II & III Russellville, Arkansas. Submitted by Barrett & Associates on behalf of Jonathan McIllwain (ST.20.07.97)

City Planner Jondahl said similar to vacation of right-of-way, vacation of easements have to go through the Planning Commission to City Council to gain approval. This application is being brought to the Planning Commission to vacate an easement where utilities in question have confirmed that there are no utilities in this section of the easement. The property has been purchased by one property owner who has built his home and wants to expand the residential uses of his private property. City Planner Jondahl said she does not believe they will be building any structures over the easement and that this portion of the applicant's property is purely recreational. The Comprehensive 2020 plan states that the City of Russellville will encourage a wide variety of housing types and encourage harmonious residential development. Goal 2 – Housing and Neighborhoods Objective 2: Encourage more innovation in neighborhood development. By allowing the vacation of this unused easement between two privately owned, by the same individual, encourages innovation with the regards to how this property owner is developing their privately owned property. With no objections from any utility company.

Staff concurs that vacation of the easement will promote innovation within the neighborhood. There were no comments from any other departments within the City or from City Corp. Staff recommends approval of the vacation of the utility easement as a result of the findings below: 1. No objections filed by any utility company. 2. No current installations within the easement prohibiting the vacation of the easement.

David Garza of Barrett & Associates said he had no comment and that City Planner Jondahl covered it.

Commissioner Smith made the motion to approve the request as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jacimore and approved unanimously.

The Eighth Order of Business is a public hearing requesting review and recommendation for a Special Use Permit to allow issuance of the Tower Use Permit for a 100' monopole commercial communication tower, location is 634 W 5th Street, in a R-3. Submitted by Cellco Partnership

d/b/a Verizon Wireless on behalf of the owner Bridge Church. (SP.20.04.181) Item 8 was requested to be TABLED at the April, May, and June meetings. Request to table by applicant.

City Planner Jondahl said the applicant is still working on providing information regarding the alternate locations that the Commissioners have requested. The applicant did state it would be one to two months before they have gathered the information and are able to bring that back to staff. The applicant is requesting this application be tabled this month and potentially next month as well until they can provide that information to staff so that staff may review it and provide recommendations to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Jacimore made the motion to table. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Smith and approved unanimously.

Chairman Miller asked all the Commissioners to stay on the meeting. He thanked everyone who was in attendance. He said this concludes the regular meeting for July, he said the Commissioners appreciate the attendees input and attendance as well as their patience with the Commission's virtual endeavors. Chairman Miller said the public could go ahead and leave the meeting and asked that the Commissioners stick around just for a second because they were a couple of housekeeping items they needed to take care of. He said there were a couple of things they needed to discuss. Chairman Miller said he wanted to bring it to the Commissioners attention before he turned it back over to City Planner Jondahl that they have been looking at the Comprehensive Plan and looking at a way that they could have a little bit more input than what they normally have just on the Planning Commission itself. He said the Planning Commission are the ones that move to have zone changes or they will be the ones to approve any zoning changes or any variances or whatever. Chairman Miller asked if City Planner Jondahl would go into what the long term planning committee would consist of. He said there would be a small presence of Planning Commissioners on this, he guesses, but then there would also be some outside people, similar to the Board of Adjustment kind of an at large type thing. Chairman Miller asked if City Planner Jondahl could explain it in more detail.

City Planner Jondahl said she first wanted to say that the Planning Commission has the authority to appoint a Long Range Planning Committee. She said this Long Range Planning Committee would then be able to make recommendations to the Planning Commission for changes to zone code, things that we need to keep an eye on, and make policy updates. City Planner Jondahl said she has asked Chairman Miller to consider appointing this Long Range Planning Committee as a result of the fact that they are getting close to completing the Comprehensive Plan update that would give us that 20 year vision for Russellville. She said it will be coming to Planning Commission here in the next couple months for sure for them to review and then move forward to City Council for hopefully their adoption by resolution as this would be their goal. City Planner Jondahl said it is very imperative that we have a Comprehensive Plan because without a Comprehensive Plan in place they do not have the authority to regulate zoning, if they do not have the two components of the Comprehensive Plan, the future Land Use Plan and the Master Street Plan. She said those are both wrapped into this Comprehensive Plan that then allows us to regulate zoning. With that, her thought in making this recommendation to Wendell is that last year when she made some recommendations to add some updates to the zone code they went

through several work sessions and she knows that was super fun for all of them. Chairman Miller said he loved it. City Planner Jondahl said she is just asking that they consider this as an opportunity to hopefully remove some of those very painful work sessions that they had by vetting these zone text amendment recommendations prior to getting to the Planning Commission. She said the intent is that there would be four Commissioners who are appointed to this committee, three citizens of Russellville and then three staff members, including herself, Planner I Marchant, and Glenn Newman the City Engineer. She said she hopes—that she has talked with a couple of the Commissioners—as they move forward that this committee would help them vet those zone text amendments and maybe not have as many hard conversations before Planning Commission.

Chairman Miller thanked City Planner Jondahl and asked if anyone had any questions for City Planner Jondahl. He said it is still just in the planning phases right now and that City Planner Jondahl had talked to the Mayor and that several of them have also talked to the Mayor about it. He said that it is still in its infancy you could say. Chairman Miller said if anyone had any questions to feel free to give Sara a call over at work any time they need to. He said he is sure City Planner Jondahl welcomes any visitors or any phone calls if they have any questions about it. Chairman Miller said it is pretty simple and that it is basically going to kind of help pave the way. He said kind of like John the Baptist. He asked if anyone had any questions or if anyone had anything else they needed to bring up before they adjourn.

Meeting adjourned.

Chairman Wendell Miller