

**MINUTES
CITY OF LONSDALE
REGULAR PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MEETING
OCTOBER 9, 2017**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Voting Members: Jim Freid, Joe Kodada, Dave Dols, Steve Cherney, and Ben Sticha
Council Representative: Scott Pelava

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

STAFF PRESENT:

City Planner Benjamin Baker and City Administrator Joel Erickson

1. CALL TO ORDER

Just before the meeting commenced, Chair Dols was paged to a fire/rescue call.

Vice Chair Kodada called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm in the Council Chambers at 415 Central Street West.

2. AGENDA

Kodada asked if anyone had any additions or deletions to the agenda.

A motion was made by Freid and seconded by Cherney to approve the agenda as presented. Vote for: Freid, Kodada, Cherney, and Sticha; Against: None. Vote: 4-0. Motion carried.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Dols asked if anyone had any comments or corrections to the Minutes.

A motion was made by Cherney and seconded by Sticha to approve the Minutes from the September 21, 2017 Regular Meeting as presented. Vote for: Freid, Kodada, Cherney, and Sticha; Against: None. Vote: 4-0. Motion carried.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS

a. Review Ordinance 2017-280, an Ordinance Amending City Code §153.074, Residential Single-Family Dwellings

Vice Chair Kodada opened the public hearing. The Planning Commission and audience members reviewed a detailed Staff Report and proposed Ordinance 2017-280. Baker read through the Staff Report. Throughout the report, members of the public and Commissioners asked questions and provided comments on the proposed text amendments. Baker explained the history of Lonsdale's developments and neighborhood associations/covenants over the past 20 years. He also explained why Ordinance 2015-262 was adopted a few years prior. Baker stated that Ordinance 2015-262 was adopted to ensure that new homes would have at least some basic design/size standards and "fit-in" language to make sure similar style homes were constructed in individual neighborhoods. He said that an updated ordinance may be necessary to clarify the original intent of Ordinance 2015-262 and to provide builders with future clarity on exact home size/design requirements.

Baker said that home builders were intentionally invited to the September 21st and October 9th meetings to provide insight on home design standards. He stated that the majority of people in attendance at the near-capacity September meeting were concerned residents from the Willow Creek Heights and RayAnn Acres neighborhoods wondering what can be done to prevent home builders from constructing smaller, lower-valued homes in their respective neighborhoods. Baker said that based on information obtained at the September 21st meeting, neighbors from the Willow Creek Heights neighborhood decided to gather with a private attorney on September 27th to discuss potential options for (re)establishing an architectural review committee and enforcement of restrictive covenants.

Baker stated that the proposed ordinance was created based on feedback provided by the Planning Commission and local residents. Baker read through Ordinance 2017-280 in its entirety and highlighted all the proposed updates to the text. Cherney stated that the language ensuring compliance with the zoning regulations mentioned on Page 1 should be strengthened. He also asked if regulations should be relevant to a particular neighborhood. Cherney suggested rewording the subsection on exceptions in regard to PUD variance language. Pelava stated that the language wasn't an escape from the rules. Cherney asked about metal roofs on homes, and the Commissioners explained that standing seam metal roofs are not allowed on homes.

Josie Malecha, 938 Bluff Heights Drive SE, wondered if a minimum requirement should be added for a home's total finished area. Baker stated that City Staff considered that, but he said it was agreed that finished area should be handled by neighborhood covenants. Erickson stated that a Certificate of Occupancy cannot be granted by the Building Inspector if the home isn't finished accordingly. Malecha also wondered why an 8/12 roof pitch shouldn't be the standard. Baker said that the Restrictive Covenants for Willow Creek Heights 2nd and 3rd Additions only require a 7/12 roof pitch, and he noted that other neighborhoods either have a 6/12 roof pitch standard or no standard at all.

Joe Krammer, 400 Singing Hills Drive SE, asked about the 20' x 30' minimum home size regulation. Baker stated that the rule was derived to avoid odd-sized narrow homes. Krammer said that although Lonsdale doesn't need to be like Edina, he suggested using similar language from the City of Edina to regulate home design standards. Krammer suggested that front porches should only be constructed of concrete. Kodada said that kind of regulation is not necessary, and he mentioned that concrete entryways don't always work or look as nice as wooden porches. Krammer stated that many people living on the southeast side of town have constructed significant homes, and he thanked City Staff and the Planning Commission for working towards creating a stronger ordinance to protect property values. Krammer thanked Erickson and Baker for their hard work. Malecha also thanked City Staff and the Commissioners for taking the lead on making improvements to the ordinance. Malecha mentioned her experience with fluctuating support and interest from fellow neighbors in trying to establish a neighborhood architectural review committee and association in Willow Creek Heights.

Jodie Rother, 608 Parkview Court SE, stated that it is unfair for the established home owners in Willow Creek Heights to be subject to a potential property value decrease due to lower-valued homes proposed in the neighborhood. She applauded the City's efforts to make the current standards better. Kodada said that is why the City is proposing an update to the design standards for single-family homes.

The Commission discussed porch post design standards, garage lighting, and a few of the other proposed design features in greater detail. They also discussed home owners associations and restrictive covenants. Baker said the City is trying to be fair to all residents and neighborhoods across town, when it comes to setting minimum home size/design standards, and he recommended that neighborhoods wanting increased standards should enforce or set up their own covenants. Malecha wondered if further ordinance language could be added to address homes that look too similar and located next to each other. The Commissioners agreed with Staff that the City should only get involved in design standards to a limited extent. Kodada stated that as an independent home builder, he thinks the proposed home size/design standards are fair and good for the City.

A motion was made by Freid and seconded by Cherney to close the public hearing. Vote for: Freid, Kodada, Cherney, and Sticha; Against: None. Vote: 4-0. Motion carried. The hearing closed at 7:52 pm.

Baker provided the Commission with an update on LGI Homes' 6 new home permit applications. The Commission reviewed a letter that was sent by the City Planner to LGI Homes dated September 27, 2017.

6. GENERAL BUSINESS

- a. Consider Approval of Ordinance 2017-280, an Ordinance Amending City Code §153.074, Residential Single-Family Dwellings

Baker said that a public hearing was held earlier in the meeting. He read through Ordinance 2017-280, and Baker recommended approval of the proposed ordinance.

A motion was made by Sticha and seconded by Freid to recommend approval of Ordinance 2017-280, an ordinance amending City Code §153.074, Residential Single-Family Dwellings. Vote for: Freid, Kodada, Cherney, and Sticha; Against: None. Vote: 4-0. Motion carried.

Chair Dols returned to the meeting at 7:59 pm.

- b. Review New Home Building Permit Statistics (Through October 1, 2017)

The Commissioners reviewed a spreadsheet showing new home permits issued from the beginning of the year. The spreadsheet showed total number of permits issued, address, builder info, finished area size, and home value. Out of the 25 new home permits issued through October 1, 2017, the spreadsheet showed how many new homes each builder has constructed to date. Baker stated that Loomis Homes had 14 new homes and 1 under review. He said that St Vincent Custom Contracting has built 5 new homes to date.

- c. Review the Updated Residential Lot Inventory (Through October 1, 2017)

The Planning Commission reviewed an updated residential lot inventory spreadsheet and associated map. Baker read through the completion percentage for each development. He said that the City is now down to 257 vacant lots remaining in town. Baker reviewed a spreadsheet showing different new home projections and their effect on the lot inventory by year. He said that if the City issues 30 new home permits per year, then new development plats should be considered by the City around the year 2024. Baker noted that the eastern half of town has been growing the fastest over the past year.

7. MISCELLANEOUS

Erickson stated that he will give a presentation on the Area No. 5 – Phase IV Project at the November Planning Commission meeting.

8. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Cherney and seconded by Sticha to adjourn the meeting. Vote for: Freid, Kodada, Dols, Cherney, and Sticha; Against: None. Vote: 5-0. Motion carried. The meeting ended at 8:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Benjamin Baker, City Planner