

**MINUTES
CITY OF LONSDALE
REGULAR PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MEETING
MAY 23, 2022**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Voting Members: Jim Freid, Joe Kodada, and Mark Ward
Council Representative: Kevin Kodada

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Lou Jirik and Lance Benninghoff

STAFF PRESENT:

City Planner Benjamin Baker and City Administrator Joel Erickson

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair J. Kodada called the meeting to order at 6:45 pm in the Council Chambers at 415 Central Street West.

2. AGENDA

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

A motion was made by Freid and seconded by Ward to approve the agenda as presented. Vote for: Freid, Kodada, and Ward; Against: None. Vote: 3-0. Motion carried.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

J. Kodada asked if anyone had any comments or corrections to the Minutes. J. Kodada stated that “car” on Page 2 should be “car wash”.

A motion was made by Freid and seconded by Ward to approve the Minutes from the May 23, 2022 Regular Meeting with the noted change. Vote for: Freid, Kodada, and Ward; Against: None. Vote: 3-0. Motion carried.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS

a. Review a Petition/Request for Vacation of an Alley Running 226 ft. South of Florida Street SW, between 2nd Avenue SW and Main Street South

Kodada opened the public hearing. Baker went through the Staff Report and attached maps. He stated that primary applicant Adam Smisek, along with 3 other neighbors, have petitioned/requested vacation of their abutting 20 ft. wide alley. Baker said that the alley is located within Block 4, Marek's 2nd Addition to Lonsdale, which was platted in 1909, and located in-between 2nd Avenue SW and Main Street South. The Commissioners reviewed the petitioner list, estimated parcel value, and proposed subdivision of the alleyway. Baker noted that the current zoning and land use plan surrounding the alley is low density residential. He said that although no City utilities run within the alley, there is an existing overhead power line, underground gas line, and buried communication cable. Baker said that a 20 ft. wide easement would need to be kept for the existing utilities. Kodada wondered if a 10 ft. easement would be sufficient. Baker said that a 20 ft wide easement is necessary to access the power poles and lines. He provided pros and cons of a potential vacation for the Planning Commission to consider. The Commissioners reviewed all of the attached maps and surveys. Kodada asked if anyone from the audience wanted to speak on the matter.

Following a question from K. Kodada, applicant Adam Smisek provided a brief history of 601 Main Street South, including information on an old ditch and an old hand pump well, that was officially sealed.

No one else was in the audience. Baker said that the he did provide information to one nearby neighbor, but there was no other written or verbal comments received.

A motion was made by Freid and seconded by Ward to close the public hearing. Vote for: Freid, Jirik, Kodada, and Ward; Against: None. Vote: 3-0. Motion carried. The public hearing closed at 6:55 pm.

6. GENERAL BUSINESS

a. Update on Willow Creek Heights Commons Parcel (1925427003)

Baker provided a brief update on Rice County Parcel 1925427003, located just south of Dollar General, in-between Commerce Drive SE and Connecticut Drive SE. He said that the Council received two proposals: 1) ALG Enterprises, and 2) Lance Manty. Baker stated that the Council approved selling the parcel to ALG Enterprises because they provided the higher bid and were going to develop the vacant land into a commercial use. Baker said that Manty proposed medium-density residential J. Kodada, Freid, and K. Kodada all agreed with keeping the parcel zoned as commercial.

- b. Consider Approval of a Petition/Request for Vacation of an Alley Running 226 ft. South of Florida Street SW, between 2nd Avenue SW and Main Street South
Baker said that public hearing was held earlier in the meeting. He said that Smisek may apply for a parcel combination request later in the year, if the vacation request is approved. Baker recommended approval of the proposed alley vacation based on the facts listed in the Resolution. He stated that the City Council will hold a public hearing and make the final decision on July 28th.

A motion was made by Ward and seconded by Freid to recommend approval of a petition/request for vacation of an alley running approximately 226 ft. south of Florida Street SW, between 2nd Avenue SW and Main Street South. Vote for: Freid, Kodada, and Ward; Against: None. Vote: 3-0. Motion carried.

- c. Review Existing Downtown Businesses & Uses with the B-1 & B-3 Zoning District's Permitted & Conditional Uses

The Commissioners reviewed a Staff Report and a Downtown map labeling the existing businesses and uses. Baker said that there are currently a few Downtown Lonsdale properties/buildings that are not in compliance with the Zoning Code. He explained that business/building owners don't always notify City Hall about a new business starting up. Baker said that Lonsdale does not require business licenses. Baker identified some of the vacant buildings and non-conforming uses. Erickson provided information on the vacant Lonsdale Oil building, including State ownership, petroleum cleanup, soil tests, and an upcoming Sheriff's sale for tax-forfeited property. The Commission also discussed the two commercial kitchen buildings. He said that because 'filling vacant buildings in the Downtown area' is a priority of the City, Staff is seeking direction on what should happen to non-complying uses. Baker said that the City could: 1) do nothing, and not enforce the Zoning Code, 2) enforce the current Zoning Code, and potentially force a business out of town, risking even more vacant buildings, or 3) revise the Zoning Code to reflect current, realistic, and generally acceptable businesses. J. Kodada said that the City should not force out existing businesses. The other Commissioners agreed. Erickson stated that the City will probably focus on future Code revisions to the B-3 District at future meetings.

7. MISCELLANEOUS

- The Commissioners reviewed a picture showing a before/after picture of a temporary fence replaced with a nice-looking permanent fence. Baker explained how a zoning letter helped make the subject property and neighborhood look better.
- Responding to a question from Fried, Erickson provided an update on the DRS Field baseball dugouts, explaining that the City's insurance and Public Works Department are working to restore the dugout in a timely manner.

8. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Freid and seconded by Ward to adjourn the meeting. Vote for: Freid, Kodada, and Ward; Against: None. Vote: 3-0. Motion carried. The meeting ended at 7:17 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Benjamin Baker, City Planner