

Meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission for Monday, May 9, 2013.

The meeting commenced at 7:00 p.m. Present were Don Bagley, LeeAllen Smith, Mark Mustain, and Mayor Tim Grenke. Also attending were Lynn Behrns and Don Brooks and his family.

Behrns announced that a quorum of at least three "citizen" members was not present. Since public hearings had been advertised for two zoning matters, he suggested that the hearings proceed and testimony be taken for use by the Commission at a future meeting. Commissioners agreed. Behrns noted that he has not received any written comments on either of the items to be discussed.

Bagley opened the hearing on the request for rezoning property owned by Don Brooks, north of Switzler Street between Pratt and Howard Burton Drive. Rezoning the property to B-2 would allow Brooks to construct a recreational facility on the property, provided the Commission determined that no buffer distance was required between the facility and nearby residentially-zoned properties. Brooks distributed draft site plans for his proposed project. The structure would be on the west half of the property, with parking on the west. The property was previously used for a single family house and a small trailer park, both of which have been removed. Most of the traffic generated by the facility would probably enter from Howard Burton Drive and exit on Switzler. Brooks owns a duplex adjacent to and north of the site on property zoned R-2. Bagley owns the adjacent property on the east, and it is zoned M-1 (Industrial). So are all of the properties along the south side of Switzler and east side Howard Burton. These are owned by Hubbell/Chance.

Brooks said the facility would have indoor batting cages and full-sized basketball court and would be a commercial enterprise. He has consulted with Tad Dunn and found that the facility would not be in conflict with the Park Department's Recreation Center. Indeed, it would complement the Department's plans. Brooks has contacted Mrs. Zaring, who owns the property on the west side of Pratt Street. Zaring has not expressed any concerns about the project to either Brooks or Behrns.

Behrns explain to Lee that changing the west half of the site from R-2 to B-2 and the east half (less the north ten feet which was previously transferred through a lot split) from M-1 down to B-2 would achieve a parcel with a consistent zoning over the whole, and would be sufficient to meet Brooks' objectives without further expanding the footprint of industrial zoning. The front yard setback requirements for B-2 zones are also less and would give Brooks more flexibility.

Commissioners had no further questions and appeared supportive of the proposal. The hearing was ended.

Behrns told the Commission that Don Bormann and he had recently found that "lumber yards" are a permitted use in M-1 zone districts, but are not mentioned in B-2. This was a surprise, because the several lumbers yards had been or now are located on property zoned B-1 (Downtown Business District). This could cause a problem for the proposed relocation of LaCrosse Lumber to a parcel on the north side of Highway 22. Bormann has researched other zoning ordinances, and found that lumbers yards are usually considered a commercial use, not an industrial use. Behrns has proposed that "lumber yards" be added to the list of permitted used in district B-2 (Highway Business District). The Commissioners present seemed to support this measure.

A public hearing was opened and ended without any public comment.

Behrns said he would poll absent Commissioners and attempt to set a date for another meeting next week. The Commission is expected to make a recommendation to the Board of Aldermen on each proposed change to the Zoning Code before it takes up related ordinances at the regular May 20th Board meeting. Bagley said that he would be out of town for all of next week.

The meeting closed at about 7:20 p.m.

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