

Planning and Zoning Commission
Special Meeting
May 9, 2016

- 1) The meeting was called to order at 7:00 a.m.
- 2) Roll Call.
Present: Craig Agan, Jim Danks, Cathy Haustein, David Landon, Robin Pfalzgraf, Gary Van Vark, Ervin Van Wyk, Ann Visser.
Absent: Bob Smith, Mike Vander Molen, Teri Vos.
Others Present: Jim Corbett, Mike Nardini, George Wesselhoft.
- 3) Approval of Minutes
 - a) March 30, 2016 special meeting. The minutes were approved as submitted.
 - b) April 25, 2016 regular meeting. The minutes were approved as submitted.
- 4) Site Plan for Pella Regional Health Center. George Wesselhoft reviewed the staff report: Pella Regional Health Center is proposing a 21,705 square foot third floor addition to part of the existing hospital building. No other site improvements are proposed. The location in question is zoned INS Institutional and is identified for Medical and Assisted Living in the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map. Staff believes the site plan meets the requirements of the Zoning Code and the Comprehensive Plan.

David Landon made a motion to approve the site plan. Gary Van Vark seconded the motion. Upon vote, all voted yes. Motion carried 8 to 0.

- 5) Highway 163 Bypass Sign Ordinance. George Wesselhoft reviewed the staff report: The City Council in 2004 after extensive review by ad hoc sign committee amended the City Code to permit taller pole signs for food, fuel and lodging uses for the Highway 163 interchanges at Washington Street, Clark Street and Highway G5T (County line). Specifically, the following options were provided:
 - (1) A sign area of up to 180 square feet for signs 60 feet in height.
 - (2) A sign area of up to 150 square feet for signs 50 feet in height.
 - (3) A sign area of up to 120 square feet for signs 40 feet in height.
 - (4) A sign area of up to 90 square feet for signs 30 feet in height.
 - (5) Signs less than 30 feet in height shall be limited to a maximum sign area of 50 square feet.

In light of businesses only opting or considering 30 or 40 foot tall signs, staff in late 2015 had sought Council direction as to whether this ordinance provision should be amended to limit the maximum height to 40 feet. The direction was given to proceed with an ordinance amendment as such limiting the maximum height to 40 feet. The Community Development Committee at their December 9, 2015 meeting recommended approval of the ordinance amendment 8 to 0.

However, the Planning and Zoning Commission at the January 25, 2016 meeting denied the ordinance 9 to 0.

In order to address concerns of both the CDC and P&Z and try to find a compromise proposal, members of the CDC and P&Z met with staff and discussed the following proposal: Keeping the ordinance the same for the Highway G5T (east) interchange, at the 60 foot height limit for bypass pole sign, but reducing the height limit to 40 feet for the other two locations.

David Landon questioned what is the driving force to change the ordinance?

Gary Van Vark responded the driving force to change it from what it was twelve years ago came from City staff; to leave it alone would have been an option. He thought there was a concern with signs erected obnoxiously tall since no one has gone that tall previously.

George Wesselhoft clarified that staff never took a position either way; staff posed the question to City Council recognizing the fact that no one has done the taller sign and their response was to change the Code.

Mike Nardini mentioned one of the charges to Administration from Council is to let them know of potential concerns before they become concerns and one of things they have been monitoring is industry trends as far as signage; tall signs and big signs would appear contrary to Code in general and staff looked at West Des Moines, Urbandale and Clive. The tallest signs was 30 feet for West Des Moines and Clive and 50 foot under special exception for Urbandale. In looking at those communities and the intent of the Pella sign code and with the realization that someone could construct a 60 foot sign; based on a general inquiry on this and back in 2004 it was a fairly contentious issue; from Council standpoint they looked at it over 12 years it the tallest sign has been 40 feet and other communities are limiting to 30 feet on interstates; what they wanted was input from the CDC and P&Z, and when they got different sets of input they went back for a compromise or better solution.

Jim Danks asked about the west interchange how high a sign could be off the approach of the runway.

Mr. Wesselhoft responded that there is a provision in the Code in so far as the airport and it does have to be reviewed by the airport engineer for height.

Mr. Nardini mentioned they used to have a storm warning siren in that general neighborhood and it would be close to 60 feet.

There was discussion about the bypass signage ordinance.

Cathy Haustein stated she could see it could be ugly if it were really tall; she wishes CDC would write something out.

Ann Visser mentioned she assumed appearance was a driving force and mentioned the casino sign south on I 35.

There was additional discussion about the driving force behind the ordinance and the history of the ordinance.

Craig Agan thinks it is a good ordinance and does not think the 60 feet is obtrusive; he does not see a problem with the ordinance.

Mr. Danks stated his hypothetical question is we go 60, 40 and 40 and four months from now someone wants a variance to put a 60 at the middle intersection and says that was in the ordinance for 12 years.

Ms. Visser responded they would probably not turn away business because of that.

Mr. Van Vark stated if Pilot, a large truck stop corporation, rolled into town and it was their industry standard, take it or leave it, we would definitely change the ordinance so why not leave it.

Ervin Van Vark stated he would leave it at 60 feet all the way across.

Mr. Landon mentioned the example of one of our presidential candidates that likes to build hotels and how he had an argument with a planning commission in south Florida over the height of a flagpole and proceeded to build a mound of dirt, the flagpole was consistent with the zoning but he built a mound. If someone really wanted their sign up they could get it up. He added he sees no real driving force to change the ordinance.

Mr. Danks asked staff to call the roll for discussion indication as to whether to continue with the existing ordinance or to change the ordinance.

Ann Visser – Existing
David Landon – Existing
Robin Pfalzgraf – Existing
Jim Danks – Existing
Craig Agan - Existing
Gary Van Vark – Existing
Ervin Van Wyk – Existing
Cathy Haustein - Change

6) Other Business.

Mr. Wesselhoft mentioned the training meeting on May 19 which ISU Extension will lead and the regular meeting on May 23 which will be a work session with

two items on the agenda: discussion about the proposed historic overlay ordinance and discussion about the ad hoc gateway committee recommendations.

Mr. Nardini mentioned that Gary Lozano with RDG who has considerable zoning experience to review the zoning and subdivision code and look for hot spots, trying to be proactive; there could be other areas. He also mentioned street projects including the Washington Street reconstruction from East 1st Street to Hazel Street with construction starting today, Hazel Street would remain fully open, and with late fall completion; Stage 3 of the Oskaloosa Street project from East 13th Street to East 10th Street, looking to start today with early November completion.

7) The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
George Wesselhoft
Planning and Zoning Director