



Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
January 11, 2021

Call to Order 6:34 pm

Roll Call

Present: Marcus Metz

Larry Sather

Monae Birkhofer

Patrick Hosterman

Staff Present: Patricia Love

Amy Rusko

Amy Bergemeier

Tansy Schroeder

Absent: Linda Utgard

Also known to be present: Steve Shepro, Peggy Wendel, Cody Davis

Approval of Minutes:

The Minutes of the November 16th, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting were approved as presented with a motion by Larry Sather and a second by Patrick Hosterman.

New Business:

- Electing a new Chair and Vice Chair for 2021:

Larry Sather nominated Marcus Metz for the Chair position and it was seconded by Monae Birkhofer. Patrick Hosterman was nominated by Marcus Metz for the Vice Chair position and it was seconded by Larry Sather. Both members accepted their nominations and it was passed unanimously.

2020 Year in Review: Director, Patricia Love went over the items that got accomplished in 2020 and below is that year in review.

The Planning Commission is an advisory commission to the City Council. Their responsibilities include making recommendations to the City Council on Comprehensive Plan Amendments and Zoning Regulations / Municipal Code Amendments. In addition, the Planning Commission provides a forum for public review of development projects outside of the formal public hearing process.

In 2020, the Planning Commission's work included:

Code Amendments / Comp Plan Amendments / Other:

- Park Impact Fee Ordinance (Up to the Public Hearing Process)
- Floodplain Regulations Update
- Buildable Lands Review & Discussion
- Planning 101 Review
- Stanwood History 101 Review
- City Beautification Action Program
- Permit Review Process Update (Outline and General Direction Complete)
- 2020 Comprehensive Plan, Rezone Amendments and Associated Code Amendments
- Housing Affordability Discussion with the Alliance for Housing Affordability (AHA)



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Public Meetings on Development Projects:

- Hamilton Park
- WDFW Boat Launch Project
- Irvine Slough Stormwater Separation Project
- Madison Place Mixed Use Building
- Upper Left Apartments
- Schenk Packing Annexation
- Wolfkill Industrial Development

Delayed Items to 2021:

- Park Impact Fee Update
- Permit Review Process

Due to the Covid-19 global pandemic, the city converted to holding on-line Planning Commission meetings in April of 2020. This led to limited public hearings, which in turn resulted in a delay in adoption of the park impact fee ordinance and the permit process update. These two items have been added to the Planning Commissions 2021 work plan.

Permit Activity Review: The city issued more single family residential permit this year than in previous years, however the total permit volume was down. This appears to be caused by the Covid-19 global pandemic that slowed the economy and forced many people out of work. The upswing in single family residential permits was due to two major plats: Cedarhome Square (125 Lots) and Mineral Point (~88 Lots) off of 68th Avenue. We are expecting this trend to continue in 2021 due to the Schmitt plat (78 SFR Lots) currently under construction and the Chandlers Reserve plat (91 Lots) that was recently approved by the Hearing Examiner.

2021 Work Plan:

Associated with the 2021 – 2022 Biennial Budget is a corresponding work plan for each department. Included in that work plan are items subject to review by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission holds two meetings a month, traditional work plan and permit items are generally scheduled for the first meeting of the month and the longer range comprehensive plan update items are reviewed on the second meeting of the month.

Below is the tentative 2021 work plan and associated schedule:

2021 Planning Commission Work Plan Items

Work Plan Item	Tentative Timing
Role: Formal Public Hearing and Recommendation to City Council	
Zoning Entitlement Process Update	January - June
Permitting Use Matrix Update	January - June
Park & Traffic Impact Fees	April - September
Sign Code Update	June - December
Role: Advisory Review	



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Buildable Lands Analysis	January - June
Street and Utility Standards Update	January - September
Animal Code Update (2020 Docket Item)	February - May
Parks Feasibility Study	February - April
1% for the Arts Code	June - December
FEMA Strategy	March - December
80 th Avenue & 64 th Avenue Traffic Study	March - May

With the above work plans for 2021, Director Love went over the 2021 items and gave the Commission a brief description of each item and what their role would be dealing with each topic.

Permitted Use Matrix Options Discussion: As part of the Departments 2021 work plan, staff is working on an update to the City's permitted use matrix and permit review procedures. Much of the work on the permit review procedures was started in 2020, however due to limited public hearings and Comprehensive Plan Amendment, this item was pushed to 2021 for completion.

In addition, the interim Enhanced Service Facilities ordinance requires the city to update our permitted use matrix within six months of initial adoption (October 2020). Work on the permitted use matrix code amendment is now being done simultaneously with the permit review procedures.

To address Enhanced Service Facilities, the permitted land use table currently has multiple uses that are outdated and some uses that are not recognized in the table but are required by state law. This can cause confusion for property owners, new applicants and city staff when analyzing if a use can be placed in a particular zone of the city. Use, site and development standards will be proposed that address: Enhanced Service Facilities, Adult Family Homes, and Congregate Care, Group Homes and/or other state regulated uses.

Director Love discussed that the goal of staff is to condense the three chapters into a single chapter that describes the permit process from the intake to the Certificate of Occupancy/Final Permit. The goal is also to marry the Permit Review Procedures with the Permitted Land Use Matrix making it easier for not only staff, but for residents to know and understand. Director Love will work directly with Commissioner Birkhofer and new Commissioner Davis to bring them up to speed on this subject.

Chapter 17.80 Permit Review Procedures proposed amendments.

In review, staff and the Community Development Committee reviewed the proposed amendments to the permit review process which includes:

- Consolidate the three permitting procedures chapters into a single chapter that follows the permitting steps.
- Eliminate duplicative and conflicting code sections.
- Include easy to read tables detailing permit types and process.
- Move the following non-procedural permit processes out of the administrative code sections and create new chapters:



- Grading Regulations
- Development Agreements
- Variance and Conditional Use Criteria
- Amendments to Annexations (Similar to Comprehensive Plan Amendments)
- Create flow charts for each permit type (Completed).
- Adopt new permit procedures following the following outline:
 - Article I: General Provisions
 - Article II: Application Provisions and Procedures
 - Article III: Permit Review Procedures
 - Article IV: Post Permit Requirements

Chapter 17.30 Permitted Land Use Matrix proposed amendments.

In evaluating how to amend the City's permitted land uses chapter, staff is proposing the following amendments:

- Re-organize of the permitted land use table; three options are being proposed.
- Review the allowed permitted and conditional uses.
- Review how the permitted uses are reflected in the permit process chapter.
- Review and update conditions, footnotes or explanations.
- Consider amendments to the definitions chapter to ensure consistency with the permitted use matrix.
- Consider adding uses or footnotes to the permitted use chapter which could eliminate the overlay zones, which include: Adult Entertainment Overlay, Historic Downtown Overlay, Master Plan Overlay and Transit Overlay. Elimination of the overlay zones can simplify the interpretation of the zoning map and what uses may apply.

Director Love added that part of the reason we are looking at this early in this year is we have the Interim Regulations for Enhanced Service Facilities (buildings that can hold up to 8 beds for people that have mental health or drug issues etc.) and we only have 6 months to update our code for that. We also don't have a code that's up to date for other types of care facilities.

In considering changes to the permitted use matrix, staff is proposing the following three options that Senior Planner, Amy Rusko and Director Love described for the Commission:

Option 1: Use the current table format and update uses. The current table is based on specific uses and zones.

- Pros – The table is familiar and allows the user to determine if a use is allowed in a particular zone.
- Cons – The table has specific uses and any uses not listed are prohibited in the city or requires an administrative interpretation. It allows for very little discretion while trying to figure out if a use is allowed in a zone or not. There are some uses that are somewhat similar, but we cannot approve or requires an interpretation.
- Commissioner Hosterman asks, what is an example that is currently not included in the matrix now? Director Love pointed out that the Enhanced Service Facilities is one of the types of uses that isn't currently in the matrix.



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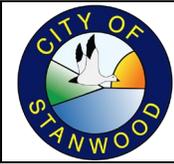
- Senior Planner, Amy Rusko describes the current codes and how the table is currently being used.
- Director Love summarized that option one is using the existing format and then relooking at the uses within the matrix.

Option 2: Consolidate the use types into broader categories, such as retail sales, and following the existing format.

- Pros – The table would remain much the same, but would reduce the uses into more general categories. Uses would then be separated out to exclude uses that are not wanted. This would act more like a form based code where uses are not as heavily regulated but the site development standards control the overall look and feel of the property.
- Cons – This would recognize broad uses, which may allow for a use that was not intended for a particular zone and may cause the same confusion of the current table. The excluded uses may end up having the same amount of uses that we have currently and my not simplify the table.
- Senior Planner, Rusko describes option two as using a similar format as option 1, but combining uses into a more general category for example condensing Automobile types of categories into one or two broader categories. Then the more detailed descriptions would be put into the definitions of what each broader category means.
- Commissioner Hosterman asks, where does “39” go? Amy Rusko answered, the Footnotes would still be in place in order to explain the conditions of a use.
- Senior Planner, Rusko summarized that Option 2 would use the same format as Option 1 while condensing the categories into a more generalized categories.

Option 3: Change the table to follow the comprehensive plan and zoning districts, with permitted uses for each zone.

- Pros – A table would be created for each zone type: Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Public Facilities and possibly a special table for unusual uses. This would then allow a table for each general zone category with permitted uses for each zone. This would resemble the zoning standards tables in chapter 17.60 and provide consistency throughout the code. This could be potentially be easier for users of the code to determine uses by zoning category.
- Cons – This would change the way the current table looks and functions. The table would be based on zone category first and then by use: a reverse from the current permitted use matrix.
- Senior Planner, Rusko describes how Option 3 will be a completely different table to be broken down by zones; Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Public and Park zones.
- Director Love explains, part of the reason we came up with this option is it goes along with our development standards of our codes. Option 3 is changing the Matrix so it follows the categories broken down.
- Commissioner Metz feels Option 2 and 3 are strong improvements over the current Option 1, but likes option 3 the best.



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- Commissioner Hosterman agrees, he likes Option 3 the best.
- Commissioner Sather offered that when it comes to uses that wouldn't be allowed. He feels the City Council and the Commission need to be careful when putting specific uses that would or wouldn't want to be allowed. He feels Option 3 is the best way to go as it makes it consistent and clear.
- Commissioner Birkhofer really likes Option 3 as well and feels it would be much easier to understand.
- Senior Planner, Rusko explains that when you look at some of the excluded uses we can add the section of uses not allowed in the City.

Director Love added, In addition, the way the code is written right now, if it isn't clear, it falls on the staff to make the determination on anything currently not in the code. This might be an option to change so the Planning Commission is more involved in the decision process along with the City staff to make decisions on items not currently listed. Further discussion is definitely needed on the options and implementation of a new format.

Commissioner Metz followed up on Commission Sather's concerns about when using Option 2 that if by listing specific exclusions, anything not specifically defined one way or another that it would be allowed to happen, however that isn't the case. Currently anything that isn't currently defined, it falls on Director Love and other City staff to make a decision.

Commissioner Sather offered a great example of what if someone came to the City and asks "Can I build a casino in the City of Stanwood", how is that handled as it's not currently defined as a specific use. Senior Planner answered, exactly... it is currently not listed so the answer would be no. Commissioner Sather said it is even a question perhaps for the City Council if the City of Stanwood would even want to allow a casino type of establishment within the city limits.

In following, Director Love hears that the overwhelming choice of the Commission is Option 3 to be the favored choice and Staff will start working on this and bring some samples back to the Commission as soon as possible.

Old Business: Discussed

Miscellaneous Business: N/A

Recent Council Action on Commission Items: No Planning Commission Action, but a code change for the Adoption of the 2018 building and fire codes is in front of the Council. The Governor's actions may be delaying the adoption of the new codes until July.

Upcoming Items:

The Permitting process will be the main focus for the upcoming quarter.

A motion to adjourn was made by Larry Sather and seconded by Patrick Hosterman.

Adjourn: 7:45 pm

Amy Bergemeier, Administrative Assistant