

MINUTES
PLAN COMMISSION
City Hall Forum - 100 State Street, Beloit, WI 53511
7:00 PM
Wednesday, December 18, 2024

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chairperson Ramsden called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Commissioners Ramsden, Winkelmann, Elliott, and Jacobsen were present. Commissioner Flesch, Anderson, and Councilor Day were absent. Commissioner Abarca arrived at 7:03 PM.

2. MINUTES

2.a. Consideration of the minutes of the December 4, 2024 Plan Commission meeting

Commissioner Jacobsen made a motion to approve the Minutes, seconded by Commissioner Winkelmann. Motion prevailed, voice vote (4-0).

3. PUBLIC HEARINGS

3.a. Consideration of a Resolution 2024-029 approving a Preliminary Plat of Elmwood Commons Plat Tw

Community Development Director, Julie Christensen, presented the staff report and recommendation.

Commissioner Winkelmann inquired about the maps and the layout designating an outlot. Ms. Christensen explained that the layout reflects the initial submission made during the engineering review process with Fehr Graham. The City determined that a larger stormwater area would likely be required, which could result in the removal of some lots. During the final engineering design, if the additional lots are deemed unnecessary, they could be added back in. However, the City believes this adjustment can be addressed as a minor amendment during the final plat stage.

Commissioner Winkelmann asked for clarification on whether there were two outlots. Ms. Christensen responded that it is now a single large outlot, whereas it was previously two. Commissioner Winkelmann then asked if Outlot Two is the only one remaining. Ms. Christensen answered yes.

Ms. Christensen explained that the City will address the zoning when the lots are created. Commissioner Winkelmann inquired if the layout still aligns with the blue and yellow map, where the yellow indicates the multifamily area. Ms. Christensen confirmed that, in general, the multifamily area is located on the north and south ends of the subdivision. Ms. Christensen elaborated that the area previously designated as an outlot is also now planned for multifamily.

Chairperson Ramsden opened and closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Elliot made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Jacobsen. Motion carried, voice vote (5-0).

3.b. Consideration of Resolution 2024-034 approving a Preliminary Plat of Eagles Ridge Remainder Subdivision

Community Development Director, Julie Christensen, presented the staff report and recommendation.

Chairperson Ramsden opened the public hearing.

Abby Edwards stated that she is a resident whose property borders the proposed development. Currently, she and her neighbors are on septic and well, and she asked if there would be any requirement to connect to City infrastructure or if they could continue using their existing systems. Chairperson Ramsden responded that he believes she can remain on her septic and well system, but deferred to Ms. Christensen for confirmation. Ms. Christensen clarified that if Ms. Edwards resides in the Town of Turtle, the City would not require her to connect to City water and sewer.

Ms. Edwards raised another concern, largely on behalf of her neighbor, regarding water runoff. She explained that when it rains, their yard experiences significant runoff, resembling a small river. She asked what measures are planned to address this issue with the development and subdivision expansion. Specifically, she inquired about potential grading on the hill behind her property to manage runoff and prevent flooding into their yards.

Scott Schneider, Director of Water Resources for the City of Beloit, explained that the developer's plans include a retention pond, which is represented as a tall rectangle on the west side of Townhall Road. This pond is designed to manage stormwater for the area. In response to Ms. Edwards' question about whether the water would be pumped, Mr. Schneider clarified that the water would flow naturally by gravity, meeting the stormwater management requirements for the new development.

Mr. Schneider noted that, as of now, no grading plans have been provided for the development. He added that he does not have enough detailed knowledge to determine what impacts the grading might have.

Bill Clasen, a civil engineer with Arc Design Resources, explained that the development will significantly reduce the amount of water flowing through the lots. Stormwater will be captured by the storm sewer system and directed to a detention basin, where the flow will be slowed, effectively reducing stormwater runoff for the entire subdivision.

Ms. Edwards asked if it was fair to assume that, with the addition of Owl Run, the front yards and houses on the new lots would drain toward Owl Run, while the backyards would continue to drain toward her property.

Mr. Clasen responded that much of the water coming down the hill toward her property will be intercepted by the storm sewer system on Owl Run. Final grading plans are still being developed and will be reviewed by the City to ensure compliance with the stormwater management ordinance.

Ms. Edwards also inquired about the estimated timeline for construction. Ms. Christensen explained that if the project is approved, the developers will need to submit a final plat for the first phase, along with final engineering designs for the infrastructure, before beginning work. A development agreement will also need to be negotiated. Mr. Clasen added that, based on the preliminary timeline, construction could begin toward the end of next year.

Ms. Edwards then asked about the alignment of Town Hall Road, noting that it appears offset. Mr. Clasen confirmed that it is slightly offset, but this aligns with the City's future plans to redesign the intersection, potentially creating an S-curve as part of those improvements.

Chairperson Ramsden closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Winkelmann made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Elliott. Motion carried, voice vote (5-0).

3.c. **Consideration of a Planned Unit Development (PUD) Master Land Use Plan for the property located at 1400 White Avenue**

Community Development Director, Julie Christensen, presented the staff report and recommendation.

Ms. Christensen explained that if the current occupant leaves, the PUD restricts future uses to those specified within it. According to the PUD, permitted ground-floor commercial uses include resale services, sales and services related to an arts and crafts studio, and a café. If the land use were to change, such as a new occupant wishing to establish a record store, the PUD plan would need to be amended. Any significant changes would require approval from the Plan Commission. Minor changes could be reviewed to determine if they qualify as small adjustments, but substantial differences would necessitate a return to the Plan Commission for approval.

Chairperson Ramsden opened the public hearing.

Kiara Wilson, the business owner, was present to answer any questions.

Chairperson Ramsden asked Ms. Wilson if the owner was present to speak on their behalf. Ms. Wilson replied that he was not. Chairperson Ramsden then inquired how long the owner had owned the building. Ms. Wilson explained that the owner purchased it in 2006, which was also when the building last operated as a salon on the ground floor. He bought it from the previous salon owner. Chairperson Ramsden asked if there is currently someone living on the second floor. Ms. Wilson confirmed that there is.

Chairperson Ramsden also asked Ms. Wilson if she plans to live in the building or simply manage the ground-floor business. Ms. Wilson responded that she grew up across the street on Central Avenue and plans to stay in that house.

Finally, Chairperson Ramsden asked if the café would offer indoor and outdoor seating. Ms. Wilson clarified that it would be an indoor café, but she envisions using the outdoor space as well, offering seating in a portable garden setting where customers can sit outside, water plants, drink coffee, and read a book—similar to a normal café or restaurant with outdoor seating.

Commissioner Abarca inquired whether the café would be located inside the fenced area or if there would be additional space outside. Ms. Wilson clarified that the café would be situated within the fenced area behind the building. Chairperson Ramsden asked if there was a garage behind the fence. Ms. Wilson responded that there was only the fenced area, with no garage. Ms. Wilson added that there is a walkway leading through the back, alongside the fence.

Chairperson Ramsden asked whether parking would be available in that area. Ms. Christensen confirmed that it would be. Chairperson Ramsden further asked if there would be space for a car to turn around once parked. Ms. Wilson explained that there would not be, and drivers would need to park on the street. She noted that most of the customers who support this business are within walking distance, including college students, so walking traffic is expected to be higher than driving traffic. She anticipates five to seven cars being parked throughout the day while the store is open. Commissioner Elliott remarked that this business is similar to Mr. B's, which has no parking but operates successfully despite that.

Ms. Christensen explained that when repurposing these commercial spaces, parking is often considered a pre-existing condition. They will attempt to make it work without needing a large parking lot, as it may be difficult to use the space otherwise. Commissioner Elliott expressed his belief that it's a great location with a unique concept.

Chairperson Ramsden closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Elliott made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Abarca. Motion carried, voice vote (5-0).

3.d. **Consideration of Ordinance No. 3859 amending the Zoning District Map of the City of Beloit for the property located at 1400 White Avenue**

Community Development Director, Julie Christensen, presented the staff report and recommendation.

Commissioner Jacobsen asked about the recommended zoning under the upcoming comprehensive plan. While she supports the PUD, she expressed uncertainty about how the zoning ordinance will be structured. Ms. Christensen explained that significant changes to districts are anticipated, particularly as the new plan integrates small businesses alongside residential uses in established neighborhood areas. The City is working to determine how to rezone accordingly, with the comprehensive plan aiming to repurpose commercial spaces. For now, the PUD remains the only mechanism to achieve this. Commissioner Jacobsen further inquired if, once the plans are updated, there would no longer be a need to bring PUD requests to the Plan Commission. Ms. Christensen explained that this has yet to be determined.

Commissioner Jacobsen expressed her support, noting that the space's smaller size makes it ideal for someone starting out, as it requires minimal changes. Reflecting on her experience walking past Roosevelt in the 1960s and observing the pharmacy with residential spaces above, she noted how such setups were more common then. She asked a follow-up question regarding the RFP process, specifically whether the Plan Commission has any role in selecting the consultant or if that decision is solely made by staff.

Ms. Christensen clarified that staff would select the consultant. However, as the City progresses through the process, there will be stages where the Plan Commission will review and approve the ordinance. She added that the City will need to determine how to present the rewritten ordinance to the Plan Commission in a way that is manageable.

Commissioner Abarca inquired about the timeline for implementing the new zoning ordinance. Ms. Christensen responded that the work will take place throughout the coming year, with the goal of completing it by year-end. In the meantime, properties can be rezoned as long as the changes align with the goals outlined in the new comprehensive plan.

Chairperson Ramsden opened and closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Jacobsen made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Abarca. Motion carried, voice vote (5-0).

3.e. Consideration of Ordinance No. 3860 amending the Zoning District Map of the City of Beloit for the property located at 423 St. Lawrence Ave

Community Development Director, Julie Christensen, presented the staff report and recommendation.

Commissioner Elliott asked if there was a picture of the property. Ms. Christensen said she does not think she put one in the file, but she can bring one up.

Chairperson Ramsden opened the public hearing.

Edgar Mellin, residing at 1910 McKinley Ave, stated that they have been residents of Beloit, Wisconsin, for the past 20 years. Chairperson Ramsden asked how long they had owned the property, to which Mr. Mellin replied that they purchased the home last year. When asked about the previous owner, Mr. Mellin said they were unsure. Chairperson Ramsden further inquired if anyone had been living in the home, and Mr. Mellin confirmed it had been vacant.

He explained that they have been waiting to see if they could convert the property into a duplex. The upper floor previously had a kitchen, which they have since demolished. The home currently features two rooms on the first floor and one on the upper floor. Mr. Mellin mentioned that he wished he had brought an outline of the layout for clarification but noted there is an attic on the upper floor that could be converted into an additional room. The first floor measures approximately 1,200 square feet, while the second floor is 790 square feet. The attic, currently excluded from the living space, could potentially be finished to create more room on the upper level.

Chairperson Ramsden asked what their plans are if the zoning request to change from single-family to multi-family is approved, specifically regarding any renovations or improvements to the building. Mr. Mellin explained that they had applied for funding to renovate the property and were approved. Their intention is to retain the building and rent it out. However, he noted that if the request is denied, they will proceed with renovations and put the property back on the market as a single-family home.

Chairperson Ramsden asked if the zoning request is denied, whether Mr. Mellin would renovate the building and put it on the market. Mr. Mellin confirmed that he would, but if the request is approved, they will proceed with renovations to convert the property into a duplex. Chairperson Ramsden also inquired if Mr. Mellin owns other rental properties in Beloit, to which he responded that they own about ten properties.

Commissioner Elliott asked about the back part of the house and its connection to the second floor. Mr. Mellin explained that it connects the first floor to the second floor. Commissioner Elliott then asked if it would be possible to build a door to separate the spaces, to which Mr. Mellin replied that they plan to add a door to the garage, which

they will separate with a wall to designate access for each apartment. He also mentioned that the driveway is large enough to allow parking on both sides.

When Commissioner Elliott inquired about the planned rental prices, Mr. Mellin mentioned that they plan to charge \$1,000 for a two-bedroom unit and \$1,200 for a three-bedroom unit. Commissioner Elliott then asked if the applicant wanted a duplex, would they need to submit a separate request. Ms. Christensen responded that she was unsure and would need to check with the City Attorney, as it was unclear whether the City would need to start the process over since the public notice indicated the request was for R-3 zoning.

Chairperson Ramsden closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Elliott made a motion to approve, but the motion died due to lack of a second.

Commissioner Winkelmann made a motion to deny, seconded by Commissioner Abarca.

Commissioner Winkelmann pointed out that there are R-2 family units in the area. Ms. Christensen explained that the area is currently a mix of residential properties. However, the request for R-3 zoning, which would allow additional units, which was inconsistent with the intent of the Established Neighborhood designation in the Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, staff recommended denial. She noted that she did not write the staff report and couldn't speak to whether the recommendation would have been different if only two units were proposed.

Commissioner Abarca asked if the new zoning ordinance planned for next year would allow the property to be converted into a duplex. Ms. Christensen clarified that since the zoning request was for R-3, not R-2, staff did not analyze whether a duplex would be allowed. Staff would need to confirm whether it was originally built as a duplex, rather than broken up into two units. However, she mentioned that in 1985, the building had been used as a two-unit property, so it's possible it was designed that way. Commissioner Winkelmann inquired about the building's age, and Ms. Christensen replied that the building was constructed in 1850.

Commissioner Elliott indicated that since the property was used as a duplex in 1985, it likely has the space for a second unit and is needed, especially given the current housing shortage. He also pointed out that if the property were put back on the market as a single-family home, it might be out of place in the neighborhood and harder to sell.

Ms. Christensen expressed concern with the idea that certain neighborhoods should be restricted to rental properties, stating that the City has been collaborating with

nonprofits to build new single-family homes. She emphasized that there is demand for single-family homes, with many people wanting to live in central city neighborhoods.

Ms. Christensen clarified that the property has been used as a single-family home since 1985. Commissioner Jacobsen noted that the Plan Commissioners cannot alter the applicant's original request, which was for multi-family zoning. Ms. Christensen acknowledged that she wasn't sure about the urgency of the applicant's request. She suggested that the Commission could table the item to explore the possibility of R-2 zoning instead.

Commissioner Jacobsen asked if the building could be divided into apartments, stating she wouldn't support that. Commissioner Elliott agreed, stating he wouldn't support it either but felt a duplex would be the ideal solution. Commissioner Winkelmann proposed that the Commissioners could either deny the request, allowing the applicants to return later, or table the item to give staff time to work with the applicants on a solution. He emphasized that while more than a duplex would be inappropriate, a duplex seemed the most fitting. The Commissioners discussed tabling the item.

Chairperson Ramsden then asked the applicant to return to the podium. He noted that based on the discussion, the chance of the property being zoned R-3 seemed slim, but the Commission appeared more open to zoning it R-2 for a duplex. Chairperson Ramsden asked the applicant if he would prefer to have a vote on R-2 tonight or if he would like the item tabled and returned at a later time with a request for R-2 zoning. Mr. Mellin explained that there had been confusion, as they initially thought R-3 would allow multi-family units, but they now realized the mistake. He stated that if the Commissioners needed to table the item to consider R-2 zoning, they were inclined to proceed with that request.

Commissioner Winkelmann withdrew his motion, seconded by Commissioner Abarca.

Commissioner Jacobsen made a motion to table the item, seconded by Commissioner Elliott. Motion carried, voice vote (5-0).

3.f. **Consideration of Resolution 2024-035 approving an exception to Sections 30.0, 30.10, 30.35(2)(c), and 30.42(2)(c) of the Outdoor Sign Regulations for the property located at 2825 Prairie Avenue**

Community Development Director, Julie Christensen, presented the staff report and recommendation.

Chairperson Ramsden opened and closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Abarca made a motion to table the item, seconded by Commissioner Ramsden. Motion carried, voice vote (5-0).

4. REPORTS

4.a. Consideration of a one-lot Certified Survey Map for the property located at 1452 S Townhall Road

Community Development Director, Julie Christensen, presented the staff report and recommendation.

Commissioner Winkelmann made a motion for approval, seconded by Commissioner Elliott. Motion carried, voice vote (5-0).

5. STATUS REPORT ON PRIOR PLAN COMMISSION ITEMS

Julie Christensen provided an update on items previously reviewed by the Commission.

6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Julie Christensen outlined the future agenda items. The next meeting is scheduled for January 8, 2025.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Jacobsen made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Abarca at 8:14 PM. Motion carried, voice vote (5-0).



Mike Ramsden, Chairperson