

**CITY OF ROCKFORD
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
JULY 23, 2015**

A regular meeting of the Rockford Planning Commission was held Thursday, July 23, 2015, at 7:00 p.m., in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 7 South Monroe Street, Rockford, Michigan.

- I. **Meeting called to order.** The meeting of the Rockford Planning Commission was called to order by Chairman Scales at approximately 7:00 p.m.
- II. **Roll Call.** Chairman Jim Scales, Vice Chair Tom Sturr and Commissioners Lisa Chamberlain, Tammy Bergstrom, Cliff Hill, Dave Rasmussen, Jon Miner and Jeff Lipe. Absent: Commissioner Tom Mester. Chairman Scales welcomed the newest Commissioners, Lisa Chamberlain and Cliff Hill.
- III. **Approval of the Minutes.** On a motion by Commissioner Miner, with support by Commissioner Hill, and carried by all, the June 25, 2015 meeting minutes were approved as submitted.
- IV. **Approval of the Agenda.** The agenda was approved as submitted.
- V. **Public Comments**

Caleb Sower of 249 N Monroe Street stated that he submitted his request to become appointed to any City Board or Commission and that he also has filed a motion to become part of the recent lawsuit filed by Monroe Street Partners.

VI. Public Hearing

- A. **To hold a Public Hearing on the proposed Amendment to the Planned Unit Development (PUD) Ordinance.** Chairman Jim Scales explained the PUD Ordinance use and how it has been used to develop several projects such as Herman's Boy and the Promenade. Chair Scales explained the variety of ways a PUD can be approved and then explained the rezoning portion of a PUD and the elimination of a Protest Petition and in the case of the Burch Body Development, how five people can affect the outcome. Chair Scales stated that it is a policy issue as to whether a protest petition should be a part of the PUD.

The Public Hearing opened at 7:10 p.m.

Kristine Sower of 240 N Monroe stated that she opposes the amendment.

Caleb Sower of 240 N Monroe stated he opposes the amendment. The City is taking away the rights of the citizens.

Jim Lietch of 251 N Monroe stated he opposes the amendment and the removal of the Preliminary Plan Review.

Michelle Winters of 201 N Monroe stated she opposes the amendment; the City is not listening to the people.

Larry Vis of 157 N Monroe stated he objects to the zoning change.

Donna Alexander of 205 N Monroe stated she opposes the amendment.

Erin Burke of 335 Norwood stated she is against the amendment and the Planning Commission is not listening to what the people want.

Ben Carew of 325 Donald stated he opposes the amendment; the Planning Commission is taking away the voice of the people.

Jack McClennan of 217 N Monroe requested to know what stimulated the change?

Grant Medich of 248 N Main Street stated he opposes the change.

Troy Winters of 201 N Monroe stated he opposes the change.

The Public Hearing closed at 7:25 p.m.

VII. Old Business

A. Consideration of recommending to Council approval of the PUD Ordinance Amendment. Discussion took place regarding the PUD Ordinance Amendment.

Chairman Scales explained that we are not eliminating the preliminary stage of the PUD process; we are not changing procedure or skipping a step in the process.

Commissioner Rasmussen stated that the Planning Commission doesn't fast track anything and to think that we do not listen to the voice of the people is not right. Commissioner Rasmussen stated that they listen to everyone including people in the neighborhoods, people on the street, the EDC and DDA, and people who they see in the local businesses.

Commissioner Miner stated that there is inconsistency with the change. To rezone from R-1 to R-2, rezoning is necessary but to go from an R-1 to a PUD, this amendment would not require rezoning. Commissioner Miner also provided word and grammatical changes he would like to see made to the PUD Ordinance.

Commissioner Miner stated that he does not agree with the “no” votes from Council with respect to the Burch Body development and stated that one of the “no” votes should be declared invalid since that Council Member voted “yes” throughout the entire process.

Commissioner Lipe stated that while he realizes that the people attending the meeting are closely attached to the property, he has heard overwhelmingly that this project would be great for the City as a whole. Commissioner Lipe further stated that the same people who want the Wolverine site cleaned up do not want the Burch Property cleaned.

Commissioner Bergstrom stated that we do not know how this will play out; we do not know what this amendment will do to our future; therefore, I would like to take some time before sending this amendment on to Council.

Commissioner Hill stated that we really have not heard the view of the population of the City in this room. The small group in this room does not speak for the entire population of the City.

Chairman Scales stated that this amendment is a public policy issue and is something that should be decided by Council. It should be up to Council to decide whether to adopt this amendment considering the timing of the Tamarack Run situation. Five property owners triggered the super majority vote; it is State law and we cannot change the law. Chairman Scales further stated that he does not believe a rezoning should be affected by a 100 foot radius. A lawsuit has been filed; the entire process creates unpredictability and discourages development in the City. Good developers will look at what has happened and walk away from working in the City.

Vice Chair Sturr stated that the Planning Commission and Council have had a lot of checks and balances with this development; we have received a lot of input and I do not see a protest petition as a protection as the Monroe Street people see it to be.

Commissioner Rasmussen stated that the Planning Commission looks at everything in the interest of the whole City; we don't always get it right but we certainly try.

On a motion by Commissioner Rasmussen, with support by Commissioner Lipe, and carried by all, the Planning Commission approves and recommends the adoption of amendments to the Zoning Ordinance in the form attached hereto as Attachment I with a review by the City's attorney of the technical changes Commissioner Miner requested. The Planning Commission on July 23, 2015, after a public hearing on said date, approved recommending adoption of the amendments by a vote of six (6) yeas and two (2) nays.

Those voting in favor were Commissioners Lipe, Hill, Rasmussen, Sturr, Chamberlain and Hill.

Those voting against were Commissioners Bergstrom and Miner.

VIII. New Business

A. Consideration of reappointing Commissioners to the following offices:

Chair – Jim Scales
Vice Chair – Tom Sturr
Secretary – Tom Mester

On a motion by Commissioner Rasmussen, with support by Commissioner Hill, and carried by all, the above Commissioners were appointed to their respective positions.

IX. Findings of Fact. There were no Findings of Fact.

X. City Manager's Report. There was no City Manager's Report.

XI. Miscellaneous Items. There were no Miscellaneous Items.

XII. Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.