

MINUTES
November 8, 2016 – 5:30 p.m.
Planning and Zoning Commission
Muscatine City Hall
City Council Chambers

Present: John Sayles, Jodi Hansen, Gary Mowl, and Steve Nienhaus.

Excused: Rochelle Conway and Jordan Pahl.

Staff: Andrew Fangman, City Planner, Community Development
Stephanie Oien, Office Coordinator, Community Development

Also: Luke Meeker, George Granberg, Jerry and Linda Page, Keith Brookhart, Vern Wilson, Chris and Vicky Jasiotta, Doug Holliday, Ken LaRue, Kim and Kirk Latta, and Jason Hurlbut.

Acting Chairperson Jodi Hansen opened the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

Minutes: Staff reported that minutes from the previous meeting were not complete and would be brought to the next meeting.

Rezoning:

Rezoning Case #Z-143-16 – Muscatine Downtown Investors LLC (Tom & Ann Meeker) – 610 Maiden Lane (former Washington Elementary School) – R-3 Single Family Residential to S-1 Special Development District Luke Meeker, 1410 Mulberry Avenue, was present to discuss the request. Mr. Meeker explained that they have received many inquiries about renting the gym for sports practices and exercise classes. As a result, they intend keep the one-story building comprised of the gym and four classrooms for that use. The 3-story portion of the building would be remodeled into 19 apartments. He indicated the apartments would be 800-900 square foot. John Sayles asked how many classrooms there were. Mr. Meeker replied they were approximately 24 classrooms. Sayles noted that a parking lot and 12-car garage was to be added to the site and asked where the drainage would be directed. Meeker responded that the current plan would be to use the existing drainage system. He explained that there are drains from the playground and near 8th Street that run to the alley. Sayles mentioned the access off 8th Street. Meeker replied that this access would be used for the dwelling units only. Sayles asked if they would widen current 8th Street access. Meeker responded that the plan was to enter off 8th Street and exit on Maiden Lane, although he thought widening the 8th Street access and making it two-way may work the best. Sayles indicated that a portion of the 8th Street access goes across a city-owned parcel. City Planner Andrew Fangman explained that this will need to be addressed. Fangman indicated that the city would likely look to sell the property to adjacent property owners. Sayles indicated that the school opened in 1973 and that the zoning ordinance required two off-street parking spaces per classroom. This is not the case with this school. He asked if there was a variance on file. Fangman did not have an immediate answer about the variance, however stated that the parking requirements in the S-1 Zoning District would be determined by the development plan. Sayles didn't see a parking issue for the dwellings but there may be a possible concern about the gym. Wendi Ingram asked what the occupancy limit was for the gym. Fangman replied that was unknown at meeting time but the Commission could add a recommendation to Council if there was a concern. Jodi Hansen asked if the developer had given any consideration to times the gym would be open. Meeker replied they hadn't set anything but expected it to be used by sports teams and for fitness instruction.

Jerry Page, 615 Maiden Lane, stated that there were not 28 parking spaces Broadway Street as indicated by the map. Sayles replied that he counted 27 spaces from the first pavement marking to 8th Street. Mr. Page voiced concerns about how difficult exiting onto Maiden Lane may be due to the contour of the land. Page also wanted to know if the catch basins tied into the city storm sewer.

Keith Brookhart, 607 Maiden Lane, voiced concerns about parking and security lighting. Mr. Brookhart explained that one of the security lights faces directly into their front window. He asked that the lights be directed downward. Meeker responded that they wanted to be good neighbors and would redirect lights. Brookhart questioned if the former school would return to a polling place. Fangman advised that would be a decision for the Muscatine County Auditor.

Brookhart asked if the restrooms and locker rooms would be left in place. Meeker replied that they planned to leave the gym facilities with little modification, however they would have to add larger equipment for use by adults.

Vern Wilson, 606 W. 8th Street, stated that Meekers build quality merchandise and he wasn't opposed to the project but had questions. Mr. Wilson asked if there would be a curfew for the gym use, citing concerns about the "neighborhood going downhill". Wilson also stated that he counted 85 parking spaces on the plan submitted. He thought this indicated future development and would be sold off. He also asked for a definition of "young professionals", a term that was used in the apartment description. He voiced concerns about the 8th Street access. He thought this would be a large traffic concern. He strongly suggested the use of a one-way access off 8th Street and one-way exit onto Maiden Lane. Meeker responded that the lower parking lots will be used for the 19 apartments and the rest of the parking would be for the gym. Meeker stated that they are purchasing this property to keep it as they are in the rental business. He added that there would no low rent housing units. He explained that their rental market is for younger people starting entry level professional jobs such as Hon, Monsanto, etc.

Vicky Jasiotta, 609 W. 8th Street, asked if there would be protection for lights shining in houses at the 8th Street access. Meeker replied that they were open to fencing or screening. Chris Jasiotta, 609 W. 8th Street, stated that he was not opposed to the project and wants to see the property used. He asked what the median rent would be. Meeker estimated the \$700 range. Mr. Jasiotta also asked for a curfew for functions in the gym citing that the property is surrounded by single-family homes. He also stated that 80-90 feet of their property backs up to the Meeker property and he wants a privacy fence installed because he doesn't want to look at the garages and parking lot. He also voiced concerns about traffic on 8th Street and asked if any thought had been given to a drive off Maiden Lane. Meeker restated that he thought widening the 8th Street access for two-way traffic may be the best option. Meeker also noted that the traffic flow might not be as congested with this use rather than the school. Sayles asked Mr. Jasiotta what a reasonable curfew was. He replied that 10 p.m. may be acceptable. Mr. Jasiotta noted that the plan indicates gym usage of 25-30 people. Meeker responded that this is merely an estimate. He advised that the gym is small and he didn't think there would be many more people than that.

Mr. Wilson speculated that Commission members had their minds made up about this project and that they most likely weren't going to listen to the citizens' concerns before making their decision. Hansen replied that the Commission is made up of citizens who are not paid for their service. She added that their decisions are based on input received at the meeting. Wilson reiterated his concerns about safety on 8th Street.

Keith Brookhart asked if the 8th Street access would be wide enough to accommodate fire and ambulance services. Fangman replied that prior to construction a site plan review is required. Staff from the fire department will be part of this review.

Mrs. Jasiotta asked how many people there would be in each apartment. She also stated that she would like to see a curfew of 9:00 p.m. set so that people could be gone by 10:00 p.m. Meeker replied that the apartments would be mostly 1-2 bedroom units. He estimated 1-2 people per unit.

Fangman explained to the group that the Commission has the power to make recommendations to Council with conditions to address concerns, such as maximum occupancy, access, hours, traffic, etc. Mr. Jasiotta asked how they would find out what was said to Council and do they have to attend. Fangman advised that after the Commission makes a decision it would be submitted to City Council. He added that there would be public hearings at the Council level as well. He stated that once approved by Council, the Commission recommendations would then become law. Mrs. Jasiotta asked how they would know if their concerns were passed on the Council. Fangman responded that Council would get a staff report that would give that information. He also encouraged the residents to attend the Council meetings and express any concerns they may have. Mr. Meeker indicated that he would gladly meet with anyone on site to address their concerns.

Jerry Page asked if the City's traffic committee would be involved. Fangman stated that he would take the traffic concerns raised to the next meeting.

Sayles stated that it seemed the Commission was fine with the rezoning request and asked if they should take action on that item alone and revisit the development plan. He thought Meeker may want to take the feedback received and make modifications. Fangman replied that, in terms of timing on the project, it may be better for Council to keep the rezoning and development plan considerations together and move them forward all at once. Steve Nienhaus asked if there was a need for a traffic study to be done. Nienhaus speculated that there would be a lot less traffic with no school. Fangman noted that after the school closed the traffic light from Roscoe Avenue was removed and there hadn't been any

concerns received. He indicated that there used to be complaints about parents stacking up in the area during pick up and drop off times. Mr. Jasiotta stated that adding a private lane would add more traffic and thought it should be looked at further. Sayles replied that he didn't say the development plan should be approved as is but suggested approval with conditions attached.

After much discussion, Steve Nienhaus motioned to table the item; seconded by Gary Mowl. All ayes, motion carried. John Sayles motioned to set a special meeting on Tuesday, November 22, to discuss and take action on the item; seconded by Nienhaus. All ayes, motion carried.

Rezoning Case #Z-144-16 – Kenneth & Dana LaRue, Non-Emergency Medical Transport – 922 Hancock Street – R-3 Single Family Residential to S-2 Institutional Office

Kenneth and Dana LaRue were present to discuss the request. They own and operate Non-Emergency Transport. They indicated that they need office space and propose to construct a building large enough to house 15-20 vehicles. Mrs. LaRue stated that she spoke with many neighbors in the area and no concerns had been expressed. Sayles asked what they anticipated the proposed building would look like. Mr. LaRue replied that he was planning for a 60'x80 or 100' nice pole barn. He said they would need it to be tall enough for a 14-foot entrance. He added that they would like to acquire a vehicle much like a MuscaBus to transport veterans to the VA. Mrs. LaRue advised that they plan to use the existing church building for office space. She added that as they develop the property they may move the office to the storage building and turn the former church into their residence. They advised that they transport senior citizens and handicap persons to and from medical appointments and family activities. Currently, they use their home for an office and rent parking spaces for their vehicles. Ingram asked if their access would be off Hancock Street or Isett Avenue. Mrs. LaRue stated that the property currently has a gravel lot off Hancock that will be used initially. She indicated that their busiest times would be from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday through Friday and most of the traffic would be employees picking up and dropping off work vehicles. Fangman noted that this a good reuse of the property. Sayles motioned to approve the request; seconded by Ingram. All ayes, motion carried.

Development Plan

3005 Harmony Court – Muscatine Downtown Investors LLC (Tom and Ann Meeker) – 5.4 Acres – Proposed Development Plan would allow for: the existing building to be converted into a six unit apartment building, the construction of a 4 unit apartment building, construction of 6 duplexes, and the construction of a private driveway accessing Fulliam Avenue.

Luke Meeker was present to discuss the request. Mr. Meeker advised that all new construction would be developed as condos. Fangman relayed that staff had received a call wondering what the target market was for the units. Meeker replied that they were looking at the \$180,000-200,000 range. He added that senior living would be good based on the walkability to area facilities.

Kim Latta, who owns 1707 Duncan Drive, asked how many bedrooms each unit would have; would the units be rentals or sold; low rent housing? Ms. Latta advised that her handicap son lives at the residence. Meeker replied that the four- and six-plex buildings would be two bedroom rentals in the \$900 range. There will be no low rent housing units. Ms. Latta asked if they if traffic would increase when they changed the access to Fulliam Avenue and closed Harmony Court. She also asked if sidewalks would be installed. Fangman responded that the Houser Street/Fulliam Avenue intersection is being addressed at the Council level. Meeker advised that a condition of the sale with Muscatine County is that Harmony Court will stop at the property line. Kirk Latta also voiced concerns about gaps in the sidewalks on Fulliam Avenue. Fangman responded that the City has developed a sidewalk gap program and that this is an area that can be addressed.

Jason Hurlburt, 1800 Duncan Drive, asked if the duplexes would be subdivided out and if that use was allowed with the zoning. Fangman replied that the property would remain one parcel. He added that the access off Fulliam Avenue would be a private drive. He explained that this property is located in an S-3 district and all uses must be approved with a development plan. Mr. Hurlbut stated that he was concerned about storm water management. He explained that the area shown currently drains very slowly near his house and pools sometimes. Fangman noted that development will have to go through a site plan review process with staff. Drainage would have to be addressed at that time.

Mowl motioned to approve the request; seconded by Sayles. All ayes, motion carried.

Adjourn.

Respectfully Submitted,

Andrew Fangman, Secretary
City Planner

ATTEST:

Jodi Hansen, Acting Chairperson
Planning & Zoning Commission