

MINUTES
February 12, 2019 – 5:30 p.m.
Planning and Zoning Commission
Muscatine City Hall
City Council Chambers

Present: Andrew Anderson, Jodi Hansen, Wendi Ingram, Robert McFadden, Steve Nienhaus, and John Sayles

Excused: Rochelle Conway

Staff: Andrew Fangman, City Planner, Community Development
Lindsay Whitson, Community Development Coordinator, Community Development

Chairperson Jodi Hansen opened the meeting at 5:30 p.m. and read the Mission Statement.

Minutes:

Andrew Anderson motioned to approve the minutes submitted for the January 8, 2019 meeting; seconded by Wendi Ingram. All ayes, motion carried.

Other:

Request from City Council for a recommendation from the Planning and Zoning Commission on a change to parking lot surfacing standards, continued discussion from the December 11, 2018 meeting

Andrew Fangman explained the request from City Council is in reference to City Code Section 10-27-8, which states the standards for all parking lots, garages, drive lines, and driveways is to be hard surfaced with materials such as cement or asphalt. The section lists surfacing materials that are not permitted including gravel and also states that other types of hard surfacing, that are not specifically prohibited, may be permitted with approval by the City Engineer. Fangman explained the current code was largely adopted in order to help the area comply with federal air quality standards. Fangman shared what information was included in the Commission member's packets including;

1. The hard surfacing code for approximately 30 other communities in eastern Iowa and western Illinois
2. A list of grandfathered graveled parking lots in Muscatine
3. A list of parking lots constructed in the last six years in Muscatine and the material used
4. A letter from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) addressing Muscatine's status on non-attainment in the 1980's

Santos Saucedo, 3 Nelson Dr, was present to discuss the request. Saucedo explained that the proposed change is an attempt to stay consistent and have all comparable businesses have the same requirements for hard surfacing, regardless of when their parking lots were constructed. Saucedo is requesting that gravel be allowed for only areas that are utilized for semi-trailer and industrial equipment storage in M-1 and M-2 zoned districts. Saucedo expressed concerns that grandfathered businesses are allowed to get away with expanding the lots with gravel even though they are not supposed too, but new businesses are held to the code standards. As a result, some businesses have and may decide to not locate in the City of Muscatine. Saucedo stated that he is open to a discussion about alternative ideas. He noted that he liked the ordinance implemented by the City of Oskaloosa with reference to an Industrial District.

John Sayles noted that no permits are needed for the construction of parking lots but inquired about the site plan protocol. Mr. Fangman said that when a site plan is required, documentation of what hard surface materials will be use is required. This led to discussion about whether more stringent site plan review guidelines should be adopted by the City and that all businesses should be required to complete the site plan review process.

Robert McFadden stated that he believes allowing gravel parking lots in town will lead to dust in the air, requiring residents in town to keep their windows closed. McFadden asked Saucedo what the city and its residents gain by changing the hard surfacing requirements. Saucedo stated that a new business can buy land in Muscatine and spend more money for hard surfacing or they can move a few miles away where there are no hard surfacing requirements. He knows of at least one business that has moved elsewhere due to the hard surfacing requirements in Muscatine. Saucedo stated that yes there are rules in regards to water and dust for grandfathered properties, but that they are not regulated.

John Sayles mentioned that if we allowed gravel for storage areas, we would then need to identify what is considered storage. Fangman agreed that the City would need to identify how many days would be allowed keep a truck trailer and/or equipment, and how many days and beyond would be considered storing the equipment.

The Commission then discussed the idea of having requests sent to the Zoning Board of Adjustments on a case-by-case basis. This would allow the Zoning Board of Adjustment to issue a conditional use permit if deemed reasonable and appropriate conditions. Fangman noted that taking this action is a possibility.

Andrew Anderson asked if City staff could provide hard surfacing codes for cities nationwide, rather than just regionally. Fangman said that City staff could provide such information at the next Planning and Zoning Commission meeting.

To conclude, the Commission requested that for the next meeting City staff provide the following;

1. Nation-wide hard-surfacing code samples, especially some that do allow gravel in industrial areas
2. A sample proposal outlining what the hard surfacing code would look like with gravel allowed in M-1 and M-2 districts and different alternatives if any

Review of the proposed Fiscal Years 2020 through 2024 Capital Improvement Plan. The Commission will make any desired changes and then act on a recommendation to City Council

Ms. Whitson provided a presentation with a brief overview of what a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is, the benefits of having a CIP, and scoring criteria utilized to score each project. Ms. Whitson requested that the Commission review the CIP prior to next month's meeting and come with any edits and/or questions. A draft copy of the CIP was distributed to the Commission electronically one week prior to the meeting.

Meeting adjourned.

ATTEST:

Respectfully Submitted,

Jodi Hansen, Chairperson
Planning & Zoning Commission

Andrew Fangman, Secretary
City Planner