

**VILLAGE OF SPARTA  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
Regular Meeting  
September 6, 2022 @ 7:00 PM  
75 N. Union St. (Sparta Civic Center)**

Present: Acting Chairman Gary Moody, Robert Carlstrom, Emilie Henry, Robert Whalen, Jon Braybrook, Ryan Wolford, Betty VanPatten.

Also present: Village Manager Shay Gallagher, Village Clerk Katy Shelton, and Fire Department Chief Dan Olney.

Absent: Bob Liscombe and Rose Frederick.

- 1) **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited at that time.
- 2) **ROLL CALL:** Formal roll call was taken. Those in attendance/absent are noted above.
- 3) **MINUTES**
  - a. Approve Regular Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of August 1, 2022  
It was noted by Commissioner Carlstrom that he voted “No” on item 8a (Ordinance 22-11) during the August 1, 2022 Planning Commission meeting. With that correction, motion by Whalen with a second by Carlstrom to approve the minutes of August 1, 2022. Motion passed unanimously.
  - b. Approve Special Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of August 10, 2022. Motion by VanPatten with a second by Whalen to approve the minutes. Motion passed unanimously.
- 4) **ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA – APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** none
- 5) **PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:** John Pierzchala, 39 W Division, asked about the zoning change at 36 Elmwood.
- 6) **COMMUNICATIONS:**
  - a. Code Enforcement Report – August 2022: Several commission members made comments about the Code Enforcement Officer’s recent job performance. It was noted that “blight” and “inoperable vehicles” are the most common infractions. The question was asked whether it would be possible to include links on code violation letters and postcards referencing the applicable codes. Commissioner Carlstrom asked about standardizing what happens when someone receives a notice as far as procedures and time frames.
- 7) **PUBLIC HEARING:**
  - a. Rezoning Request: 36 Elmwood St NW:  
Public hearing opened at 7:07pm.  
36 Elmwood ST NW (Sparta Fire Station) currently has split zoning with the portion of the parcel that fronts N State St zoned GC and the portion that fronts Elmwood zoned R-2. In an effort to simplify the zoning map, Sparta staff has proposed to rezone the entire parcel to GC. The Township and Fire Department support this.

John Pierzchaia, 39 W Division, spoke against this. He feels that the number of houses with children in this area makes rezoning the parcel unsafe. He doesn't understand why it needs to change from residential to commercial.

Ricky Johnson, 29 Centennial, also asked questions about the rezoning.

Public hearing closed at 7:21pm.

8) NEW BUSINESS:

- a. Ordinance 22-12 – An Ordinance to Rezone 36 Elmwood St. NW from split zoning, R-2/GC, to General Commercial: Motion by VanPatten with a second by Braybrook to recommend to the Village Council to go ahead with this rezoning. Motion passed unanimously.
- b. Site Plan Review 36 Elmwood St. NW: The Sparta Fire Department is proposing an addition to the existing facility which also includes an additional driveway. The Village Engineer, Prein and Newhof, has reviewed both the site plan and the storm water calculations. Robert Andrus, from Andrus Architecture, was here to address concerns and answer questions. Motion by VanPatten with a second by Wolford, to give conditional approval to move forward with these plans. Motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Whalen thanked Fire Department Chairman Olney for everything he's done with the Fire Department.
- c. Updated Special Land Uses – R-1, R-2, GC, and CBD: While not a major concern currently, this will give the Village additional flexibility and ensure that the Village meets all zoning requirements. The consensus of the Commission was that this is a good idea.
- d. Adult-Use Recreational Marijuana Special Land Use Discussion: The Village needs to update its Special Land Use requirement to reflect the zoning restrictions related to adult use recreational dispensaries. A sample draft regulatory ordinance which lays out the application procedure was provided to Commission members. Commissioners discussed the feasibility of adding other licenses now – in addition to just allowing dispensaries. The Village Manager stated that it's very important to only allow one site plan revision at a time for potential dispensaries because of time constraints. He also stated that as we move through this recreational marijuana process, it will involve one or two public hearings on the Planning Commission level and then one or two public hearings on the Village Council level.

The consensus of the Commission was to move forward on this issue.

9) UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- a. None.

10) PUBLIC COMMENT:

Linda Gary, 3282 E 128<sup>th</sup> St Grant, commented. She said that she owns several rental properties in Sparta. She had several criticisms of the Code Enforcement Officer's job performance. She asked that there be a codified manner in which violations are handled.

Ricky Johnson, 29 Centennial, said that Code Enforcement is not being handled properly or uniformly. He asked that the Village concentrate on the major items first and then deal with smaller issues. He also asked that violation notices include a link to exactly which ordinances are being violated.

11) VILLAGE MANAGER REPORT: Village Manager Gallagher updated the Commission on the ZBA meeting on Hickory, the GSB road treatment, spot street repairs, the Head start building

on the north side of town, awarding of the sanitary flow tracking project, and various railroad track crossing projects.

12) COMMISSION COMMENT: Commissioners Whalen and Wolford both stated that they want the Code Enforcement Officer to slow things down and concentrate on just the major violations right now.

13) ADJOURNMENT: meeting adjourned by acting Chairman Gary Moody at 8:35pm.

Submitted by Katy Shelton, Village Clerk.