PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES – CITY OF INVER GROVE HEIGHTS

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 – 7:00 p.m.
City Council Chambers – 8150 Barbara Avenue

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Weber called the Planning Commission Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present:	Jonathan Weber *(Chair)* Trisha Presley *(Secretary)* Jason Teiken Lance Twedt Aida Schaefer Dennis Wippermann
Commissioners Absent:	Scott Clancy *(Vice-Chair)* – excused Robert Heidenreich – *excused* Amy Hunting – *excused*
Staff Present:	Heather Botten, Associate Planner Stacy Bodsberg, Community Development Support Specialist

3. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes of the June 4, 2024, Planning Commission Meeting.

Motion by Teiken, Second by Presley, to approve the minutes as corrected.
Ayes: 6
Nays: 0 Motion Carried.

4. PUBLIC HEARING

A. Ordinance Amendment to Title 10 of the City Code (Zoning Regulations) specifically Chapter 2, Section 10-2-2, Chapter 9C, Section 10-9C-1, Chapter 9C, Section 10-9C-2, Chapter 9C, Section 10-9C-3, Chapter 13, Article J, Section 10-13J-5, and Chapter 15 relating to regulations for multiple family districts. (City of Inver Grove Heights – Case No. 24-17X) *Tabled Action from the June 4, 2024, Planning Commission Meeting.*

Reading of Public Notice

Secretary Presley read the Public Hearing Notice.

Presentation of Request

Associate Planner Botten presented a summary of the staff report.

The proposals in the ordinance update the City's multi-family zoning regulations, including aligning density guiding with the Comprehensive Plan, consolidating performance standards, making multi-family housing a permitted rather than conditional use in multi-family zoning districts, and allowing for mixed unit types in the Northwest Area Overlay District (consistent with the Comprehensive Plan).

Commissioner Teiken inquired about the approval process for the ordinance updates. Botten stated that due to the size of the amendment, there would be three readings of the ordinance updates before the City Council. Depending on the Council's decision, the ordinance would be published and subsequently take effect if approved.

Commissioner Schaefer inquired about the rationale for reducing the parking requirement from 2.5 to 2 parking stalls per unit and adding 1 visitor stall for every 6 units. Botten stated that staff analyzed parking at multi-family developments in six nearby cities and found that 2 stalls plus guest parking exceeds what a lot of apartment/townhome developers are looking for. Schaefer mentioned larger events being a potential issue and inquired if street parking would be generally permitted. Botten confirmed except for specifically posted parking limitations. A lot of multi-family developments allow parking on at least one side of the street.

Commissioner Wippermann inquired about the rationale for reducing the enclosed parking stall requirements and that it's visually less appealing to have cars on the street. Botten stated that single-family homes have no requirement for enclosed parking, and that there would still be one enclosed stall required for multi-family housing developments.

Commissioner Wippermann inquired about the rationale for changing conditional use to permitted use. Botten stated that conditional use can mislead people into thinking an allowed use project can be denied, which is not the case; for multi-family areas, apartments or townhomes are the primary use. Therefore, they should be designated permitted use rather than conditional use. During the site plan review process, conditions can still be added.

Opening of Public Hearing

Kris Wilson, City Administrator, responded to Commissioner Teiken's earlier question about the approval process. She said that under City Code, an ordinance that has had a public hearing before the Planning Commission only requires one reading before the City Council. While the City Council could ask for more research or more readings, it is possible that they could approve it after one reading.

Chair Weber closed the Public Hearing.

Planning Commission Discussion

Commissioner Schaefer stated that the proposed ordinance contains many changes and would prefer a deeper understanding of all the implications.

Commissioner Wippermann stated that he agrees with most of the proposed ordinance changes but feels like the city is giving up a lot of say. He is not in favor of approving.

Commissioner Teiken stated that he was in favor of moving the ordinance forward, the changes are in line with the Comprehensive Plan's attempt to provide more housing supply and variety. The reduction of half a parking stall does not strike him as radical. Ridesharing and carpooling have become more popular as a strategy to address parking concerns for the occasional large event.

Commissioner Presley stated that she agrees with Commissioner Teiken.

Commissioner Schaefer commented that public transit in the area is not yet robust enough to be an effective alternative to driving. The impression of an area is negatively impacted when there is inadequate parking.

Commissioner Presley questioned what the ordinance's reduction in parking stalls would look like for a hypothetical 100-unit development. Botten stated that there would be 50 fewer resident stalls; however, there would be close to an added 20 guest stalls with the new guest stall requirement. Presley stated that those guest parking stalls could help alleviate any potential shortage in larger events, in addition to unused resident stalls.

Commissioner Schaefer stated that parking stalls for residents and guests would be different.

Chair Weber inquired about a specific local development in the Northwest Area. Botten stated that for the Northwest Area, developers only need to meet a certain percentage of the parking requirement, and even so, they ask for variances to decrease the parking requirement.

Commissioner Schaefer stated that developers can always request a variance to reduce the parking, but the City cannot request developers to provide parking above the required minimum.

Chair Weber questioned that the parking minimum cannot be raised for a specific project. Botten confirmed that it cannot.

Chair Weber inquired about the six other cities analyzed. Botten stated that City Planner Hunting did the analysis and found that developers in Inver Grove are similar to those in the studied cities. Some cities are considering removing parking requirements entirely.

Chair Weber stated that in Rosemount, there are lower parking requirements, and he has noticed that the lots still have plenty of empty stalls. The discrepancies between the City Code and the Comprehensive Plan create issues for staff, the Commission, and developers; and is in favor of increased clarity.

Commissioner Twedt stated that he is generally in favor of simplifying City Code.

Planning Commission Recommendation

Motion by Twedt, Second by Teiken, to approve the proposed Ordinance Amendment.
Ayes: 4
Nays: 2 (Schaefer, Wippermann) Motion Carried.

The item is tentatively scheduled to go before the City Council on July 8, 2024.

5. REGULAR BUSINESS

Associate Planner Botten stated that the originally scheduled Planning Commission meeting for Tuesday, July 2, 2024, has been cancelled.

6. ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Will Clashe, Recording Secretary.