

**MINUTES  
CITY OF AMES  
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**

Date: July 20, 2016	Debra Lee, Chairperson	2018
	*Matt Converse, Vice Chairperson	2018
Call to Order: 7:00 PM	Carlton Basmajian	2017
	Rob Bowers	2018
Place: Ames City Hall Council Chambers	Doug Ragaller	2019
	Yvonne Wannemuehler	2018
Adjournment: 10:11 PM	*Absent	

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CALL TO ORDER: Debra Lee, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

MOTION: (Wannemuehler/Ragaller) to approve the July 20, 2016 meeting agenda

*MOTION PASSED: (5-0)*

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF July 6, 2016:

MOTION: (Bowers/Ragaller) to approve the July 6, 2016 meeting minutes

*MOTION PASSED: (5-0)*

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PUBLIC FORUM: There were no public comments.

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**PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE MAJOR SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN AMENDMENT TO BUILDING ENTRIES FOR 3505 AND 3515 LINCOLN WAY (WALNUT RIDGE)**

Case Planner Karen Marren reported the City Council approved a Major Site Development Plan for the subject properties in September 2015 to allow for construction of a commercial and residential mixed-use development. Turn Key Investments, LLC and Chuck Winkleblack, the property owners, requested approval of an amendment to the approved site plan to include two small additions for exiting the building to address *Americans with Disabilities* code requirements for stairwells. Staff recommended approval of the amendment.

There were no comments from the Commission, the applicant, or the public.

MOTION: (Wannemuehler/Ragaller) to accept **Alternative #1**, which states: that the Planning and Zoning Commission can recommend that the City Council **approve** the Major Site Development Plan Amendment for 3505 and 3515 Lincoln Way to allow for the proposed new building additions to meet code requirements for two stairways.

*MOTION PASSED: (5-0)*

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## **PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE MAJOR SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR 5310 MORTENSEN ROAD**

GW Land Holdings, LLC requested approval of a Major Site Development Plan for development of 15 three-story, 12-unit apartment buildings and one clubhouse (180 total units). Planning and Housing Director Kelly Diekmann reviewed previous rezoning and platting. This project is the first phase of medium-density residential development located south of a planned extension of Mortensen Road, with low density residential housing planned for the north side. Mr. Diekmann highlighted several plan features, including its desirable one- to three-bedroom configurations, open space and common area amenities, internalized parking, and landscaping and screening. The developer asked to modify parking lot landscaping to address parking islands that do not meet minimum dimensions—staff supported the permitted request. Building elevations and architectural features were reviewed. The project also includes a clubhouse—staff supported its design and location—that required adoption of a Zoning Text Amendment [a subsequent agenda item] in order to be included in the approved Major Site Plan for the development.

Carlton Basmajian asked if the plan featured covered parking stalls. Mr. Diekmann indicated the project will include a combination of fully enclosed garages and uncovered parking.

Alex Galyon, GW Land Holdings, LLC, 121 North Russell Avenue, commented on the project's focus on one- and two-bedroom units as well as several features intended to add to a sense of community, e.g., clubhouse, pond, dog park and dog wash facilities. He also thought the planned screening along Highway 30 would add to the project.

There were no public comments.

Mr. Basmajian asked for clarification on the parking island landscaping. Mr. Diekmann displayed an exhibit showing the proposed parking islands and outlined how the total proposed parking lot landscaping configuration and effect meets the ordinance intent and requirements.

**MOTION:** (Ragaller/Bowers) to accept **Alternative #1**: that the Planning and Zoning Commission can recommend that the City Council **approve** the Major Site Development Plan for the proposed site and 15 apartment buildings with the following conditions:

- A. That the parking island as requested by the applicant be accepted as meeting the intent of the ordinance based on size and location toward the required internal parking lot landscaping requirement.
- B. That additional landscape requirements as conceptually shown on the site plan be finalized with staff prior to City Council approval.
- C. That a site plan and proposed use of Outlot A be approved prior to issuance of certificate of occupancy of any apartment building.
- D. Approval is conditioned upon approval of the Clubhouse Text Amendment.

**MOTION PASSED:** (5-0)

Mr. Diekmann indicated this item would appear on the August 9 City Council meeting agenda.

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**PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE LAND USE POLICY PLAN MINOR MAP AMENDMENT FOR THE 2700 BLOCK OF LINCOLN WAY, BETWEEN HYLAND AVE. AND SHELDON AVE.**

Case Planner Karen Marren reviewed the existing zoning and current and proposed Land Use Policy Plan (LUPP) designations for the seven subject properties located south of Lincoln Way and between Hyland Avenue and Sheldon Avenue. The proposal to amend the designated land use to Downtown Service Center is the first step in the process to allow mixed use commercial and residential development. Preliminary information from the developer describes a potential six-story building with commercial uses on first floor, including a hotel, along with multi-family residential housing above. Ms. Marren noted that the existing property uses (convenience store, restaurant, coffee shop, nail salon, and apartments) are not aligned with the current low-density residential LUPP designation. The intent of the amendment is to extend the Campustown district further west, stopping at Hyland Avenue. Additional future reviews would include development intensity, infrastructure capacities, traffic, design details, impact on surrounding properties, and discussion with neighborhood residents. Staff recommended approval of the LUPP amendment to allow the developer to move forward with the project.

Carlton Basmajian asked if the current low-density residential land use designation had ever been reviewed since its inception. Kelly Diekmann, Planning and Housing Director, indicated the RL designation dates to 1997 and had not been examined or adjusted since. He noted the properties are located on the eastern edge of Focus Area 4 as identified in the initial evaluation period of the Lincoln Corridor Plan. Assessments of the subject site concluded it could be examined independent of the rest of the Focus Area because it could be viewed as a large-scale project to extend Campustown to the west. Other properties in the Focus Area would only have smaller-scale medium- or higher-density structures.

Yvonne Wannemuehler voiced concern about large-scale development exacerbating parking problems in the area and noted concerns from neighborhood residents. Mr. Diekmann reviewed parking ratio standards and acknowledged the issue of transitioning to neighboring properties if Campustown Service Center parking allowances were applied on the edge of Campustown. Debra Lee agreed with the general concern about the potential impact on neighborhoods to the west. She asked for information about the utilization of the intermodal parking facility located in the western portion of Campustown. Mr. Diekmann reviewed parking options available at the intermodal facility. Leased spaces are fully occupied and metered spaces are usually available.

Chuck Winkleblack, Hunziker Companies, 105 South 16<sup>th</sup> Street, appeared representing River Caddis Development. He stated the developers are acutely aware of the importance of parking as a component of a successful project. Noting future opportunities for examination of this and other issues, he urged approval of staff's recommendation to approve the land use amendment.

Mr. Basmajian was hesitant to separate the proposed project from the Lincoln Corridor Plan, although he guessed the area would ultimately be marked for high-density development. He preferred to wait to see if other options for the site would be found by the conclusion of the study period later in 2016. Mr. Diekmann reviewed previous staff, City Council, and Lincoln Corridor consultant assessments that concluded that the proposed development on the subject site would not impact other recommendations for the Focus Area. He added that staff supported the proposed Minor LUPP Amendment because the applicant had multiple public neighborhood meetings and the area had already been defined as an area of potential change via the Lincoln Corridor Plan. The developer wished to have rezoning and the project details fleshed out by August/September, he noted.

Doug Ragaller saw the proposed development as a natural progression congruent with growth of Iowa State University, i.e., expanded University requires expanded Campustown.

Ms. Lee cited her tendency to be protective of neighborhoods. In this case, she identified two key decision factors: (1) Downtown Service Center designation more closely fits what is already there, and it is hard to picture low-density residential ever being appropriate at that location; and (2) high-density development near Campustown is preferable to building on the edge of town.

Mr. Basmajian generally agreed but repeated his concern about timing and where the line is drawn. He asked if this was true planning or reacting to a developer who purchased land. In his view, the subject area is more of a transition area and unlike the Campustown core. The land use change would enable construction of a six-story building adjacent single-family housing. He thought a more gradual transition in building scale and density would be ideal.

MOTION: (Bowers/Ragaller) to accept **Alternative #1**, which states: that the Planning and Zoning Commission can recommend that the City Council **approve** an amendment to the LUPP Future Land Use Map to change the land use designation of approximately 1.8 acres of land located at 2700, 2702, 2718 and 2728 Lincoln Way, 112 and 114 South Hyland Avenue, and 115 South Sheldon Avenue, from Low Density Residential to Downtown Services Center.

*MOTION PASSED: (4-1) Opposed: Basmajian*

Mr. Diekmann indicated this item would appear on the August 9 City Council meeting agenda.

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**ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT TO ALLOW CLUBHOUSES IN THE FS-RM ZONING DISTRICT**  
Planning and Housing Director Kelly Diekmann stated staff supported clubhouses as an allowed use in the Suburban Residential Medium Density zoning district because it would allow for diversification in these areas and would be subject to Major Site Plan public review processes.

Carlton Basmajian asked why clubhouses had been previously excluded as an allowed use. Mr. Diekmann cited recent demand for FS-RM development, better definition of expectations for that type of development, and ebbs and flows in market interest in clubhouse amenities.

Doug Ragaller asked for staff feedback on a letter to the Commission from Scott Renaud, FOX Engineering Associates, Inc., written in support of the proposed amendment yet critical of its limitations. Mr. Renaud favored additional allowances for maintenance facilities and maximum units allowed in FS-RM development. Mr. Diekmann said there did not seem to be a need for public outreach, as Mr. Renaud had argued, because adopted standards exist. A full review of FS-RM zoning standards would require City Council prioritization of staff's work plan. The proposed text amendment reflected a response to an immediate need from a submitted project.

Debra Lee asked if clubhouses could be added to existing FS-RM developments retroactively. Mr. Diekmann thought most existing FS-RM projects would probably not pursue the option, but it would be available.

There were no public comments.

MOTION: (Wannemuehler/Bowers) to accept **Alternative #1**, which states: that the Planning and Zoning Commission can recommend that the City Council **adopt** the proposed amendment to allow a clubhouse as an accessory use within the FS-RM zoning district subject to approval of a Major Site Development Plan.

**ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT TO THE CAMPUSTOWN SERVICE CENTER ZONING DISTRICT STANDARDS FOR FIRST FLOOR COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL USES**

Kelly Diekmann, Planning and Housing Director, explained how the proposed amendment related to the development project located along the 2700 block of Lincoln Way that includes a ground-level residential component. Current Campustown zoning does not permit household living (read: apartments) on the ground floor; instead, residential components are required to be above commercial uses. The proposed amendment included two related components: (1) a hotel component with apartment units located above; or, (2) if no hotel, the ability to include residential units on the ground floor of the Hyland Avenue side of the project. Without approval of the text amendment, the developer would be required to include commercial uses along all street frontages on Sheldon Avenue, Lincoln Way, and Hyland Avenue. This standard in the Campustown Service Center (CSC) zoning district is critical, he said, because any changes considered for the subject site could be applied elsewhere in the CSC district. Campustown is based on street-level pedestrian activity supporting commercial environments. It is meant to be a commercial district that allows housing, not an urban housing district.

Mr. Diekmann reviewed four options for enabling the proposed project along the 2700 block of Lincoln Way to proceed without substantially altering how Campustown development occurs.

1. Specify amount of commercial floor area based upon street frontage or lot area.
2. Allow sites with multiple street frontages to place residential uses across from another residentially-zoned site.
3. Create a residential and mixed use combining district.
4. Allow short-term lodging use on the ground floor with household living above.

Staff recommended several CSC zoning changes outlined in Alternative 1 in the staff report.

Carlton Basmajian asked why staff chose to require 70 percent non-residential site frontage to allow street level household living. Mr. Diekmann explained the figure considered a variety of projects, the impact (good or bad) from interruptions in commercial storefronts, and how it could influence development in Campustown generally.

Mr. Basmajian asked for background information on CSC zoning. Mr. Diekmann reported CSC has existed in its current form for over 10 years. Mr. Basmajian wondered if the issue of non-commercial uses on the ground floor had come up before in other CSC developments. Mr. Diekmann said an amenity building servicing several apartment buildings was developed, but there have been no other proposals involving housing on the ground level.

Mr. Diekmann and Mr. Basmajian discussed incentives and urban revitalization criteria.

Mr. Basmajian inquired about Campustown commercial vacancies and the potential effect of adding commercial space. Mr. Diekmann indicated the highest-priced space is not fully leased along Lincoln Way. He noted a history of concern about the types of commercial spaces available in Campustown and how redevelopment projects have formatted larger-scale spaces that are more difficult for small business owners to take on. The Campustown Action Association is very interested in commercial space configuration, he added. Mr. Basmajian pointed out the proposed project would eliminate several small commercial spaces. It would not necessarily result in a net loss, Mr. Diekmann said, but spaces would be configured differently.

Mr. Basmajian asked if this case could be reviewed by the Zoning Board of Adjustment to make allowances for one site without altering standards applicable to the entire CSC district. Mr. Diekmann said there would be no mechanism for a one-off variance. Option 3 (creating a residential and mixed use combining district) would provide for individual review via Commission and City Council review rather than ZBA review. The ZBA generally deals more with technical interpretations rather than design issues and neighborhood compatibility, he explained. Yvonne Wannemuehler appreciated how Option 3 could be used elsewhere. Mr. Diekmann noted that could become unpredictable and/or undermine other planning efforts. He encouraged restricting deployment of a combining district to Downtown and Campustown to prevent carte blanche mixed use development proposals in commercial areas.

Debra Lee and Mr. Diekmann discussed implications of allowing short term lodging and how it could be difficult to control or manage in some circumstances.

Chuck Winkleblack, Hunziker Companies, 105 South 16<sup>th</sup> Street, appeared representing River Caddis Development. He indicated the developer is not married to the 70 percent commercial requirement. He believed everyone agreed it would be hard for commercial uses with Hyland Avenue street frontage to be viable, and would also not transition well to residential neighbors. Ms. Wannemuehler asked if the 70 percent commercial requirement would work with the proposed project. Mr. Winkleblack indicated it would not work with the project's current design because the developer cannot count any of the hotel or hotel amenities toward the total. He said the 70 percent figure would be a challenge because the project has three street frontages.

Ms. Lee encouraged maintaining a perspective beyond a particular project. She thought the issue was how much commercial development should be encouraged to achieve the desired balance of commercial and residential uses. Mr. Diekmann agreed and stated the clear goal for Campustown is a walkable pedestrian environment lined with vital and viable commercial uses.

The purpose of CSC zoning is to promote commercial use within Campustown and prevent it from becoming an exclusive residential area, Ms. Lee stated. Mr. Diekmann agreed and said controlling commercial use is a critical piece to keep a whole district together. Otherwise, it would be likely to only see commercial uses persist on Lincoln Way, Welch Avenue, Chamberlain Street, and a few other isolated locations. The market would not automatically choose to build commercial into projects at second-tier commercial locations, he explained.

Mr. Basmajian thought Alternative 1 was a much bigger change to the underlying ordinance and asked if staff was more comfortable managing things that way. Mr. Diekmann said staff did not strongly favor one alternative or another. Doug Ragaller asked why staff recommended support of Alternative 1. Mr. Diekmann said the City traditionally puts predictable numbers into an ordinance rather than depending on more qualitative reviews to gauge appropriateness.

Mr. Diekmann summarized the options discussed as follows: Option 1 is predictable and can be operationalized. Option 2 would limit application of development without commercial uses without fundamentally changing typical Campustown development. Option 3 would remove CSC standards from consideration and require custom projects reviewed case-by-case. Option 4 related to including a hotel or not, with or without other changes.

Commission discussion ensued on how Option 2 would apply within Campustown.

MOTION: (Basmajian/Bowers) that the Planning and Zoning Commission recommend that staff to develop language to:

- a. Allow sites with multiple street frontages to place ground floor residential uses across from another residentially-zoned site.
- b. Allow for short-term lodging to be located on the ground floor and to allow household living located above.
- c. Reduce the window percentage requirement for residential facades to a minimum of 30 percent and maintain a 50 percent requirement for non-residential facades.

MOTION PASSED: (5-0)

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### **ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT FOR SMALL TRANSITIONAL GROUP LIVING**

Case Planner Karen Marren reported the City Council received a request in April 2016 from interested non-profit organizations and social service providers to create a housing use option in residential zoning districts for youth or adults needing transitional housing with in-home support. These organizations wish to diversify and distribute their services by using smaller supervised facilities instead of providing all services from a large facility. Ms. Marren reviewed the existing definition of 'family' that applies to single-family homes (any number of related people or up to three unrelated people may occupy a dwelling) and noted it would greatly restrict the number of people who could live in a supervised home. The established Group Living use listing would include transitional living facilities and would avoid the broad community implications resulting from a change to the definition of 'family' while also allowing for an occupancy limit and other regulations on how the use could function. She explained that existing zoning generally restricts Group Living and Social Service Provider uses to medium- or high-density zones, where there are typically fewer available single-family housing options.

There were no public comments.

The Commission and staff discussed the following text amendment options individually in detail.

1. *"Supervised Transitional Home" Definition.*

[STAFF] The use would be defined as a small group living residential use for purposes of assisting occupants with transitions to a long-term living environment.

[COMMISSION] Debra Lee asked if 'transitional' is a key word in the use definition. Mr. Diekmann stated the use was not intended as a permanent home of residents. Also, the use would not supersede existing use categories with more specific definitions. Ms. Wannemuehler asked what this would be used for if it is not intended for persons with developmental disabilities, or as a shelter, as examples. Mr. Diekmann cited a program for adults with dependent children as an example of a group that is not defined elsewhere in the zoning code.

2. *Zoning Districts Allowed.*

[STAFF] The use would be permitted in all residential zones.

[COMMISSION] No objections or concerns were noted by Commission members.

3. *Occupancy Allowance.*

[STAFF] The use occupancy allowance would be calculated by either the number of 'family units' occupying a dwelling, or strictly the number of occupants in the home.

[COMMISSION] Ms. Lee, Carlton Basmajian, and Ms. Wannemuehler discussed the merits and drawbacks of 'hard' and 'soft' occupancy caps and asked if there were ways to avoid being arbitrary without inviting potential complications. Mr. Diekmann illustrated how several adults with dependents could occupy a dwelling in a way that would be impractical or unacceptable with a 'soft' cap based on the number of family units. Staff favored restricting the total number of occupants. Debra Lee favored setting the limit at 8 occupants (to reduce potentially alienating neighborhoods) and seeking feedback from service providers to determine if adjustments were needed.

4. *Separation Distance to Other Supervised Transitional Homes.*

[STAFF] The use would require 500-foot separation between such transitional homes.

[COMMISSION] Ms. Lee supported separation restrictions to govern intensity and avoid creating neighborhoods that are group home focal points. Mr. Basmajian thought opening up all residential zones to this use would alleviate potential problems from requiring separation without creating more service location options for providers.

5. *Parking.*

[STAFF] The use could establish a per-bedroom parking requirement or a flat number regardless of bedrooms. It was anticipated not all residents would have vehicles.

[COMMISSION] Ms. Lee shared that intensity of on-street car parking is a major factor in perceived impact on a neighborhood. Mr. Basmajian agreed with staff's prediction that fewer cars would be likely with transitional housing residents. He added that streets are public space meant for parking and noted how intense on-street parking brings a traffic calming benefit, in his experience. Ms. Marren and Mr. Diekmann outlined options available to service providers to augment on-site, off-street parking.

6. *Licensing and Inspections.*

[STAFF] The use would be subject to minimum standards established at the time of application, without need for continued inspection.

[COMMISSION] Given that the proposed use may not be covered by other regulations (e.g., state licensing, rental housing code), Ms. Lee thought staff's recommendation for approval standards was sensible and appropriate.

7. *Approval Process Options.*

[STAFF] The use would be subject to administrative staff approval of objective Zoning Permit criteria rather than Zoning Board of Adjustment Special Use Permit approval.

[COMMISSION] The group discussed application approval and compliance/enforcement advantages from the use of objective standards. Ms. Lee confirmed that once a property was approved for the proposed use there would be no further reviews. Mr. Diekmann indicated there were no plans for ongoing licensing/review. Doug Ragaller questioned why there would be no further review. Ms. Lee suggested placing a term limit on approvals that would enable repeated verification of life/safety compliance. Ms. Marren reviewed permitting requirements for Group Living and Social Service Providers, what would apply to transitional living facilities, and the relevant approval authorities for each classification. The commissioners favored administrative staff approval over Special Use Permit approval via the Zoning Board of Adjustment.



MOTION: (Lee/Wannemuehler) to accept **Alternative #1**, as *modified*, which states: that the Planning and Zoning Commission can recommend that the City Council **adopt** a zoning text amendment to allow for the creation of a Supervised Transitional Home as a permitted use in all residential zones, with occupancy limits and separation requirements of 8 occupants and 500 feet of separation, subject to staff approval of a zoning permit for a site and structure, with periodic inspection for basic safety requirements compliance.

*MOTION PASSED: (5-0)*

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COMMISSION COMMENTS: There were no Commission comments.

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STAFF COMMENTS: Mr. Diekmann reviewed the tentative agenda for the August 3, 2016 Commission meeting and provided an update on the appointment of a new commissioner to fill a Commission vacancy.

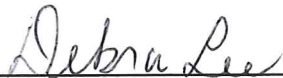
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MOTION TO ADJOURN:

MOTION: (Wannemuehler) to adjourn the meeting.

*MOTION PASSED: (5-0)*

The meeting adjourned at 10:11 PM.



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Debra Lee, Chairperson  
Planning & Zoning Commission



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Joseph C. Newman, Recording Secretary  
Department of Planning & Housing