

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

Date: March 15, 2017	Debra Lee, Chairperson	2018
	Matt Converse, Vice Chairperson	2017
Call to Order: 7:00 PM	*Carlton Basmajian	2017
	Rob Bowers	2018
Place: Ames City Hall Council Chambers	*Anuprit Minhas	2019
	*Doug Ragaller	2019
Adjournment: 9:51 PM	Yvonne Wannemuehler	2018
	[*Absent]	

MAJOR TOPICS DISCUSSED:

1. Public Hearing for the Major Site Development Plan (Sign Program) for 3306 and 3326 Lincoln Way and 117, 127 and 137 South Wilmoth Avenue
2. Public Hearing for the Rezone of 1105 Top O Hollow Road
3. Zoning Text Amendment for Industrial Ground Mount Solar Energy System
4. Zoning Text Amendment for Landscape Standards (Part 2, Continued)
5. Lincoln Corridor Plan Discussion

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

MOTION: (Wannemuehler/Converse) to approve the Agenda for the meeting of March 15, 2017.

MOTION PASSED: (4 - 0)

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FEBRUARY 15, 2017:

MOTION: (Bowers/Converse) to approve the Minutes of the meeting of February 15, 2017.

MOTION PASSED: (4 - 0)

PUBLIC FORUM: There were no public comments.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE MAJOR SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SIGN PROGRAM) FOR 3306 AND 3326 LINCOLN WAY AND 117, 127 AND 137 SOUTH WILMOTH AVENUE

Karen Marren, Case Planner, stated that Breckenridge Group Ames Iowa, LLC has asked for an amendment to their original Major Site Development plan to include a residential sign program. She stated a condition for the approval of the applicant's Major Site Development Plan and Urban Revitalization Plan was that they come back to the Commission to request their sign program. Ms. Marren stated that tonight's request is for the residential component of their sign program. She stated that they will complete the commercial portion of their sign program when

they are further along with the mixed-use portion of their project. Ms. Marren stated that the residential portion of the sign program includes one monument sign located at the corner of South Wilmoth Avenue and Lincoln Way, one wall sign for the Clubhouse and a group of informational and directional signage. She stated that nothing that the applicant has proposed in their sign program is outside of what is currently allowed in the Code for residential signage.

Gary Robinson, Dodd Creative Group, stated that he represents the applicant. He stated that he feels that what they have proposed will fit in well with the project.

Joe Stoben, landscape architect with Olson & Associates, stated that he has made some revisions to the landscape plan to provide plantings for the monument sign.

MOTION: (Bowers/Wannemuehler) to accept Alternative #1, which states: that the Planning and Zoning Commission recommends that the City Council approve the Major Site Development Plan Amendment for the site to include the attached sign program for residential signage.

MOTION PASSED: (4 - 0)

PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE REZONE OF 1105 TOP O HOLLOW ROAD

Charlie Kuester, Case Planner, stated that the parcel addressed as 1105 Top O Hollow Road was acquired by the City of Ames. He stated that it was created as a result of a lot split from a larger lot. Mr. Kuester reviewed the zoning of the surrounding parcels. He stated the City of Ames owns the lot next to this property where an electric substation is located. Mr. Kuester stated that the City wants to combine their two lots and requests that this property be rezoned to S-GA (Government/Airport).

Adam Schwartz, 3715 Calhoun Avenue, reviewed the location of his property on the map. He stated that a month ago his wife noticed that trees were being removed near their property. Mr. Schwartz stated that there was landscaping on the property near their lot line that blocked the substation from view and blocked some of the noise. He reviewed details of their conversations with the tree removal crew and supervisor, one point being a lack of notice of the removal of the trees. Mr. Schwartz stated that according to the plans that he was shown the substation expansion will not be placed on the property that the City wants to rezone. He questions why the rezone is needed. Mr. Schwartz stated that he requests that this property not be rezoned. He expressed his concerns about the environmental impact, the fact that their sewer line will be expanded, and the lack of notice given.

Brad Scandrett, 1021 Top O Hollow Road, stated that when he purchased his property 13 years ago there were many large pine trees located between his property and the substation. He stated that those trees were removed. Mr. Scandrett stated that the City told him that the tree stumps would be ground up and new trees would be planted, thus blocking their view of the substation. He stated that this has not happened. Mr. Scandrett stated that he objects to the rezone of this property. He listed his concerns.

Lyndon Cook, City of Ames Electrical Engineering, stated that the expansion of the substation has been in the Capital Improvement Plan for five years. He stated that the project had been

deferred over that period of time due to budget reasons. Mr. Cook stated that they will need to expand the substation onto the property line and possibly over the property line. He stated that the City purchased this additional property when the Public Works Department was working on a drainage improvement project. Mr. Cook stated that it is their plan to expand the substation. He outlined the location of the sanitary sewer line near this property. Mr. Cook stated that as part of the expansion process this sewer line will be relocated. He stated that a solid wall may be built to help with the sound and the visibility of the substation. Mr. Cook stated that they are looking at trying to limit the expansion. He stated they will probably need to expand over the property line and will need to have the property rezoned.

Yvonne Wannemuehler asked about the height of the proposed wall and where it will be located. Mr. Cook stated that it needs to be at least seven feet tall for safety purposes. He stated that they will build at least an eight foot wall. Mr. Cook outlined the location of the wall and the gates on a map. He reviewed some of the construction details for the wall. Mr. Cook stated that once the expansion is completed they do not have any plans for future expansion at this site. Ms. Wannemuehler asked if the City will maintain the grass at the substation. Mr. Cook stated that the City currently maintains the grass at this location. He stated that they are currently working on a landscape plan to replace the trees that were removed along Mr. Scandrett's property.

Debra Lee stated that she is distressed that these details are coming out at this stage of the process and that this is the forum where they have been heard.

Kelly Diekmann stated that these details are not relevant to tonight's request. He reviewed the process that will need to be followed if the rezone is approved. Mr. Diekmann stated that we are not reviewing a site plan at this time. He stated that the Electric Department needs to work with the neighbors on these details. Mr. Cook stated that they will continue to communicate with the neighbors.

Mr. Diekmann stated that this request will not determine if the expansion of the substation will be allowed. He stated that it will determine what type of review needs to be done, whether it is a staff review or the City Council. Mr. Diekmann explained why staff feels that the appropriate zoning for this parcel is S-GA. He stated that the next step after a rezone would be a plat of survey to combine the two parcels.

Ms. Wannemuehler asked if the rezone is approved would the neighbors be informed of the planning details. Mr. Diekmann stated that notification of the surrounding property owners would not be required. He stated that it will be treated like any other Planning Department administrative project (apartment buildings or commercial buildings). Mr. Diekmann stated that the public does have the right to come in and view the plans once they are submitted.

Ms. Lee stated that she is optimistic that communication will improve.

Dawn Harris, 1111 Top O Hollow Road, stated that she owns property to the west of this parcel. She stated that the substation is located right next to the Skandretts property. Ms. Harris stated that the trees that had been on the property partially blocked the view of the substation. She stated that since the trees have been removed it is unsightly; and, she can hear the hum from the substation. Ms. Harris spoke about the lack of notification when the trees were removed. She stated that she would like to be notified when things occur at the substation.

Adam Schwartz stated that he does not object to the expansion of the substation. He stated that he would prefer it to be relocated into a non-residential area. Mr. Schwartz stated that after the

expansion he does not want to see anything else added to this property. He asked if only the portion of the property where the expansion is actually located could be rezoned and the rest of the property remain under the current zoning district. Mr. Schwartz stated that this would protect them from not being informed when the City makes changes. He stated that he had very little notice of this meeting. Mr. Schwartz stated that it is Spring Break and a very bad time to hold this meeting.

MOTION: (Converse/Bowers) to accept Alternative #1, which states: that the Planning and Zoning Commission recommends that the City Council approve the request to rezone 1105 Top O Hollow Road from RL to S-GA based upon staff's analysis as found in the addendum.

MOTION FAILED: (2 -2) (nay: Wannemuehler, Lee)

MOTION: (Converse/Bowers) moved to table this agenda item to the next Planning and Zoning Commission meeting.

MOTION PASSED: (4 - 0)

ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT FOR INDUSTRIAL GROUND MOUNT SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEM

Charlie Kuester, Case Planner, stated that tonight's amendment request is for free standing solar energy systems up to 20 feet in height in the General Industrial (GI) zoning district. He reviewed the types of allowed uses in the GI zone. Mr. Kuester reviewed the current allowed size of a free standing solar energy system and where they may be located. He stated that these solar systems will need to be placed on a lot that has a principal building. Mr. Kuester stated that they will still be regulated by size and number with the interconnect agreement that they have with the City of Ames Electric. He stated that owners of these solar systems, on a yearly basis, will still need to be a user of some City of Ames electricity.

Scott Renaud, FOX Engineering Associates, stated that there are other electric districts in Ames other than the City of Ames Electric. He stated that the size of the system may be more dependent on other electric entities than the City of Ames Electric.

Ms. Lee asked under what situations these systems are required to be elevated to 20 feet in height. Mr. Renaud stated that it depends on the size of the panels. He stated that they are post mounted, tilted and will rotate to match the angle of the sun. Mr. Renaud stated that CyRide currently has a similar system. Ms. Wannemuehler asked if the CyRide system is elevated 20 feet in height. Mr. Renaud stated that he believes that it is. Ms. Wannemuehler asked if 20 feet tall is tall enough. Mr. Renaud stated that a supplier of the systems stated that it is enough due to the wind load.

MOTION: (Wannemuehler/Converse) to accept Alternative #1, which states: that the Planning and Zoning Commission recommends that the City Council adopt the proposed amendments regarding solar energy systems.

MOTION PASSED: (4 - 0)

ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT FOR LANDSCAPE STANDARDS (PART 2, CONTINUED)

Kelly Diekmann, Director of Planning & Housing, stated that this is the third time that the Commission has reviewed the proposed changes to the landscape standards. He stated that this proposal was continued at the last Commission meeting. Mr. Diekmann outlined the items that the Commission wanted staff to review for planting densities and open space landscaping requirements.

Justin Moore, Case Planner, reviewed vegetation requirements for six example properties. Mr. Diekmann further reviewed the details of the proposed requirements that were discussed at the February meeting. Mr. Moore explained the thought process that was involved in determining the planting ratios based on space, cost and aesthetics. He reviewed the separation distance and the requirements between industrial and residential zones. Mr. Moore stated that since the last meeting staff has prepared a Draft Landscape Ordinance for the Commission to review.

Rob Bowers asked about the highlighted areas in the Draft Landscape Ordinance. Mr. Diekmann reviewed those areas of the report. He stated that the highlights are of options that address the Commission's comments from the last meeting.

Justin Dodge, Hunziker Companies, 105 So. 16th Street, asked if staff is recommending the February 15th alternative. Mr. Diekmann stated that staff is recommending either the February 15th or the March alternative for front yard plantings. He stated that they are not recommending the landscape percentage or the useable open space options for a site. Mr. Dodge stated that he is disappointed in the statement in the report that mentioned that the attendance at the workgroup meeting was sparsely attended. He reviewed the frustration of some of the individuals that attended those meetings. Mr. Dodge stated that at each of those meetings individuals stated that the density needs to be reduced. He stated that they have had a representative that has attended all of the meetings. Mr. Dodge stated that the change in the planting density will result in a 50 percent increase in cost. He stated that he would like to see further reductions in the planting density. Mr. Dodge stated that they could work with a 20-25 percent increase.

Mr. Diekmann stated that the 50 percent increase will only come into play with how the parking lot is configured. He stated that a 50 percent increase will not apply to most sites. Mr. Diekmann reviewed the increases for several of the sample sites listed in the staff report. He stated that in many cases 50 percent may not be a large number in absolute terms.

Mr. Dodge stated that he would like to see an evaluation prepared at the end of the construction season that would have concrete numbers showing the results of the change to the landscape standards.

Ms. Wannemuehler asked Mr. Dodge to clarify his objections. Mr. Dodge stated that they object to the planting population/density. Mr. Diekmann explained that the concern is the overall density but that their main focus is on the grass and shrub density. Discussion was held on the changes that were made since the February 15th meeting. Mr. Dodge stated that he would like to see a lower density for this initial amendment to the Landscape Ordinance. He stated that at

the end of the year a determination could be made whether it is meeting the goals of the City; and if not, then the density could be increased.

Scott Renaud, FOX Engineering, stated that he agrees with Mr. Dodge about coming back in a year after the changes are implemented and refine what is approved. He wants to have more creativity without increasing the numbers. Mr. Renaud stated that he doesn't want to see any additional cost for plants. He stated that he would like to see additional soil improvements. Mr. Renaud stated that regulations can be interpreted various ways to different people. He feels that additional discussion should be scheduled at another meeting to further review all the details of the proposed changes to the landscape standards and how they will be applied. Mr. Renaud stated that he would also like to see more flexibility in what can be used and less restrictions.

Ms. Lee asked the Commission how they feel about the front yard requirements that have been proposed. Mr. Bowers and Mr. Converse stated that they prefer the March alternatives. Mr. Diekmann reviewed various details of this alternative.

Ms. Lee stated that the community and the City Council have requested staff to look into amending the landscape standards. She stated that these discussions have been on-going for years. Ms. Lee stated that this is not being done at the request of staff. She stated that it is as a result of the community's desire. Ms. Lee stated that the proposed increase in plantings is not a significant amount of money compared to the total cost of these projects. She stated that she is not interested in decreasing the plant density any lower than what is listed in the March alternative that has been presented.

Ms. Wannemuehler stated that the point based system made more sense to her. Ms. Lee stated that the City Council rejected that system. Mr. Diekmann stated that staff will try to encourage individuals to use some items that were in the point based system but they will not be mandated.

Mr. Bowers asked staff if they had mentioned at an earlier meeting that they would be interested in reviewing what is adopted approximately a year later and assessing the results. Mr. Diekmann stated that it depends on the City Council's priorities, but Staff would be supportive of a report back.

Ms. Lee asked staff to review the proposed open space and site landscaping options. Mr. Diekmann stated that current landscaping is perimeter oriented. He stated that staff looked at two internal landscaping topics when reviewing the amendment to the current landscape standards; landscaping in general (vegetation and softening through trees and shrubs) and useable space (amenity space). Mr. Diekmann reviewed various details of the proposed changes for each of these categories.

Further discussion was held on the proposed amount of useable open space and the number and location of required plantings.

Ms. Lee asked if the February 15th and March alternatives would be presented to the City Council. Mr. Diekmann stated that staff wants to get input from the Commission prior to determining what will be sent to the City Council. Ms. Lee stated that she would like to see the Commission members that are not in attendance tonight also have an opportunity to weigh in on these alternatives. Mr. Diekmann stated that the Commission has the option of tabling this item to the next Commission meeting.

MOTION: (Converse/Bowers) to table the discussion of the proposed changes to the Landscape Standards to the next Planning and Zoning Commission meeting.

MOTION PASSED: (4 - 0)

LINCOLN CORRIDOR PLAN DISCUSSION

Karen Marren, Case Planner, explained that the Framework Plan looks at the Lincoln Corridor west boundary to the east boundary. She reviewed various aspects and objectives of the Framework Plan. Ms. Marren reviewed various aspects of the five Focus Areas: Westside Mixed Use, Campustown Transition, Oak to Riverside Neighborhood, Lincoln Way and Grand Avenue, and Downtown Gateway.

Ms. Lee wanted the public to know that tonight's presentation consists of concept ideas; and, they will take City Council approval to be implemented. Mr. Diekmann stated that the Lincoln Corridor Plan would not change the zoning on anyone's property upon adoption.

Mr. Bowers asked if this plan recommends increased housing in the downtown area. Mr. Diekmann stated that it is imbedded in the plan as an option.

Ms. Marren stated that some of the concepts from each Focus Area could be incorporated in other Focus Areas.

Ms. Lee asked for direction as to how staff wants the Commission to review the Plan. Mr. Diekmann reviewed priorities and various details that would need to be put in place for implementation of the Plan.

Ms. Wannemuehler asked if the Commission needs to review and vote on the whole plan. Mr. Diekmann stated that staff feels that the Plan should be adopted in whole. Ms. Lee reviewed her concerns. Mr. Diekmann stated that if the Commission approves the Plan it is an endorsement of the concept of change as to how and where it can occur, but does not lead to specific changes immediately.

Justin Dodge, Hunziker Companies, 105 So. 16th Street, stated that he has received input from individuals that have expressed the desire for downtown redevelopment. He stated that he hopes that the Commission will support the Downtown Focus Area concept.

Ms. Lee stated that it seems that there is a consensus of the Commission present to review the Plan for each of the focus areas in depth. Discussion was held that the community has already had multiple opportunities to hear discussions regarding the Lincoln Corridor Plan through public workshops and on-line resources. Ms. Lee asked staff if discussion of the Lincoln Corridor Plan Focus Areas can be placed on the Commission's April 5, 2017 Commission meeting. Mr. Diekmann stated that a consultant will be at the April 11, 2017 City Council meeting to present the Lincoln Corridor Plan.

Ms. Marren stated that she received an email from a citizen regarding the proposed plan that she handed out to the Commission members at tonight's meeting. Ms. Lee asked about public notification. Ms. Marren stated that notification was sent to those that have attended prior Lincoln Corridor meetings as well as neighborhood association contacts. She stated that the Plan is also available to view on the City's Planning Department web page.

COMMISSION COMMENTS: Ms. Lee asked if the rezone for Top-O-Hollow Road will be on the April 5, 2017 Commission agenda. Mr. Diekmann stated that it will be on this agenda.

STAFF COMMENTS: Staff reviewed the tentative agenda for the meeting of April 5, 2017. Mr. Diekmann stated that at the City Council Workshop on March 21, 2017 they will be reviewing details for Parking Lot X in Campustown.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

MOTION: (Wannemuehler/Bowers) to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:51 PM.



Debra Lee, Chairperson
Planning & Zoning Commission



Lorrie Banks, Recording Secretary
Department of Planning & Housing