

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF  
THE ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT**

**AMES, IOWA**

**JANUARY 9, 2019**

The Ames Zoning Board of Adjustment met, pursuant to law, in regular session at 6:00 p.m. on January 9, 2019, in the Council Chambers of City Hall with the following members present: Amelia Schoeneman, Kyle Perkins, Matthew Koehler, Rob Bowers, and Susan Bradbury. Assistant City Attorney Victoria Feilmeyer and City Planner Justin Moore were also present.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 14, 2018:** Board Member Bradbury asked for two corrections. Page Two, second paragraph from the bottom, in the last sentence: “High-Oriented” should be “Highway-Oriented” and Page Six at the bottom: “Conclussions” should be “Conclusions.” Moved by Bradbury, seconded by Bowers, to approve the Minutes of the meeting of November 14, 2018, with corrections.

Vote on Motion: 5-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

**CASE NO. 18-14**

**SPECIAL USE PERMIT – A Special Use Permit to allow an Exception to the minimum two-story height requirement and minimum 1.0 Floor Area Ratio requirement in the DSC zone for 100-6<sup>th</sup> Street.**

City Planner Justin Moore introduced the request and reviewed the site plan, project description, applicable law, and Findings of Fact and Conclusions.

The Developer and owner of 100-6<sup>th</sup> Street is seeking entitlements for the development of a commercial office expansion at 100-6<sup>th</sup> Street. The site is made up of three separate parcels zoned Downtown Service Center (DSC). The current building houses the offices of Friedrich Iowa Realty. The proposed project will require the removal of an existing apartment building immediately south of the office building on one of the lots proposed to be consolidated with this property.

The proposed project requires approval of Exceptions to the DSC zoning standard requirements of minimum Floor Area Ratio of 1.0 and the minimum two-story requirement. Approval of an Exception to these minimum development standards by the Zoning Board of Adjustment is permitted under certain circumstances as defined within the Zoning Ordinance.

The owner proposes to combine two abutting lots to the west and south with the lot at 100 6<sup>th</sup> Street to create a new 21,755-square-foot parcel and expand the existing single-story building to create a total building floor area of 12,283 square feet. The Floor Area Ratio (FAR) would be 0.56 upon completion of the lot consolidation and completing the proposed building expansion.

The proposed addition and remodel maintains pedestrian access from both 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Duff Avenue, as well as adding a new entrance on the west side of the building from the parking lot. The proposed building addition would be predominately one-story at approximately 12 feet in height. The addition includes a raised mezzanine located in the middle of the building addition,

and it extends to a peak of approximately 28 feet in height. The mezzanine is approximately 26 feet in width and includes a small area of upper level floor space.

The Zoning Board of Adjustment is authorized to consider a request for an Exception to the Minimum Two-Story requirement in the DSC zone and minimum 1.0 FAR requirement. The outcome of the Board's decision on an Exception request will determine how the applicant proceeds with the additional approval requirements for a Plat of Survey to consolidate the parcels and ultimately a Minor Site Development Plan for site and building improvements.

The proposed project is an expansion of an existing building and not for new construction. The property has frontage on 6<sup>th</sup> Street. For properties on a through lot, existing buildings on the south half of the lot shall have a second story along the entire 5<sup>th</sup> Street frontage. The proposed project retains or creates an active pedestrian street entrance. The existing building has a primary entrance, which will remain active on 6<sup>th</sup> Street and a secondary entrance along Duff Avenue. The proposed project includes the addition of a new central lobby oriented to the west parking lot, a new Duff Avenue entrance and a courtyard between the building and the street.

Height and building placement is demonstrated in the proposed project that emphasizes an urban design of Main Street style development characterized by a height compatible with buildings in downtown and maintaining or creating a street edge with buildings. The adjacent structures vary in height and stories from single-story buildings up to three stories. The building immediately to the south of the site is three stories with a two-story building at the end of the block. The Elks Lodge to the west is one and a half to two stories in height. Properties on the north side of 6<sup>th</sup> street are zoned Neighborhood Commercial and do not require two stories.

The façade of the new addition will be brought closer to Duff Avenue than the current apartment building. The proposal will create an appearance of height and presence similar in nature to that of the surrounding buildings on the periphery of Downtown. While not encompassing the entire area of the building as a second story, the mezzanine does provide an element of height and architectural interest similar to a two-story building.

Parking is not required for commercial uses in the DSC zone. The proposed project adds seven surface parking spaces along the south side of the property where covered garage parking currently exists for the apartment building. Site landscaping requirements will be applied during site plan review and will require some front yard and parking lot landscaping that will contribute toward softening the appearance of the parking lot, depending on the extent of changes proposed to the existing nonconforming parking lot. The proposed project has a minimum floor area ratio of 0.50.

Notification was made to all owners of property within 200 feet. A notice of public hearing was placed on the property and published in the newspaper.

Applicant Luke Jensen, 100-6<sup>th</sup> Street, Ames, with Friedrich Companies, was sworn in and testified under oath. He stated that the applicant has met all six of the standards to move forward.

Board Member Schoeneman asked what the thought was behind building out into the other side instead of building up. Mr. Jensen explained that structural components made it complicated to build up, so they decided to build the addition to the south. He verified the main entrance will be off the parking lot and said they are not certain on plans for the mezzanine, but it is available space and will be taken advantage of.

Reiny Friedrich, Chairman of the Board for Friedrich's, 1300 Kenyon Circle, Ames, was sworn in and testified under oath. Mr. Friedrich discussed the history of the company: Friedrich Iowa Realty purchased the building in the middle 1970's when it had eight to ten agents; it now has 30 to 40 agents. Its accounting department is in different locations and it wants to consolidate everyone into the same building. Mr. Friedrich said JCorp architects designed the addition.

Ms. Schoeneman said she originally had concerns about parking, but after hearing the details from Planner Justin Moore, her concerns are resolved. She said she is concerned about the pedestrian access. Mr. Koehler pointed out that there will still be entries on 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Duff.

Board Member Bradbury said the new plans have a welcoming perspective on Duff for people walking along the sidewalk with a courtyard, and the plans increase the number of entryways. She asked if the plans had gone to the Planning and Zoning Commission and whether it will review the parking situation. Planner Justin Moore said the case had not gone to the Planning and Zoning Commission. Based on the outcome here, it will go to City Council. Planning and Zoning would not review this type of project. City Council will review the Plat of Survey, and staff has the ultimate say in parking. Mr. Moore explained there is no parking standard in this area; the applicant is just choosing to provide it on site. He addressed Ms. Schoeneman's question explaining there are no maximum parking standards, only minimum.

Moved by Koehler, seconded by Perkins, to approve ORDER NO. 18-14, thereby approving the request for a Special Use Permit to allow an Exception to the minimum two-story height requirement and minimum 1.0 Floor Area Ratio requirement in the DSC zone for 100-6<sup>th</sup> Street.

Vote on Motion: 5-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

**COMMENTS:** Board Member Koehler stated that he believes the addition will be a huge improvement to the area.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Moved by Perkins, seconded by Koehler, to adjourn the meeting at 6:27 p.m.

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Rachel Knutsen, Recording Secretary

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Matthew Koehler, Chairperson