



**City Of Searcy  
Planning Commission**

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**January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024**

**12:00 NOON**

**City Hall Chambers**

**Agenda:**

1. Call to order
2. Notice of a Quorum
3. Approval of November Meeting Minutes
4. Large-Scale Development – Freeway Storage – Brent Shelor, Nature's Angle
5. Discussion of Zoning Code Amendments – Richard Stafford
6. Adjournment

## Searcy Planning Commission

### Meeting Minutes

January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024

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This regularly scheduled meeting of the Planning Commission was held in the City Hall Chambers at 12:00 noon.

#### Commission Members Present:

Steve Jordan, Chairman  
Jamie Mobley  
Charles Green  
Larry DeGroat  
Mike Cleveland  
Bill Patton  
Lisa Wray  
Jim House

#### City of Searcy Staff Present:

Madison Lee, Recording Secretary  
Richard Stafford, City Planner  
Phil Watkins, Code Enforcement  
Mark Lane, City Engineer  
William Grady, Fire Inspector

#### Not Present:

Matt Boyd

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### Chairman Jordan called a notice of a Quorum.

#### Approval of November Minutes

The first item on the agenda is the approval of December 2023 minutes. Commissioner Green made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Commissioner Patton seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

#### Large Scale Development- Freeway Storage

The next item on the agenda is a large-scale development request for Freeway Storage. This item on was the December agenda and was not voted on due to lack of information regarding the three-waiver requests. Brent Shelor was present to speak on behalf of this agenda item. Shelor said in discussion with the owners, they have agreed to put in sidewalks along Hubach and they have chosen to go with an approve façade material instead of the non-approved decorative metal panel material they originally requested. He also said that the owners have agreed to put up an estimate of \$22,359 in lieu of the half street improvements. This money will be put to in an account until the other half of the street is developed. If the other half is not completed in 5 years then the owners would receive their money back with interest. They also will be going to City Council to get a waiver for the in- lieu of contribution, but if they don't receive the waiver, then they will pay the in lieu of fee as agreed upon. **Commissioner Green made a motion to approve this agenda item as presented. Commissioner Patton seconded the motion. The motion as passed unanimously.**

#### Discussion of Zoning Code Amendments

The next item on the agenda is a discussion of the zoning code amendments. This agenda item was discussed at the December meeting as well, but was not able to discussion all proposed changes.

Richard Stafford spoke on behalf of this agenda item. Some of these amendments are just clarification and some are new regulations.

Richard said that there was a change from the last meeting's discussion about the dumpster enclosers. One change included the material that is used for the enclosure. The material would just have to meet the commercial design standards from the approved material list. He also said that he spoke with Todd Phillips the director over sanitation. They talked about putting a gate requirement in the code. Phillips was a little hesitant because he was afraid that business owners would leave the gates open or closed creating a slowdown in the pick-up process. Phillips also requested a size requirement for the enclosures to ensure that the trucks would be able to pick up the garbage. He requests that a single dumpster enclosure would be sized a 10x10 and a double 10x20. The Commission felt requiring a gate was important and how a policy could be created of making the dumpster owners open and close the gate the same as a resident has to roll out their trash bins. They requested that we add the gate requirement along with working on a policy. They also requested the material of the gate should also be added to the amendments.

The next item up of discussion was the principal structure on the lot and allowing one efficiency unit, as already defined in the code, along with the principal structure. This would make an allowance for a mother-in-law quarters or pool house that had both a kitchenette and bathroom. Richard said there has been some issues that have come up recently with the city staff regarding mother-in-law quarters and/or pool houses. The main goal right now is to dig a little deeper and see if one efficiency unit is really a bad thing to allow. The proposed change would allow one efficiency unit along with the principal structure, if it met both the accessory building requirements and it met the efficiency unit definition. It would also have to meet the size and height requirements of an accessory structure and if it does not, they would have to come to the Planning Commission for a Conditional Use approval. The other reason for looking at this change is the fact that if someone connects the subordinate structure with a breezeway, they would be allowed to build it as large as they want and put as many living spaces in it, they wanted because it's just part of the main structure. The requirement can also be circumvented through replating of a lot if large enough. If there are ways to circumvent and nobody has a problem with the uses, then maybe the code needs changing. Richard said as of right now there are a lot of houses in the city limits that are not complying with the code because they have a pool house that has a kitchenette and bathroom. The commission had more discussion about the primary residents and the use as rental property and could that be regulated. That led to density discussion of the different residential zones and would this regulation lead to a change in the spirit of what is intended for the One-Unit (formally Single-Family) Residential zones. Mr. Degroat brought up that the FHA is relaxing some financing options to allow for an Accessory Dwelling Unit and other communities are looking at allowing them because of lack of affordable housing. Phil Watkins said he does not agree with this proposed change, he doesn't believe that one efficiency unit should be allowed in residential neighborhoods. Someone could build a large living structure 5 feet off the property line and feels that would open the City up to liability. Alderman Don Raney began discussion on covenants and how a lot of covenants wouldn't allow this and what is the city's role in that. Should the city play a larger role in making sure property owners are obeying the covenants before issuing permits. Discussion was then had on making an accessory unit meet the main structure setbacks if there were living quarters in it. Richard said staff would come up with some of the changes as discussed to the amendment for next month.

The next couple amendments were some clarifications and titles additions. There was a redundant section about accessory buildings and staff is proposing to remove it. More discussion was had about the dumpster enclosures.

Digital asset mining adds a use definition for it and adds it to the use chart making them a conditional use in all commercial, industrial, and UT zones. That allows the Commission to see each proposal and accept or deny on a case-by-case basis.

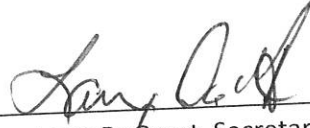
The first couple changes to the commercial design standards is correction to the numbering sequence and fixing something that was referring to the wrong section. Another change includes a change to the façade regulations as requested by Planning Commission from a previous meeting. That request was to change the requirement that the faces of buildings adjacent to right-of-way and 8ft. down the sides to meet the façade material list, but to anything in view. This change would require any façade that is visible from any point along the property line that either abuts right-of-way, a residential zone, or parking lot drive lanes. This change would allow staff to look at site plans and determine the angle of the building from the furthest points of the property to see if that would be seen but does not get into the idea that it might be visible half-a mile down the road.

The next proposed change is regarding the fencing code. There are not any regulations found in the zoning code nor the Code of Ordinances regarding fences. There is a standalone ordinance from many years ago that Code enforcement has kept in the pocket of a zoning code binder. This change will put this standalone ordinance in the zoning code and make it where Code Enforcement can enforce the regulations. The only difference in this proposed article that is not found in the standalone ordinance is we are proposing a maintenance section and giving Code Enforcement the ability to order the repair or removal of dilapidated fences which would deem a safety hazard.

The first proposed amendment to the sign regulations is similar to a requirement that was in the zoning code prior to 2017, which did not allow vehicles to be used as signs. We would like to add it back in, but weren't really happy with the original language. This language is similarly used in other cities and states that vehicles can't be used to circumvent the sign regulations. The second change adds political signs (there is already definition in the code) as signs exempted from the sign regulations. The third change adds the term feathers signs and classifies them as a temporary sign and not a fluttering banner which is not allowed in the front yard. The fourth change in the sign regulations is for temporary signs. This would require a permit for all temporary signs larger than an "individual temporary sign" like yard signs. The permit would be valid 90 days then the sign would need to be removed or permitted again. It would also limit any and all temporary signs to 3 per commercial lot street frontage.

The next proposed amendment is the change in building permits article. There are a couple paragraphs in the article that is repeated three times. This change could delete two of the three redundant paragraphs.

With there being nothing further, this meeting was adjourned.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Larry DeGroat", written over a horizontal line.

Larry DeGroat, Secretary