

## **SEARCY PLANNING COMMISSION**

### **AUGUST 2021 MINUTES**

#### **SEARCY, AR**

The regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the Planning Commission of and for the City of Searcy, Arkansas, was held by Zoom ID 617 815 0816, at 12:00 pm on Tuesday August 3, 2021, pursuant to proper public notice. Attending the call were Chairman Steven Jordan and Commission members: Jamie Mobley, Bill Patton, Charles Green, Larry DeGroat, Mike Cleveland, Lisa Wray, Jim House and Jim Wilbourn. Also attending the call: City Planner Jim VonTungeln, City Engineer Mark Lane, Code Enforcement Officers Jeff Webb and Phil Watkins, and Fire Inspector Guy Grady.

Chairman Steven Jordan called notice of quorum.

The next item on the agenda was the approval of minutes from the June 2021 Planning Commission meeting. Commissioner Green moved that the minutes be approved. Commissioner Patton seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

The fourth item on the agenda is a Large Scale Development for an Oasis Carwash on East Race Avenue. Adam Whitlow with Whitlow Engineering Services explained this lot is very well known as the previous location of Ryan's. The proposed carwash will be similar to the current Oasis Carwash on Beebe Capps Expressway next to the gas station, Big Red. The carwash will contain a three bay wash as well as several vacuum stations and self-wash bays. Whitlow also explained there will be an area reserved for a future lease space measuring around 2,700 square feet. Mark Lane, City Engineer, explained the Sanitation Department Director, Terry Rutherford, would like to modify dumpster placement for the large trash truck's access. Whitlow replied with the suggestion of putting the dumpster pad adjacent to the handicap parking or any other proposed solution. Commissioner DeGroat was curious if the questions presented by Bear Davidson with Searcy Water was resolved. Whitlow explained some of the items will be address once the mechanical, electrical and plumbing work have begun. Bear Davidson assured the Commissioners the questions brought to Whitlow can be addressed before a building permit has been issued but as far as site plan approval for a Large Scale Development, Searcy Water has nothing to hold up the project process. Commissioner DeGroat moved that the project be approved subject to the approval of dumpster location. Commissioner Patton seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

The next item on the agenda is a Large Scale Development for Harding University. This development will be the relocation of the track. Danny Deramus joined the call to represent Harding University. Deramus explained the relocation of the track would on a property owned by Harding University just east of the current location. Harding University is hopeful the

relocation will allow more room for the different sports they offer. Deramus did share the University will remodel First Security stadium to a single sport facility therefore they will remove the current track inside the stadium. Bear Davidson is curious if plans with more project details such as elevation and drainage, will be submitted at a later date. Deramus shared with everyone on the call an engineering firm has been selected for this project but at this time financing for the project has not been finalized and once finalized, the engineering notary City Engineer Mark Lane is requesting we will be done. Commissioner DeGroat questioned if the parking for the Large Scale Development needed to be discussed because some of the project will be in a flood plain. Deramus assured the Commissioners the parking will remain on Gin Creek. Commissioner Green moved to approve the Large Scale Development. Commissioner Patton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Another item requested was a RePlat of Southwind Estate. This request is presented by Adam Hart with Hart Construction. Hart explained the process of refiling this plat will correct the issues of property lines landing bisecting two homes rather than between them. Chairman Jordan questioned how many homes are built in that area. In which, Hart shared there is currently one tri-plex and six single-family dwellings. Hart has not had an issue with these properties because they have been used as rentals and the same title and lending institution has had the lien on all of them even though property lines are bisecting homes. Commissioner Green moved to approve. Commissioner Mobley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The last item on the agenda, was a public hearing regarding Short Term Rentals. Chairman Jordan illustrated the proposal of these regulations have come about by the Planning and Growth Committee. At this time, Chairman Jordan opened the public hearing. Al Fowler, President of River Oaks POA, attended the call. Fowler stressed the purpose of zoning laws since River Oaks is a single family neighborhood and he believes a business should not be operating from single family homes. Fowler also has experienced multiple issues with short term rentals in his neighborhood such as noise complaints, parking, and parties. Fowler stressed the businesses already taking places in River Oaks neighborhood but short term rental is the most concerning. Anna Lawson who owns 6 Cabins on the Knoll attended the call. Lawson explained the house in Searcy as well as a house they own in Fayetteville are used as short term rentals. Lawson shared the majority of people renting their home come to Searcy for business trips. Lawson also has strict policies for the people occupying the resident such as parking and noise restrictions. Fayetteville has similar regulations as the ones proposed and Lawson said she does not see an issue. Laurie Davis who lives at 1 Ridgewood Lane attended the call. Davis moved here in 2019 for her small business of short term rental. Davis proposed to make it illegal for the city to change current policies for small businesses and there is no need to create new regulations. Davis also shared some visitors have needs that go beyond what a normal hotel can provide. The company Airbnb, where her business is advertised, hold strict guidelines and can only continue after positive reviews are reported by individuals who stay there. After no questions or comments were made, Chairman Jordan closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Green does not recall seeing a final document of the proposed regulations. Chairman Jordan asked for a motion to take the proposed regulations under advisement for further study. Commissioner Green motioned to take regulations under further advisement. Commissioner Mobley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with one objection.

There being no further business before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned

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Jim Wilbourn, Secretary