

Community Development Department

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MINUTES PLAN COMMISSION JANUARY 6, 2026 CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Members Present: Rob Gormanson, Michael Woolsey, Diane Odeen, Rebecca Prendergast, Dan Toland
Members Absent: Chris Holtkamp, Lisa Moody
Staff Present: Emily Shively, Becky Corson, Joe Reardon

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting convened at 6:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

M/Woolsey, S/Odeen to approve minutes. Motion carried 5/0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Patricia La Rue – (485 Marcella Ct) – spoke on the planning and housing developments that have been up for discussion at previous meetings. La Rue referenced housing plans staff have shared and she indicated the plots and square, that people aren't realizing that each of those squares has a family. A family that chose to move to this area, understanding the setbacks and size of the parcel are getting the property they can afford. She appreciates people not wanting to adjust what is in our ordinances, but understands that smaller developments make more affordable housing for others.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

Proposed ordinance amendments to Title 17 – Zoning, Chapters 17.04, 17.08, 17.20, 17.24, 17.28, 17.44, 17.48, 17.64, 17.73, and 17.80; the purpose of which is to implement the Comprehensive Plan Housing and Land Use Chapters including changes to residential development performance standards; parking requirements; allowing for accessory dwelling units; clarifying definitions; and adding an expiration of site plan approval.

Assistant Director of Community Development Emily Shively gave a presentation regarding the proposed ordinance amendments as part of the Comprehensive Plan implementation. Shively gave a presentation highlighting what was discussed during the December Plan Commission workshop to provide some context for those watching this evening. Covered in the presentation is Comprehensive Plan guidance, data analysis, and potential ordinance amendments. Shively indicated the Comprehensive Plan has an implementation chapter and a section for each major element in the Comp Plan. For the amendments highlighted above, Shively is focusing on items from Housing and Land Use elements. The first item selected to update is to update the zoning code to support the Land Use Chapter mainly with regard to residential development standards. Two items selected that align with the land use item is to update the zoning ordinance to support

density and development that accommodates the missing middle housing, and another is to consider the adoption of alternative housing options, such as accessory dwelling units (ADUs). Shively covered the diagram to understand how policies and regulations stack, with the most flexibility on the green area on the diagram (Comprehensive Plan and Zoning), and as you increase on the diagram policies and processes become more defined with less discretion and more certainty (toward Site Plan and Building Permit). Another piece in implementing the goals of the community is partnership within the private sector. In order for a development project to be successful it needs to be feasible in five areas (financial feasibility, market feasibility, physical characteristics, legally feasible, and political feasibility). Shively indicated that each of the five characteristics have different components of risk. Where more certainty, there is a lower risk, and a project can become more feasible and potentially more affordable.

Shively covered the data collection process on existing neighborhoods and the conformance size to the standards of code; reviewed the locations of missing middle housing typology; and reviewed development standards of recent projects, the majority of which were approved via the Planned Unit Development process which provided flexibility from the underlying zoning standards. Another piece for the data collection is the Housing Needs Analysis study that was conducted in 2018, updated in 2022, and set to be updated again in 2026.

Starting with the R-1 single-family low-density residence districts, an interesting thing discovered is the average lot size in this district is 11,542 square feet and the average R1 duplex lot size is only slightly larger at 12,950 square feet. Shively indicated there are not many existing single-family lots in R-1 that were not conforming as to size. The analysis indicates that most single-family homes are on lots at least 7,500 square feet in size, and there are very few areas where there are under three dwelling units per acre. Most are between 3-12 dwelling units per acre. Shively indicated the higher densities are partially due to the mix of housing types in our existing neighborhoods. Current code in the City allows for duplexes in R1 provided they have a 1,400 foot separation from each other or in larger developments not to exceed 2 acres. Existing stock of duplexes, triplexes and quadplexes in R1 illustrates that these provisions have not been adhered to in the oldest and most established parts of the City. Shively also indicated that the existing stock of missing middle blends well into the streetscape and does not generate a higher level of complaints regarding traffic as compared to purely single-family areas.

Shively compared more recent developments where the flexibility for lot size, lot width, and setbacks were all requested and granted via PUD for the neighborhoods, and flexibility that was requested regarding parking, setbacks, and open space being requested and granted for multi family projects in the past 6 years. All these requests were in alignment with the Comprehensive Plan and flexibility was needed for project feasibility. Based on tracking of housing needs in the community and additional 313 multi-family, 258 single-family, 81 twin-homes, and 693 senior housing units are needed by 2030.

Shively covered how the Planned Unit Development tool is helpful for providing flexibility, but it also creates uncertainty for developers and the community and lengthens the approval process. In review of the flexibility the City has granted via PUD over time, the proposed ordinance amendments intend to move the approvals up the pyramid where there is more certainty and less discretion which means less risk.

Shively indicated the key takeaways from the data collection are that lot size, setbacks, and housing type are areas where the ordinance is out of alignment with the Comprehensive Plan and development feasibility. Scaling lot size differently across housing types in R-1, R-2, and R-3 districts would be consistent with the existing missing middle development patterns and can

provide for additional opportunities for more of this type of housing development in new neighborhoods.

Shively then moved to cover proposed residential ordinance amendments. The three areas covered in this section were accessory dwelling units, residential lot performance standards, and multifamily performance standards. The first area covered was accessory dwelling units. Shively covered the proposed elements of this ordinance. Other cities' codes were reviewed as well as best practices to remove barriers to build this type of housing while balancing the integration of these homes into neighborhoods. Another item covered is how setbacks are measured. The proposed change is to measure setbacks from the property line to the building foundation rather than the overhang or eave. Also, for some housing types in certain zoning districts we move away from a minimum lot size area per unit and instead use a density standard for the number of homes per acre. Shively indicated this would allow for more flexibility in lot and unit configuration while achieving the same goal as a minimum lot size or lot area.

Shively talked about the three main changes in the R-1 district is minimum lot size reduction from 7,500 to 5,000 square feet, two-family homes are allowed without a separation requirement, and density standards reflect the minimum lot size with triplexes allowed on lots at least 10,000 square feet in size. The main changes for the R-2 district will be scaling single-family lot sizes to allow for more homes in a zoning district, and setbacks being modified to reflect flexibility. The changes for the R-3 district keeps the single-family lot scale in R-2 and does not have an upper limit on the number of two-family or multi-family units, but would be determined based on setbacks, parking, stormwater, and other site conditions. Shively did include in this package a new item with modest changes to Mobile Home Park Zoning to bring them in alignment with R-2 district standards.

Shively highlighted the significant change proposed for multifamily homes, the amenity and open space standards. Current requirements are that one square foot of usable open space be provided for each square foot of dwelling area has required a PUD process for all our recent multifamily projects. A menu of options that a project could provide was created for future projects. The number of those required for each project is based on the number of units in a development. More units would mean more amenities. Shively indicated we are proposing we retain the 1:1 open space standard, but as an option for all projects. Also we are proposing projects that provide affordable housing also receive a credit or reduction in required amenities.

Shively mentioned the final residential ordinance amendment proposed is for multifamily parking. Based on existing projects in the City, standards other communities use, and thinking about locations that may have available on-street parking for visitors versus those that will need to provide some off-street parking for guests.

Lastly, Shively covered a few other items that have come up over time (accessory uses and shade structures, driveway performance standards, and other miscellaneous amendments). For Accessory Uses and Shade Structures a proposal for separate definitions for the two to provide more clarity. Similarly, for attached dwelling and principal building. Issues have come forward around shade structures such as pergolas and gazebos as current code doesn't differentiate between open-sided and enclosed accessory structures. Shively covered for driveway performance standards in R-1 the driveway width may be the greater of 30% of the lot width up to 35', and R-2 and R-3 may be up to 35' wide. Shively covered the last few items proposed, the first was single family and two-family homes have at least one door facing the street, adding an expiration date for site plan review, and regulation for window signs as we do not have a definition

for them. And lastly using the same parking standards in the Corporate Park Zoning to I-1 and I-2 zoning districts.

Shively wrapped up her presentation and asked the Commission if they were ready to make a recommendation to Council regarding the proposed amendments.

Diane Odeen made a motion to forward the six proposed ordinance amendments with a favorable recommendation to City Council. **M/Odeen, S/Prendergast – carried 5/0**

Michael Woolsey talked about his meeting he had with Emily Shively before the Plan Commission meeting and asked Emily to discuss with the Plan Commission how to look at the lot sizes in R-1, (low density) R-2 (medium density) and R-3 (high density) regardless of housing type. And that you can have a mix of home types in different zoning districts. Shively also clarified there wouldn't be a project like the Uplands in a R-1 zoning district.

Diane Odeen spoke on this would allow for more creativity to developers with these changes.

Woolsey also mentioned this helps the Plan Commission have more conversations with other people when questions arise and be an improvement on thing, we are looking for with regards to housing numbers.

Dan Toland spoke on how he thinks this will help clarify things and make things easier with not needing to go through extra PUDs on future developments.

Planning Update

Emily Shively gave a planning update with an overview of the adopted Council Strategic Initiatives that were adopted last fall and will be ongoing through June of 2027. Shively indicated the initiatives fall under the same four categories established by the Council's strategic planning (Connected Community, Economic Vitality, Financial Sustainability, and Quality Municipal Services). For Connected Community the key areas for focus are Kinnickinnic River Corridor Plan Phase 1, Safe Streets Actions Plan, and Glen Park Phase II. For Economic Vitality the key areas for focus are Downtown Project, Continued Infill in Corporate Parks, and Innovation Center Expansion. For Financial Sustainability the key effort here is examining impact fees. And for Quality Municipal Services the key areas are the Fire Station Remodel, Library Remodel and Capital Campaign, Public Safety Communications Upgrade, and Public Utility Infrastructure Assessment. Lastly, Shively covered we are shifting two meetings this year due to elections, the April Plan Commission meeting shifting from Tuesday to Wednesday April 8th, and November 3rd shifting to November 4th. Shively also mentioned we are expecting to have a meeting in February and possibly having some more ordinance amendments.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Woolsey made a motion to adjourn at 7:04 p.m. S/Odeen; motion carried 5/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Becky Corson, Community Development Coordinator