

CITY OF WASHINGTON, ILLINOIS

Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting

Wednesday, August 3, 2022 at 6:30 P.M.

In a meeting room in the Washington District Library in Five Points - 380 N. Wilmor Road, Washington

Call to Order

Chairman Mike Burdette called the regular meeting of the City of Washington Planning and Zoning Commission to order at 6:30 p.m. in the library meeting room in Five Points, Washington. A quorum was established.

Roll Call

Present and answering roll call: Commissioners Burdette, Milot, Reeder, Ritter, Scott and Williams

Absent: Commissioner Rodriguez

Also present: Planner Aaron Paque and City Clerk Valeri Brod

Item A

Public Hearing:

Request by Brian Johns for a variance of the front yard setback to replace the front porch at 106 S. Cedar Street

Chairman Burdette opened a public hearing for comment at 6:31 p.m. Planner Aaron Paque shared that this request would reduce the setback from 25 feet down to 15 feet to give room to add a front porch. He provided a rendering of the property that showed the proposed porch and explained that many houses in this area are not set back to 25 feet. He shared that this request would keep it in line with the other houses in the area. Property owner Brian Johns shared that they have an existing porch that is five feet by five feet and they want to increase the size in order to make improvements. He also shared that this request will only make it about three feet closer to the road.

At 6:32 p.m. the public hearing was closed.

There was no additional discussion. Commissioner Ritter motioned to accept the variance and Commissioner Scott seconded. On roll call the vote was:

Ayes: 6 Burdette, Milot, Reeder, Ritter, Scott, Williams

Nays: 0

Motion carried.

Item B

Comprehensive Plan Land Use Discussion

Chairman Burdette introduced Zach Borders of Civic Plus. Mr. Borders shared that he made a presentation at the July 6th Planning and Zoning Commission meeting. He explained that he is now bringing another layer forward and that this is more than a simple zoning change. Mr. Borders stated that this concept is called the Transect. He shared that Zoning separates areas into types of development but doesn't take into account physical form and if we slice Washington like a cake, we will see layers of different characters. Mr. Borders noted setbacks, styles of homes, and types of urban development. He stated that this would allow predictable outcomes and this could help reduce friction and share what we expect from developers. Mr. Borders shared that he is a WCHS graduate. He shared that a comprehensive plan is policy, land use, and economic development all together. He stated that what makes it a success is it helps a person to visualize the future plan. He noted that there are many different elements but of all items, they focus on walkability. Mr. Borders shared that he saw people walking in the neighborhoods but not around the central corridor, RT24. He shared a diagram that was color coded, highlighting the walkable areas. He said bikeability is also important and noted that bike trails help, but they can take extra right-of-way. He also shared that open spaces are important and noted our great park district but park access is not as great as they would hope. As for the local economy, Mr. Borders shared they are not planning for the big box stores any longer. He shared that so much has changes since the 2001 market analysis that is no longer appropriate. He noted a publication called Small Towns and specifically an area in Berwyn, Illinois where they created pads for small structures, then held a competition for small business

owners to pitch their ideas for occupying the structures on the pads. They then built small shops on the pads which brings traffic to the area. He stated that this has been a successful project for Berwyn. Mr. Borders shared that middle housing is missing in Washington and zoning is the culprit because multi-family isn't usually welcome. He noted that this concept is especially helpful with providing affordability. He also noted that not having this causes people to move elsewhere. Mr. Borders shared a concept called a Cottage Court where the units are close in proximity, built around a courtyard. Planner Aaron Paque asked for clarification on the occupancy of the lower floors in his sketch of a Cottage Court. Mr. Borders shared an image of the small shops in Berwyn and explained that these were for temporary businesses that hoped to grow their own brick and mortar locations. He shared a photo of Washington Plaza and explained that Washington has too many parking lots. He stated that asphalt doesn't do anything and requires maintenance. Mr. Borders shared ideas about suburban retro fit and noted that some improvements were made to Washington Plaza after the tornado. He shared an image that included the concept of a small greenspace within the parking lot and stated that this could be done quickly and cost effectively. He shared an image that showed Washington Plaza with more businesses that would come because the excitement would be generated. Mr. Borders shared an image with improvements to Route 8 and explained how stormwater would be managed. He also shared images of the Menards and Kroger parking lots, explaining that the parking lots were built for black Friday, but that is not used as much anymore. Mr. Borders provided an overview image of how Freedom Parkway could be developed using this concept. He also shared an image of Serenbe, Georgia that was developed using an urban setting inside a rural and natural area. He explained how Freedom Parkway might include residential and commercial spaces. Mr. Borders shared an image of a single-family house that had a limited setback, not a grass lawn, and used native plantings. Commissioner Milot discussed the speed of traffic that could occur on Freedom Parkway and asked about it possibly becoming a cut-through because it is the quickest route. Commissioner Scott noted that getting into Freedom Parkway now is a choke point. Mr. Borders shared that opening the other roads and providing walking and biking options could help ease the traffic. Planner Aaron Paque asked how the reduction of set-backs could help the drainage. Mr. Borders shared that there are alternative options that absorb more water and grass doesn't absorb as much water as other options. Mr. Borders shared ideas regarding the Square and addressed the streetscape that was developed about a year and a half ago. Mr. Borders shared information about the 223 property. He provided an image of a development outside of St. Louis, Missouri as inspiration for the 223 property. He noted that it was built in the middle of farmland and included drainage areas, a church, multi-family housing, single-family housing, and this evolves over time. Mr. Borders shared a concept illustration of the 223 property. He shared that natural topography should be maintained and the drainage paths, called "green fingers" should remain with boardwalks over them. Doing this allows the water to travel through as it is today. He shared that the original development scheme for this area had nearly 300 units, but this would be less. Mr. Borders shared that this will be used as a tool to increase walkability and bikeability. Planner Paque asked about the commercial aspect. Mr. Borders shared that this is a compact, self-sufficient neighborhood and small markets, boutique restaurants, and a coffee shop could be considered but this isn't dependent on it. Mr. Borders noted the community of Seaside, Florida sharing that the gentleman who inherited the land wanted to development it into a community without going into debt so he developed the area incrementally. He shared that it started with a fruit stand where they passed out brochures and sold t-shirts, then it grew into a seafood market, then a street of houses, and it continues to grow. Commissioner Burdette asked about the impact on schools and noted that Central School District is growing while the other two are stagnant and this is all in Central's district. Mr. Borders shared that the high school numbers and permits are going down. He also shared that District 52 had grown previously and schools are another governmental agency. Mr. Borders noted that walkability and bikeability will help school kids and smaller neighborhood schools could be considered. He also noted an incremental approach can help smooth out the impact.

Old Business

Mr. Paque shared that there will be two variances for next month's meeting.

**Commissioner/Staff
Comments**

None provided

Adjournment

At 7:38 p.m. Commissioner Milot moved and Commissioner Reeder seconded to adjourn.
Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Valeri L. Brod, City Clerk