

**MINUTES
CITY OF LONSDALE
REGULAR PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MEETING
APRIL 17, 2014**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Voting Members: Jim Freid, Dave Dols, John Duban, and Ben Sticha
Council Representative: Scott Pelava

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Joe Kodada

STAFF PRESENT:

City Planner Benjamin Baker and Police Chief Jason Schmitz

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Dols called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm in the Council Chambers at 415 Central Street West.

2. AGENDA

Dols asked if anyone had any additions or deletions to the agenda.

A motion was made by Duban and seconded by Freid to approve the agenda as presented.
Vote for: Freid, Dols, Duban, and Sticha; Against: None. Vote: 4-0. Motion carried.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Duban and seconded by Sticha to approve the Minutes from the March 13, 2014 Planning Commission. Vote for: Freid, Dols, Duban, and Sticha; Against: None. Vote: 4-0. Motion carried.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Jeff Kodada, 309 1st Avenue SW – Landmark Square Apartments, stated that some of the apartment management companies along 1st Avenue SW are not fulfilling their duties in regards to upkeep and maintenance of the apartments. He said that some apartment units have old smelly carpet and possible mold and pest problems. He suggested that some kind of ordinance be enacted to help the elderly and vulnerable adults living in these apartment units. He said that residents of the apartment units might be scared to mention anything about their living conditions to management in fear of being evicted.

The Planning Commission directed City staff to look into the issue. Baker stated that the City currently does not have a rental ordinance and probably will not need one in the immediate future. He noted that the City's Police Chief, Building Inspector, and Administrator have all looked into various living condition complaints in a timely manner, working with apartment management and residents to resolve any legitimate issues.

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- a. Review a Proposed Ordinance Amendment to Lonsdale City Code Chapter 71, Parking Regulations

Dols read the public hearing notice and opened the hearing. Baker read through the entire proposed ordinance for on-street parking regulations. He noted the minor changes that were included in the proposed ordinance based on comments from the Commission members at their last meeting. Baker also compared the new ordinance to the current on-street parking regulations ordinance.

Belinda Thomas, 421 Main Street North, stated that she was greatly in favor of the new proposed ordinance. She said that she is tired of her neighbor who regularly uses the public street for his extra parking, including in front of her home. She stated that she likes the new 48-hour rule along with the proposed rule requiring vehicles to be parked entirely adjacent to their homes. Thomas did ask how the new ordinance would be enforced. Schmitz stated that the Police Department would enforce the new parking rules on a complaint/call basis. He encouraged residents to call the Police Department with any concerns regarding on-street parking. Thomas explained her previous frustration with bothering the Police Department with phone calls in the past without much resolution to the problem. Dols encouraged all resident to call the Police Department right away to notify them of issues in the community.

Duban asked if there is a public place for vehicles to park during snow emergencies. Schmitz said that cars can park in the DRS parking lot. Freid asked if vehicles are ever issued tickets. Schmitz said that the Police Department will sometimes issue administrative citations when warranted. He said that as long as violators are aware of the regulations they will get a ticket. Schmitz said that most of the time \$20 citation fines are issued. He further elaborated that if habitual violations continue or tickets go unpaid then the Police Department will have a vehicle towed.

Dols asked if the audience had anymore comments on the matter. No one else responded to the request.

A motion was made by Duban and seconded by Freid to close the public hearing. Vote for: Freid, Dols, Duban, and Sticha; Against: None. Vote: 4-0. Motion carried. The public hearing closed.

6. GENERAL BUSINESS

- a. Consider Approval of a Proposed Ordinance Amendment to Lonsdale City Code Chapter 71, Parking Regulations

Baker provided a brief update on the public hearing held earlier in the meeting, and he said that City Staff recommends approval of the proposed ordinance amendment. Duban asked if semi-trucks currently park in residential neighborhood very often. Schmitz said that they don't find too many large trucks in residential neighborhoods. Freid stated that he was in favor of cars needing to be parked in front of their own homes, and not parked down the street and listed "for sale". Dols asked if the section concerning "parking for the purpose of advertising or selling merchandise should be clarified to allow for garage sales.

A motion was made by Duban and seconded by Dols to approve the proposed ordinance amendment (Ordinance 2014-257) to Lonsdale City Code Chapter 71, Parking. Vote for: Freid, Dols, Duban, and Sticha; Against: None. Vote: 4-0. Motion carried.

b. Review of New Fence Permit Application (Reformat and Inclusion of Language Pertaining to Fence Encroachments into Easement Areas)

Baker explained that starting at the beginning of 2014, the City modified its application form and requirements for fences to provide residents with a hassle-free permit process compared to before. Baker explained that previously fence applicants had to obtain notarized signatures from each adjacent neighbor and sign off on a separate easement agreement, both of which had to be recorded at Rice County for \$50/document. The Commissioners reviewed the new application form, and Baker explained that necessary easement encroachment language was included on the back page of the form. He noted that the City Attorney did review and approve the new application form. Freid mentioned that fences erected on the property line should be constructed of low-maintenance materials. Dols noted that in the past the City has had to access some rear yard easements to fix drainage issues, like in the case of 9th and 10th Avenue NE. The Commissioners thanked City staff for simplifying the fence permit process and creating a good fence application form.

c. Update on Potential Lot Combination Policy and Requirements

The Commissioners reviewed a draft version of an internal policy created by the City to help answer questions about: 1) requests for residential lot combinations and 2) requests for placing various accessory structures on vacant lots. The policy document listed many items that would be required if someone wanted to combine two residential lots for construction of one home, including conditions about rezoning, neighborhood consistency, sewer/water lines, financial impacts, setbacks, easements, driveway standards, landscaping standards, and home size/design standards. The policy document also listed which accessory structures/items would be allowed on vacant lots and in what circumstances. The Commissioners stated that the City should pursue officially adopting the draft policy in the near future.

On the subject of design standards, the Commissioners discussed potential issues that may arise in newer residential neighborhoods where no one is currently enforcing restrictive covenants for minimum home and landscape design requirements. Baker noted that that he is not aware of any active neighborhood associations or developers still involved in reviewing home plans before said plans are submitted to the City for a building permit. He stated that residents with higher-valued homes may become irritated if homes are constructed with low roof pitches, no landscaping, and little to no design features incorporated into the homes design. The Planning Commission agreed that the City should be proactive and require some minimum design standards for new homes before any lower-value homes are constructed in town. They suggested that design standards should follow the character of the existing neighborhoods.

d. Consider Creating a New “CI, Commercial-Industrial” Hybrid Zoning District for the Lonsdale Business Park / Consider Zoning the Rezac Nature Preserve as “P, Parks and Open Space”

The Commissioners discussed the idea of creating a new hybrid zoning district for uses in the new Lonsdale Business Park. They reviewed the I-2 and B-2 Zoning District regulations to see if certain uses from each of the two districts would work better in the new business park. The Commissioners also reviewed and compared the design standards from each district. The Commission agreed that they want the buildings and lots along Hwy 19 and Garfield Avenue to look nice. They also agreed that the fronts of the buildings along Commerce Drive should require higher design standards. Duban said that the Hwy 19 side of the buildings should be considered the façades. Pelava noted that travelers along Hwy 19 will also be able to view the sides of the buildings too. Baker said that since the north side of the new business park is located along Hwy 19, the City may receive requests for highway/high visibility orientated businesses. He also said that large commercial-industrial developers/builders are telling the City that they like to locate in business parks where buildings are made from high-quality, long-lasting, and visually appealing materials. He stated that if the City allows lower-quality buildings in the beginning stages of the development, that it may be tough to recruit nicer businesses/buildings in the future. The Commission recommended that only one or two free standing signs be allowed along Hwy 19 to promote joint-signage and reduce visual clutter. Pelava provided an update on the design of the Hwy 19 and Garfield Avenue intersection.

7. MISCELLANEOUS

- Baker provided updates on various City projects, such as the Veterans Memorial Project, 3-R Landmark Building Renovation Project, Kalina Park Project, Linking Lonsdale Project, Lonsdale Business Park Project, Main Street Plaza Project, Water Tower Reconditioning Project, and Area No. 5 Reconstruction Project.

8. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Duban and seconded by Freid to adjourn the meeting. Vote for: Freid, Dols, Duban, and Sticha. Against: None. Vote: 4-0. Motion carried. The meeting ended at 8:18 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Benjamin Baker, City Planner