

**WILLMAR PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF WILLMAR, MN
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19, 2020**

MINUTES

1. The Willmar Planning Commission met on Wednesday, August 19, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. virtually via GoTo Meeting.

**** Members Present:** Christina Nelson, Rolf Standfuss, Steve Gardner, Jeff Kimpling, Cletus Frank, Terry Sieck, Khalif Ahmed Bashir, and Jonathan Marchand.

**** Members Absent:** N/A

**** Others Present:** Sarah Swedburg – Planner, Lori Knapper - Willmar, MN, Mona Lackore - Willmar, MN.

2. MINUTES: Minutes of the July 15, 2020 meetings were approved as presented.

3. KNAPPER HOME OCCUPATION CUP -- FILE NO. 20-01: The public hearing opened at 7:08p.m. Staff presented a request by Lori Knapper of Willmar, MN for a conditional use permit to allow a home occupation (salon) on property described as follows: Lot 6, Block 1, Terwisscha’s Addition (904 15th Ave SW). Ms. Knapper is planning an addition on the east end of her existing home to accommodate this use, and all business will be conducted inside, by appointment.

Mona Lackore (Willmar, MN) spoke in favor of the Conditional Use Permit & inquired if the business would have more than one employee. Ms. Knapper confirmed that she would be the sole employee.

No one else appeared to speak for or against the request and the public hearing closed at 7:11 p.m.

Staff comments were reviewed and discussed (see Attachment A). Staff noted that all phone calls received from neighbors were positive & in favor of this application.

Mr. Gardner inquired about additional staffing allowances for a home occupation. The Zoning Ordinance was amended in 2011 to allow up to two non-family member employees residing at another address to be employed at a home occupation as long as adequate & convenient parking is available on site.

Mr. Marchand asked about signage plans. Ms. Knapper informed the commission that she has not determined what the final signage plan is, but anticipates putting something in

place to help customers find her location. Sign permits are ancillary to Planning Commission & building permits.

The Planning Commission reviewed and made affirmative findings of fact as per Zoning Ordinance Section 9.E.3.a.1-7.

Mr. Kimpling made a motion, seconded by Mr. Marchand to approve the Conditional Use Permit with the following conditions, as amended by Mr. Frank:

- A. The home addition and home occupation shall meet Zoning Ordinance setback, signage, and parking standards at all times or a variance shall be obtained.
- B. A building permit shall be submitted and approved by the City Building Inspector for the construction of the home addition.
- C. The use shall meet all applicable local, state, and federal rules and regulations at all times.

The motion carried.

4. TINY HOMES STANDARDS DISCUSSION (CONTINUED): Staff reviewed the discussion that began at Planning Commission on July 15 regarding Tiny Homes. This discussion began because of an inquiry from a local developer interested in a Tiny Home development triggered after the adoption of the 2020 Minnesota Building Code that now includes “Appendix Q” of the International Building Code, allowing for the construction of Tiny Homes that are less than 400 square feet. Staff also shared anecdotal research collected from other cities with Tiny Homes standards.

Mr. Frank asked if there has ever been internal discussion about imposing a minimum square footage for a home. Staff has never felt the need to impose such a minimum requirement. At this time, there is only a minimum square footage requirement for lots.

Smaller homes used to be the standard, as Mr. Gardner informed the commission; the “missing middle” doesn’t just come from the price range needed to fill the gap in housing stock that is being seen across the country, but the size of the homes themselves. He emphasized discussion from July that the Commission should continue discussion focused on Tiny Homes with foundations (as opposed to mobile). Mr. Standfuss expressed his desire to see Tiny Homes allowed in a planned development rather than on vacant lots in already developed neighborhoods.

Mr. Kimpling inquired if Homeowners Associations (HOA) ever impose minimum square footage requirements for homes. If they do, HOA covenants may impose stricter guidelines than the City’s Zoning Ordinance, but never allow a less strict standard unless first approved by the Planning Commission.

Mr. Frank thought that the 4,000 sf lot size that can be achieved with a Planned Unit Development may be the appropriate size for a lot. He has more concern about amending

the code to define square footage of a tiny home & approval of such a home in an existing neighborhood. He thought that perhaps a Conditional Use Permit should be required to allow a tiny home on an existing, vacant lot in a developed area

Mr. Gardner asked about the feasibility of creating a subcommittee to dive into this topic deeper and provide the Commission with a specific recommendation for Tiny Home standards.

Staff will research the possibility of subcommittee creation to dive deeper into investigation of Tiny Homes. Additionally, Staff will continue to gather more feedback from communities with existing Tiny Homes as well as get a better feel from the local developer if there is current community member interest in purchasing Tiny Homes.

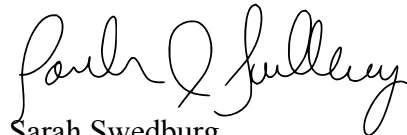
5. MISCELLANY: The Comprehensive Plan is nearing completion of Phase 1. Staff and Mid-Minnesota Development Commission are beginning the planning process for Comprehensive Plan Task Force creation and public outreach activities.

2 of 3 phases of the Renaissance Zone have been completed and approved by the City Council. This new program does not negate the Commission's role in reviewing City land use items such as land sales. The last phase of this program will include the Zoning Overlay district and heritage designation program, both of which will be reviewed by the Commission prior to adoption.

Planning Commission has received 2 formal applications for appointments of Community members. The first who applied is being appointed to the Commission to fill the vacancy of the early retirement of Dr. Kjergaard. Staff anticipates having 2 more community members ready to fill the vacancies that will occur at the end of the year due to the retirements of Mr. Gardner and Standfuss.

6. There being no further business to come before the Commission the meeting adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Sarah Swedburg
Planner

PLANNING COMMISSION – AUGUST 19, 2020

STAFF COMMENTS

1. KNAPPER HOME OCCUPATION CUP -- FILE NO 20-01:

- The applicant is Lori Knapper of Willmar, MN.
- The applicant is requesting a conditional use permit to allow a home occupation for a hair salon business on property legally described as: Lot 6, Block 1, Terwisscha's Addition (904 15th Ave SW).
- The parcel is zoned R-2 (One- and Two- Family Residential).
- The parcel fronts 15th Ave SW, and is accessed via this same road.
- The hair salon will be operated by appointment.
- General hours of operation will be Monday mornings, Tuesday & Thursday afternoons
- The applicant will be the sole employee, off street parking is available in the driveway, business will take place within the home, and no exterior storage will occur of business related items.
- An addition on the east side of the existing home will be constructed to accommodate this use.
- Sign permits are ancillary from the CUP. Signs are limited to 2 sq. ft. in size and require a sign permit.
- No anticipation of significant increases in deliveries at the home.
- All comments from neighbors received by staff have been positive and in favor of approval of this request.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve the conditional use permit with the following condition:

- A. The home addition shall meet Zoning Ordinance setback requirements (10 feet from interior side yard property line and 30 feet from right-of-way and rear yard property line).
- B. A building permit shall be submitted and approved by the City Building Inspector for the construction of the home addition.
- C. The use shall meet all applicable local, state, and federal rules and regulations at all times.