



City of Othello
Planning Commission
October 18, 2021
Anne Henning

CALL TO ORDER

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this was a hybrid meeting with a remote component via GoToMeeting. Chair Chris Dorow called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Chair Chris Dorow, Alma Carmona, Brian Gentry, Daniela Voorhies, Kevin Gilbert

Absent:

Staff: Community Development Director Anne Henning

Attendees: Bob Carlson

MINUTES APPROVAL

Chair Dorow mentioned that the minutes provided in the packet summarized the discussions rather than being a verbatim transcript. Ms. Henning noted that the only legal requirement is to capture motions, seconds, and votes, however the discussion information is useful so she includes that. Doing a verbatim transcript takes too long to be feasible.

September 20, 2021 minutes were approved as written. M/S Gilbert/Carmona

ASSISTED LIVING IN THE C-1 ZONE – DISCUSSION

During the Zoning Code update process (2017-2020), an assisted living facility was determined to be an allowed use in C-2 and C-3 but prohibited in C-1. This was based on the idea that C-1 should be the traditional downtown development pattern with buildings directly abutting the sidewalk and pedestrian activity along the street. Prohibiting assisted living was logical because such a facility would not typically generate pedestrian activity and would not be a good downtown use.

Staff has been contacted about converting 140 E. Main, the former CBHA building, into assisted living. The current zoning wouldn't allow this, but the proponents are interested in doing a combination of commercial uses that could serve the general public as well as the facility residents. There are uses often found in assisted living facilities which are also typical of a C-1 Zone, such as beauty shop/barber shop, nail salon, and coffee shop. The proponents would also have been interested in potentially providing health care facilities (one has recently earned a nurse practitioner license); however, the proposed sale agreement restricts any uses that would duplicate any of CBHA's services. Other potential compatible uses we discussed were restaurant, childcare, bank, and library. The commercial uses could occupy the public-facing, street-level portions of the building, with the assisted living portions behind and/or above or below street grade. This would be similar to how multi-family residential uses are allowed in a basement or upper story in all three commercial zones under the current code. The Planning Commission is being asked if they would be in support of going through the process to change the code to potentially allow some form of assisted living in C-1.

Veerpal Kaur, one of the proponents, explained they are considering purchasing the building to convert it to assisted living. They like the idea of including space for commercial uses such as a salon, coffee shop, or library. Chair Dorow mentioned the code could have a footnote like it does for multi-family to have

street level commercial. Ms. Kaur noted they would also need street level access to the assisted living portion.

The Commission was in favor of scheduling a public hearing for the next meeting, Nov. 15, to consider changes to the C-1 Zone.

SAND HILL ESTATES FUTURE STREET LAYOUT – DISCUSSION

The developer of Sand Hill Estates has been working with City and Fire District staff to come up with a layout for future phases that would discourage cut-through traffic and reduce speeding. Since reducing street width was not desired by the Planning Commission or Council, the developer looked for other methods to reduce excessive speeds and make the streets less attractive for non-neighborhood-residents to get from one collector to another. Methods chosen were dead end streets and not having a straight line between collectors. The 20' emergency access ways at the ends of the cul-de-sacs were added at the request of the Fire District for better access in and out of the dead ends. There would need to be bollards and parking restrictions at either end. Since these access ways would need to be kept clear, they can do double duty as pedestrian/bike connections to better connect the neighborhood for non-motorized travel. The Commission was in favor of the general layout proposed.

PARKS & RECREATION ELEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN – UPDATE

For the last several months, the Planning Commission has been working on updating the Parks & Recreation Element of the Comprehensive Plan, which serves as the Park Plan that qualifies us for grant funding for projects such as the Lions Park ballfields, playground, and basketball courts. To continue to qualify us for funding, Park Plans must be updated every 6 years, with the next update due March 1, 2022.

Goals

The Commission discussed the draft Goals so far, starting with "Maintain a minimum ratio of 1:1 open space to recreational space in community parks." "Recreational space" was understood to be developed facilities, including outfields. There was consensus that open space for informal activities like picnicking, frisbee, and little kid soccer is important. Commissioner Gilbert noted that if the open space is interspersed with developed facilities, it might not be very usable. There was discussion about whether there should be minimum dimensions, such as 40 x 50 yards, for open space. The Commission looked at an aerial photo of Lions Park and wondered if it already had more than 50% developed facilities. They felt it is important to "spread the wealth" and put facilities in other parks and also not use up any more of the open space at Lions Park. Discussion about whether it was appropriate to require something like a soccer complex to be double the size so that half could be undeveloped open space. Discussion about defining specialty parks like a soccer complex vs a general use park like Lions. Discussion about having a goal specific to maintaining the existing amount of open space at Lions Park. Concluded to delete the 1:1 goal.

Commissioner Gilbert noted that draft goal "Identify and prioritize future needs and facilities" was vague and suggested adding a time frame. Ms. Henning noted that RCO requires aspirational goals with specific measurable objectives. She suggested changing the goal to "Periodically identify and prioritize..." and then have an objective for how often. RCO requires the plan to be updated every 6 years. Commissioners would like an objective of an annual review of future needs and facilities.

Ms. Henning suggested that the draft goal of "Try to have at least one unique feature or amenity in every park" could be a measurable objective under the goal of "Focus on unique amenities for all parks." Commission agreed.

Level of Service

Commissioners felt Level of Service was a difficult topic and they may not have sufficient information yet to make recommendations. Commissioner Carmona mentioned usually there are 30 men's soccer teams registered, although this was a very light year with only 17. Commissioners thought maybe a survey would be good, asking the public how many baseball fields, soccer fields, etc. are needed.

Commissioners discussed whether there should be a standard of number of parks per population. They concluded it would be better to have a standard for square footage per population, since they didn't want to see a lot of tiny parks without amenities created just to meet a standard.

Commissioners discussed the RCO Level of Service Standard about active recreation. They felt it would be better to have specific standards for each category, such as playgrounds, baseball fields, soccer fields and courts, football, basketball, tennis, roller skating, skateboarding, walking paths, sidewalks, tracks, pools, places to cool down, volleyball, open space, and pickleball. Commissioner Gentry noted he had recently been in Utah, where each park had 6 to 10 pickleball courts. He said it was fun for himself and his children and it didn't take up much space. The other Commissioners mentioned they had included pickleball as a high priority last month when they prioritized activities.

Commissioners discussed the RCO Level of Service Standard about capacity. They felt there may not be enough open space capacity for large events such as 4th of July and car shows. They wondered if there is enough soccer capacity at Kiwanis. They mentioned that men's soccer teams compete for the baseball fields, to use them for soccer since there aren't enough soccer fields available to reserve.

Commissioners discussed the RCO Level of Service Standard related to quality. They wondered if the public is satisfied. Probably using a baseball field for soccer doesn't lead to the best quality for either baseball or soccer. They also felt an aspect of quality relates to safety, including the safety of the equipment, the safety of the surroundings, and whether there is safe access such as sidewalks.

Commissioners discussed the RCO Level of Service Standard related to distribution and access. They felt current access and distribution is not sufficient. They suggested looking at a radius of half mile, one mile, and two miles.

Commissioners discussed whether to include school facilities when calculating level of service. They preferred not to count school facilities, since these facilities are not designed for all ages, there are times of day they are not available to the public, and using school facilities for the general public would add maintenance costs to the school district.

Commissioners discussed whether to add a goal about increasing accessibility for all. They talked about the need for inclusiveness and therapeutic opportunity. The Spokane "sensory playground"/music park was mentioned as a good example.

Priorities

Ms. Henning asked the Commission how to prioritize upgrading existing facilities compared to the priorities from last month for adding new facilities. Commissioner Gilbert stated it would be more important to fix existing equipment than to install new facilities. Commissioners thought maybe staff could grade the maintenance of existing facilities and determine the point where they would need to be replaced, when they would be prioritized above new facilities.

Commissioners reviewed the "high priority" items from last month and determined this order of priority:

1. Soccer complex
2. Musical playground
3. Splash pad
4. Pickleball
5. Stage
6. Art/murals
7. Futsal (soccer courts are less of a priority if a soccer complex is created)

Commissioners discussed having local artists create murals, both for lower costs and local pride. Commissioners discussed that a city named Othello should have a Shakespeare festival, possibly Shakespeare in Spanish.

Commissioners asked staff to prepare Level of Service Standards, to be reviewed at the next meeting.

SEPTEMBER BUILDING & PLANNING DEPARTMENT REPORT - INFORMATIONAL

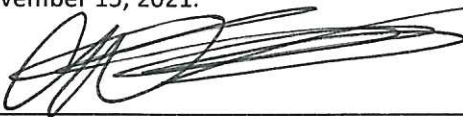
Chair Dorow encouraged the Commissioners to read the department report to keep track of what is going on in Building & Planning.

ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT (ADU) PUBLIC HEARING OCTOBER 25

Ms. Henning mentioned that the Council would be holding a public hearing on Accessory Dwelling Units next week. The Council would like to hear from the community, so Commissioners should be sure to encourage people they know are interested to testify and/or submit written comments. Staff will give notice of the meeting as a special meeting, so all Planning Commissioners can attend if they want.

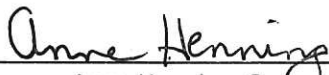
ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm. Next regular meeting is Monday, November 15, 2021.



Chris Dorow, Chair

Date: 11/15/21



Anne Henning, Community Development Director

Date: 11-18-21