

**MINUTES OF  
Rensselaer Advisory Planning Commission Hearing 2023-08  
Thursday, December 14, 2023 at 5:30 pm CST**

**I. Call to Order:** The Rensselaer Advisory Planning Commission met on Thursday, December 14, 2023 in City Hall Council Chambers. Advisory Planning Commission President, Stan Haines, called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm CST. Building Commissioner, Joshua Davis, was asked to proceed with roll call.

**II. Roll Call:**

**Present:** President - Stan Haines, Jeff Rayburn, Bryce Black, Justin Wilson, Deana Rule, Sean Cawby, Mike Davis, Building Commissioner - Joshua Davis and Secretary - Jessica Call

**Absent:** Vice President - Cliff Wood and Joe Effinger

**Guests:** City Attorney - Jacob Ahler, Kevin M Arnold, Dennis Black, John and Kathy Mroczek, Robert Schenk, Max and Hannah Madson and Brett Schwab.

**III. Old Business:**

**A. Ordinance 21-2023 - Approval of Council Amendment:** City Council made an amendment to remove Section 2, paragraph 12 from the original amendment proposed by the Rensselaer Advisory Planning Commission. Following the approval, it will go before the City Council for the final approval. Motion for approval made by Cawby, seconded by Black. **Motion Passed.**

**B. Rezone 828 N Melville St:** Commissioner Davis is continuing the proposal for the rezone of the 600 block of E Oak St as well as the 800 block of N Melville St from I-1 (Light Industrial) to R-2 (Two-Family Residential). 816 E Oak and 803 & 817 N Rachel St will remain I-1 (Light Industrial) for the time being, due to the businesses that were grandfathered in back in 2008. Upon approval, notices for the public hearing will be mailed for the next Plan Commission meeting. Motion for approval was made by Davis, seconded by Cawby. **Motion Passed.**

**IV. New Business:**

**A. Rezone St. Joseph's College Parcel from RS to R1; Dennis Black:** Dennis Black came before the Plan Commission to petition the rezone a St. Joseph's College parcel from RS (Suburban Residential) to R-2 (Two-Family Residential) to allow for hands-on training and education and aid in the city's housing needs. The rezone would allow the program to better utilize the property, resulting in .17 acre lots, rather than 1 acre lots. The program is proposed to be self-sustaining; Saint Joseph's College will be funding the costs for instructors, materials, subcontractors and the land. There will be approximately 28 lots on the parcel. The projected cost of each finished single-family home will be in the mid \$200k range. Bryce Black stated that city utilities will be readily available for these properties. A motion for approval was made by Rayburn, seconded by Cawby. **Motion Passed.**

**B. Rezone 331 W Washington St; Hannah and Max Madson:** Hannah Madson, the current owner of Busy Bee, is proposing to rezone 331 W Washington St. from R-1 (Single-Family Residential) to B-1 (Central Business). Madson is closing Busy Bee, in hopes of establishing a pet grooming business. This business will be year round, Monday through Thursday 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, and every 3rd Saturday. There are currently 4-5 parking spaces available on the property, but this business will be strictly drop-off and pick-up only. The structure's exterior will remain the same; however, new signage will be installed. A motion for approval was made by Black, seconded by Rule. **Motion Passed.**

- C. Recommendation to Council to pursue development of Unified Development Ordinance:** Commissioner Davis explained the Unified Development Ordinance is a zoning and subdivision ordinance combined. Commissioner Davis also informed members that he encumbered \$19k from the 2023 Building Department budget to put towards the cost of the UDO Development. In November of 2023, the Building Department received a cost estimate from GRW, Inc., which was in the amount of \$77k. Members expressed that the estimate seemed high; however, Commissioner Davis stated that the last time the city had this done was between 2006 and 2007, and even then it cost nearly \$70K. A motion for the recommendation was made by Cawby, seconded by Rayburn. **Motion Passed.**
- D. Citizen Member Requirement for Mayoral Appointments:** According to IC 36-7-4-207 the municipal executive shall appoint four (4) citizen members. These citizen members cannot be elected officials, which may affect the status of our current board members.

**V. Optional Discussion:**

- A. Petition to Vacate Undeveloped Prairie St:** Brett Schwab would like to vacate the 20 ft. section west of Midway Electronics. Schwab plans to install a fence on the north end of the property and stage the delivery trucks to eliminate backups. Currently, the city gains no taxes on this property, and if the property is vacated to Schwab, the city will begin to collect property taxes.
- B. Plan Commission Policies and Procedures Preview:** Commissioner Davis would like the members to read through the policies and procedures to better understand how the meetings are supposed to operate.

**VI. Adjournment:** President Haines entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion made by Cawby, seconded by Rayburn.

**Motion Carried** - Meeting was adjourned at 6:25 pm CST.

**Next Meeting:** Thursday, January 11, 2024 at 5:30 pm CST.

**Minutes Prepared by:** Advisory Planning Commission Secretary - Jessica Call