

**CITY OF HANOVER  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
NOVEMBER 22, 2021  
OFFICIAL MINUTES**

**Call to Order**

Stan Kolasa called the November 22, 2021, Planning Commission Meeting to order at 7:00 pm in person. Members present were Stan Kolasa, Jim Schendel, Dean Kuitunen, Mike Christenson, and Gretchen Barrett. Also present City Planner Cindy Nash, City Engineer Nick Preisler, Council Liaison Jim Zajicek, and Administrative Assistant Amy Biren. Planning Commission applicants for the open seat were present in the audience along with many guests.

**Approval of the Agenda**

**MOTION** by Schendel to approve the agenda, seconded by Kuitunen.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

**Approval of Minutes from the October 25, 2021, Regular Meeting**

**MOTION** by Schendel to approve the October 25, 2021, minutes, seconded by Kuitunen.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

**Approval of Minutes from the October 25, 2021, Joint Meeting of the Planning Commission and the Economic Development Authority (EDA).**

**MOTION** by Schendel to approve the October 25, 2021, Joint Meeting minutes, seconded by Kuitunen.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

**Citizen's Forum**

None

**Public Hearing**

**Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance Related to Parking, Swimming Pools, and Exterior Storage**

Kolasa closed the Planning Commission meeting at 7:03 pm and opened the Public Hearing.

Nash reminded the Board members that the amendments related to swimming pools and exterior storage have been previously discussed and the proposed changes were before them in a red-lined ordinance.

She continued, stating that the parking ordinance had been discussed during a joint meeting with the Economic Development Authority (EDA) in October. Based on the discussions and feedback, Nash said she did not include a reduction in parking in the B1 Zoning District, Downtown River Commercial, as it was met with unanimous support. Additionally, Nash said that if the Board is interested in such a reduction, she suggests that another discussion takes place at the next meeting and that the parking amendments are tabled.

Nash said that one change that she made was to amend the parking calculations to be determined by 90 gross square feet rather than by 2.5 seats.

Kuitunen asked for clarification on whether the entire group of amendments would need to be tabled or if the parking amendments could be separated. Nash responded that the parking amendments could be separated from the other amendments and the Board could send only the swimming pools and exterior

storage forward to Council. She added that a public hearing would have to be advertised again for the parking amendment.

Kolasa said that the Fire Chief would like to use storage containers for training purposes and asked if the amendments would impact that plan. Nash said that she was unaware of that plan and would need more information.

Martin Waters, 10268 Kalen Lane: The River Inn may be impacted by the ordinance amendments and that the Planning Commission and Council should make it easier to conduct business in Hanover, not more difficult. The businesses in Hanover, particularly the restaurants, have had a very challenging two years and leaders should consider this.

Barrett asked for confirmation that two of the amendments can go forward, and that Section 10.39 dealing with parking in all districts could be tabled. Nash confirmed this. She added that the use in the district determines how many parking spots are needed. Determining gross square feet is a measurable and objective way to determine parking spots rather than using seats. Seating areas are variable and subject to change.

Barrett asked for a refresher on how other cities determine parking spaces. Nash said that many are using the gross square feet and some use seating. She added that one thing not considered during the joint meeting was counting public parking spaces toward the parking space requirement.

After determining that no other audience member wanted to speak, Kolasa closed the Public Hearing and re-opened the Planning Commission meeting at 7:16 pm.

Christenson stated that going from 80 gross square feet to 90 for parking calculations makes it less restrictive. Nash concurred.

Claudia Pingree, 11711 Riverview Road NE: The River Inn does much for the community. The parking calculations will make it more restrictive and difficult for businesses to be successful.

Kolasa said that the City is not making it more difficult and the discussions need to happen.

Barrett said that at the last meeting with the EDA, it was discussed whether or not public parking spaces could be counted toward the parking requirements for businesses. Nash said that the response was mixed so she did not include it as an option. Nash reminded the Planning Commission that they will be the ones recommending the amendments and sending it forward to Council.

Kuitunen stated that an ordinance needs to be created that addresses a variety of issues otherwise there will be variances being brought to the Planning Commission. He reiterated that the City is not trying to make it more difficult for businesses, but that it is fair for all businesses.

Nash reminded the Board that depending on where the business is located and in what zoning district will determine how parking is calculated. She added that whatever ordinances are put in place, they need to be reasonable over all of the districts.

Zajicek also explained to the audience that an ordinance is needed.

Kuitunen asked for clarification on to whom the 90 gross square feet applies. Nash responded that it only applies to restaurants and bars.

Christensen said that it looks like that less parking would be required under the new ordinance. He suggested the Board should consider going forward with the changes and address issues on a case-by-case basis.

Nash reiterated that every business needs to be treated equitably. Continuing, Nash said that she could bring the parking ordinance amendment back to the December meeting. Christenson said that may be better to have a complete understanding and not move forward. Nash said that it is difficult as the City has not received any plans from the two other restaurants and do not have comparisons which would help with the amendments.

Kuitunen thinks that the Board will have to come up with other calculations. Schendel said that the B1, Downtown River Commercial, and B2, Highway Commercial, districts need to be addresses separately. Nash said that one space per 90 gross square feet is less restrictive than one space per two and a half seats. If the Board starts tinkering with calculations, then there may not be enough parking spaces in the future if a different business is in that same location.

Christenson asked if there could be parking regulations for peak times versus nonpeak times. Nash replied that would not be easily enforced and different districts or properties may have parking spilling over into other districts, residential areas for example, and would have undesirable consequences.

Nash reminded the Board that they may separate the parking ordinance amendments from the other two sections and table the parking or they could table all of the ordinances. There is not an urgency with the swimming pool or exterior storage amendments as it is entering into winter.

**MOTION** by Kuitunen to move forward to Council, recommending the amendments to the swimming pool and exterior storage ordinances, but to remove and table Section 10.39 related to parking, seconded by Barrett.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

## **Public Hearing**

### **Variations Related to Parking at 11220 River Road NE, the River Inn**

Kolasa closed the Planning Commission meeting and opened the Public Hearing at 7:35 pm.

Nash said that there are two variations related to parking and the site plan before the Planning Commission for consideration tonight. She suggested that the representative for the River Inn explain the site plan and the request for variations.

George Fantouzza, architect for the River Inn, said that he has been working with owner Jodi Tappe since March. The River Inn would like to expand and bring the facility up to ADA compliance. The parking lot has been turned into a patio area in response to the Covid Pandemic. Fantouzza explained that the River Inn had been grandfathered in regarding parking regulations, but due to the expansion of the patio area, it would no longer be considered grandfathered and would need to meet current parking regulations. The existing parking stalls prior to Covid were calculated to be between 30-33. This number was arrived by the applicant and the City Engineer, Nick Preisler.

Fantouzza then directed the Board's attention to the site plan and remodeling plans. He explained how the trash and grease storage area would be moved back onsite. Supplies are stored in the accessory building, necessitating staff to cross the patio area to bring items to the main restaurant building. He walked the Board through the expansion area of the restaurant.

Fantouzza said that there is no intention to increase capacity of the restaurant.

Jodi Tappe, River Inn owner, stated that her business location is different than businesses located on CSAH 19. They are asking for parking calculations to be fair, but that it is not apples to apples. She has heard that the plans for CSAH 19 include making River Road a dead end, but that she is okay with that.

Nash stated that there are two variances that are needed: a reduction in the number of parking spaces required and a possible reduction in the number of parking spaces they already have. Nash continued with the suggestion that since the parking amendments were tabled, that the variances be tabled as well and to give feedback to the River Inn.

Nash directed the Board to the memo in the agenda packet and the explanations of parking required and provided pre-Covid, the proposed parking plans, and potential options for parking mitigation. The options include angled parking in the street right of way; construction of an off-site River Inn parking lot; implement a City program to pay for parking for businesses; or approve the variances with no mitigation.

Kolasa asked for input from the audience members.

Mary Coons, 11150 River Road: She believes that the number of parking spaces required is unrealistic and as a homeowner living a few doors down, does not mind patrons parking on the street in front of her home. Most downtown areas in historic towns do not have much if any parking. The River Inn has made Hanover a destination and gives back to the community. The River Inn parking lot safety has improved because of the patio being there. She asks the Commission to be flexible in changing the parking ordinance.

Bob Miller, 11150 River Road: Big Bore BBQ and the River Inn make Hanover a destination to visit. He knows of Maple Grove residents that choose to come to Hanover to eat rather than the many restaurants in their own town. The ordinances proposed would not work and have suggestions he would like to leave with the Planning Commission. He also feels that "gross" needs to be defined.

Claudia Pingree, 11711 Riverview Road: She is very proud of Hanover. The River Inn gives back to the community in many ways. It is not fair for Jodi to buy extra parking for putting us (Hanover) on the map.

Bob Pink, 11107 River Road: I have been a business owner for 36 years in Hanover. When the City created a parking lot downtown next to the River Inn property, he questioned who is parking in it other than the River Inn. It is not fair that other businesses have had to provide parking spaces over the years and the River Inn is asking for an exemption. Perhaps a solution would be for the River Inn to pay for the City parking lot.

Martin Waters, 10268 Kalen Lane: He understands that the Planning Commission and the City Council have big decisions to make and have been part of that process in the past as mayor. He agrees that there is not enough parking in the downtown area, but that it is working. He is asking that the City does not make it harder for businesses, but to make it easier. There are other ordinances not being enforced that could be worked on. The expansion of the River Inn is creating a better space, especially with ADA compliance. Common sense needs to come into play.

Bob Miller, 11150 River Road, responded to Bob Pink's comment that this situation is different. Pink asked why Jodi didn't buy the property where the City parking lot is located. Tappe responded that they did have first right of refusal on the property, but that her husband was in the hospital at the time and they decided to pass on the offer.

Mike Straub, 11103 River Road: I, too, am a business owner on River Road and don't have an issue with people parking on the street. However, sometimes the overflow parking from River Inn patrons impact on how he is able to enter his business driveway. People are also using his driveway as a turn around. Business owners do work past business owners and shouldn't be impacted. The parking ordinance needs to be enforceable. He suggested that signage be added to River Road so that people would not park in the areas around business entrances.

Fantouzza stated that Jodi does not need to move ahead with the expansion and can move everything back inside of the restaurant. Tappe stated that if she had to move everything back in, she would need to lay off people and would still have the parking issues.

Tappe thanked the community and businesses for their support and offering of the use of their parking lots.

Kolasa closed the Public Hearing and re-opened the Planning Commission at 8:18 pm.

Christenson asked what the plan was for the extra building that is currently storage. Tappe said that the goal right now is to get everything out of there and over into the expanded area. They are not planning on getting rid of the storage building since it would only provide a minimal number of parking spaces.

Christenson also commented that the City parking lot can be used by any business and if additional businesses make Hanover their home, they should have the ability to use the lot.

Kuitunen said many times as he jogs through town, he has seen people doing unsafe driving maneuvers and illegally parking. There needs to be a solution to parking in the downtown area.

Tappe said that she has had people tell her that they don't mind walking blocks to eat at the River Inn.

Nick Preisler, City Engineer, requested to speak regarding the CSAH 19 project. He said that the City's engineer firm, WSB, has taken the lead for the project with Wright County. In reference to Tappe's comment about River Road becoming a dead end, he said that was a very preliminary design created by a different consultant. As the lead on the project, the City has a hand in how it is handled and presented to residents, including opportunities for resident input. The end goal is to increase mobility through Hanover.

Zajicek asked if the trash and grease storage area could be moved. Fantouzza said that the desire is to keep it away from the patrons as well as keep the hammerhead turnaround in place for the garbage truck.

Preisler clarified how SAC and WAC, sewer and water connections, were calculated. They are not calculated by the number of restrooms that a business has, rather by square footage. The use of the area has different square footage calculations. For example, to determine WAC, for every 300 square feet of indoor space is equivalent to one unit. Outdoor space is calculated using 1200 square feet for one unit.

Barrett asked if the gross square feet calculation for parking would count everything in the building. Nash said yes. Nash continued that some cities discount certain spaces in the calculation, but that creates the same issue as using the number of seats.

Kuitunen asked if it would be possible to take just the square footage of the seating area. Nash replied the issue is seats are put in areas that were not considered before or considered as part of the calculation.

Nash reminded the Board that parking for the employees has to be considered as well as parking for the patrons.

Zajicek said that square footage doesn't give Covid consideration where there are less seats. Nash said that it would not be different.

Kolasa clarified what the process and what is needed for the next meeting. He went over the list for Nash which included striping, signage downtown, parking spaces, fire code and enforcement of illegal parking. He asked if there could be an extra meeting scheduled as a work session.

Barrett asked for an updated estimate on the cost of angled parking.

Doug Hammerseng, 219 Jansen Avenue, and former Planning Commission Liaison, asked the chair for the opportunity to speak. Kolasa allowed him to speak. Hammerseng said that we have to be very careful here and what decisions are made. It is agreed that the River Inn is loved and does much for the community, but that emotions cannot make the decision. The Comprehensive Plan does a good job outlining what the downtown area will look like. The City is taking the lead with the CSAH 19 project by taking the opportunity to utilize what will happen in the future. This project may free up space that would lend itself to parking. The vision needs to be in place and then work towards it.

Planning Commission members agreed that a work session before the December 22<sup>nd</sup> Planning Commission meeting would be a good idea.

**MOTION** by Kuitunen to table the two variance requests and site plan for the River Inn for further discussion, seconded by Schendel.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

#### **Unfinished Business**

None

#### **New Business**

##### **River Inn Site Plan at 11220 River Road Ne**

This was reviewed in conjunction with the variance applications and tabled.

#### **Interviews of Planning Commission Candidates for Vacant Seats**

Kolasa stated that the Board needed a five-minute break before conducting candidate interviews.

The candidates were asked to take a seat in the front row. Each candidate would be asked the same question by Planning Commission members. After all of the questions have been asked, candidates will have the opportunity to ask Board members questions.

#### **Tell us about yourself**

**Bob Miller:** I have lived in Hanover for more than 20 years in the oldest house in Hanover. I am an engineer and analyst who has dealt with complex people and situations and can also write. I am one of the founding members of the Hanover Historical Society. I view serving on the Planning Commission as another element in serving Hanover.

**Mike Amery:** I have just moved to Hanover and have been here for three months. I would like to get involved in my community and have experience in dealing with issues similar to the ones Hanover is experiencing. I served on the Maple Grove City Council and have experience with planning downtown areas, specifically the main street area of Maple Grove and the Arbor Lakes complex. I moved to Washington, DC, and served as a lobbyist for 16 years before moving to Hanover. I work from home and will be in the community.

**Elyse Phillips:** I have lived in Crow River Heights for 12.5 years and moved here when the earlier building was taking place. We chose to move to Hanover because we value the small-town feel and want our child to grow up in similarly to how we did. I value the small-town feel of Hanover, but realize that we need to have an eye to the future. I have worked with the Hanover EDA, the Buffalo Chamber, and other organizations as part of a marketing firm from an educational aspect, teaching businesses how to market themselves and use marketing tools. Since my son is growing older, I want to become more involved with my community.

**Jeff Woullet:** I have lived in Hanover for one year and intentionally moved here after looking at neighboring communities. I like the size of Hanover and find it to be a desirable community. I grew up in a small town observing how my dad interacted with the community members. I would also bring the millennial perspective to the Board and represent the younger community members.

**John Ganfield:** I have lived in Hanover for eight years. I have learned a lot about the Planning Commission over the past few years as I have had to submit applications for my business. The Planning Commission has done a lot for me and my business. I want to give back and help others through the process just like when Doug Hammerseng walked me through the process.

### **Land issues confronting Hanover**

**Miller:** When the Comprehensive Plan identifies an area as a certain zoning district but there are other uses in it, how does that work. For example, I live in the B1 District, Downtown River Commercial, but I am a residence which isn't a use in that district. I don't have a vision or agenda and just want to provide service to the community.

**Amery:** People are moving to Hanover. From the conversation this evening, there is opportunity for development downtown. The housing being constructed can create economic development within the City and a vision is needed.

**Phillips:** Housing needs to be planned intentionally and who it is attracting. Does there need to be more multi-family or senior housing? What is desired and then what is the vision to attain that. As Hanover expands, it also needs to move forward.

**Woullet:** The land needs to be used responsibly and the small-town feel retained. The residents need to be asked what they want and why they are moving to Hanover. Making sure everyone is on the same page is important and being part of the solution.

**Ganfield:** None of the recent projects have been that controversial. The City has spoken regarding the housing and will be busy the next few years with new residential construction. I look forward to the direction the City will go.

### **Strict versus flexible ordinances**

**Miller:** Ordinances represent the voice of the residents and should be well-defined and clear. If there is wiggle room, it needs to be defined. I prefer strict ordinances.

**Amery:** Need to be flexible with care in making decisions ensuring that all are treated fairly in the future.

**Phillips:** Defined, clear ordinances are needed. As from the conversation with River Inn, ordinances can be difficult. Are you crafting an ordinance for one person or business or for everyone?

**Woullet:** Without order and organization, it would be chaos. Need to be equal across the board. Ordinances are there and we are part of interpreting them. I lean more toward the black and white, but what is going to be best for all.

**Ganfield:** A few years back, I might have answered differently. I prefer strict regulations or it will be a slippery slope. I handle differences well.

### **Developer relationships**

**Ganfield:** No matter who it is or how they act, you still have to work with them. A previous attitude does need to be taken into consideration, but don't shut them out because of it.

**Woullet:** You need to rise about it and be professional. The ordinances are there to guide us.

**Phillips:** History is important to anticipate the future. Transparency and giving the information needed is important. You need to work collaboratively.

**Amery:** I am a lobbyist who has worked with a variety of people. The enemy today may be the person you need tomorrow. You need to make sure the job gets done to the best ability.

**Miller:** I would be wary of developers with a bad record, but would get past the arrogance and do the best for Hanover.

### **Ranking skills to reach a conclusion**

**Ganfield:** Respect others, listening to points of view, compromising to reach consensus, and articulating own viewpoint.

**Woullet:** Respect others, listening to points of view, articulating own viewpoint, compromising to reach consensus.

**Phillips:** Respect others, listening to points of view, compromising to reach consensus, and articulating own viewpoint.

**Amery:** Respect others, listening to points of view, compromising to reach consensus, and articulating own viewpoint.

**Miller:** Respect others, compromising to reach consensus, listening to points of view, and articulating own viewpoint.

### **Citizen opposition to development**

**Woullet:** How will this benefit the City? Through services, tax benefits? Need to have a true understanding of why the citizens would be against it.

**Phillips:** Listening is important because they have a vision or viewpoint as well. Information gathering is important as well as listening to see the big picture.

**Amery:** Listening to all of the sides and gathering all of the information including regulations is important before making the decision. He gave the example of a development impacting eagles and how the residents were concerned about the eagles.

**Miller:** You wouldn't need to remain neutral if it meets the ordinances. If it doesn't meet the ordinances, then the developer needs to revise and resubmit.

**Ganfield:** Listen to the concerns and come to a compromise.

### **Hanover's vision**

**Phillips:** I really align with the Comprehensive Plan and have the same type of vision. I chose to live here and raise a family. I don't want to lose the small-town feel as we progress.

**Amery:** My vision is not all that important; it is what is important for Hanover. Take in all of the information, making sure the i's are dotted and the t's are crossed before sending it to Council. Being able to listen to everyone, take all of their input, and then make a recommendation.

**Miller:** I moved here because of the small-town, rural feel. I would like to keep that feeling and the Comprehensive Plan does that well.

**Ganfield:** Growth is happening. Retaining the small-town feel along with growth will be challenging.

**Woullet:** A lot of work and heavy lifting has been started and should be continued. Bringing businesses into Hanover would be beneficial.

### **Applicant's questions for Planning Commission:**

Woullet asked what is the hardest thing about being on Planning Commission. Kuitunen responded separating emotions from facts is the most difficult. Barrett said that you really need to separate biases and remain neutral. Christenson said that when a development comes in and the residents were against it.

Phillips asked what is the most interesting part of Planning Commission. Barrett said that she didn't know she would be approving so many accessory building permits. Kuitunen responded having the



workshops with other Boards or Council and working on the Comprehensive Plan. He also enjoys getting people to understand the facts.

The majority of the candidates left the meeting.

### **Reports and Announcements**

Schendel wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Kuitunen asked about the model homes for Rivers Edge. Biren responded that the home being constructed at the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> and Emmy was the single family model and there is one on Riverview Circle being constructed for the villa style home.

Schendel asked about the grey pickup truck that has been driving on the trail. Preisler said he would check into it and ask them not to drive on the trail.

Nash said that a big concept plan will be coming to the Planning Commission regarding the Anderson Farm. She was unsure if the developer would have it ready in time for the December meeting.

The last of the candidates for the Planning Commission left.

The Planning Commission discussed the candidates for the open seat and determined their choices. Biren will forward this information to Mayor Kauffman.

### **Adjournment**

**MOTION** by Schendel to adjourn, seconded by Kuitunen.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:52 pm.

**ATTEST:**

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Amy L. Biren  
Administrative Assistant