

OXFORD PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes – August 13, 2019

MEMBERS: Jonathan Eady, Chair; Laura McCanless, Vice-Chair; Zach May, Secretary; Michael McQuaide, Avis Williams. Juanita Carson was absent.

STAFF: Mr. Pepper (Zoning Administrator) was absent.

GUESTS: Susanne Widdel, Gary Ellis, Dave Huber, Nick Cole, Barbara Cole.

OPENING: At 7:03 PM, Mr. Eady called the meeting to order and welcomed the guests.

MINUTES: Upon motion of Mr. McQuaide, seconded by Ms. Williams, the minutes for the meeting of July 9, 2019 were adopted as presented. The vote was 5-0.

JOYCE VODAR DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION (207 W. Bonnell Street): The Commission discussed that since the permit is only for tearing down the old shed, they are inclined to approve the development application. Ms. McCanless had a concern that Ms. Vodar would tear down the shed, but rebuild a new shed on the existing footprint, which would be in violation of the ordinances based on the drawings presented. The Commission discussed approving the development permit with a caveat to deliver the information about the setback requirements to her in written communication.

Upon motion by Ms. McCanless, seconded by Ms. Williams, the development permit with a caveat that the permit would not be delivered to Ms. Vodar without express written communication about the setback was approved. The vote was 5-0.

CHARLES GREEN DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION (1214 Godfrey Street): The Commission reviewed the application, and after minimal discussion, they determined that the proposed construction met all setbacks and development permit requirements.

Upon motion of Ms. McCanless, seconded by Mr. May, the development permit was approved as presented. The vote was 5-0.

GARY ELLIS DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION (302 Cindy Court): The Commission reviewed and discussed the application as presented. Mr. Eady noted a change, to add verbiage that specified that they were going to install an access ramp so it's clear what's happening in the construction.

Upon motion from Ms. Williams, seconded by Ms. McCanless, the development permit was approved as with the language clarification. The vote was 5-0.

DAVE HUBER DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION (1102 Emory Street): Mr. Huber mentioned that the panels were partially installed, and once they got the stop order, they stopped construction. The Commission said that the building permit was needed because of the electrical work. The Commission discussed that aesthetics are part of the application considerations and discussed that Mr. Huber's panels blended in with the roof and are aesthetically pleasing.

Upon motion by Mr. McQuaide, seconded by Ms. McCanless, the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the development permit as presented.

NICHOLAS COLE DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION (1104 Emory Street): Mr. Cole confirmed that the panels would only be on the west side. Mr. Eady made a notation to reference the west side of the house. No further discussion was needed.

Upon motion from Ms. McCanless, seconded by Ms. Williams, the development permit was approved with the language clarification. The vote was 5-0.

The contractor asked about aesthetics. He asked what might be problematic. The Commission said it would be a problem if it encroached on the setbacks. Also, if the nature of installation was very visible, and would not be compatible with the surrounding property, the Commission may suggest different ways to install panels. Panels would not be permitted in the front yard.

SARAH DAVIS DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION (112 George Street): Ms. Davis was injured and could not appear. Mr. Eady talked to Mr. Pepper about this and discussed that the only construction was on the existing footprint. It was noted that the back corner of the house does not meet the required setbacks, but since it has been there since these ordinances were written, and it was not in violation at the time it was built, no action should be taken.

Upon motion by Ms. McCanless, seconded by Ms. Williams, the commission voted 5-0 to approve the development permit, despite the absence of Ms. Davis.

DISCUSSION ON NATIVE PLANT ORDINANCE: Ms. McCanless discussed that the Sustainable Oxford Committee is considering allowing yards to grow in a more natural manner, including native plants and meadows. Sustainable Oxford would like to be at the forefront of the environmental advocacy efforts, and this would move in the right direction. There is a model ordinance that was discussed, as an example. Mr. Eady brought up the question of whether the Commission wanted to advocate allowing people to grow native grasses in the front yards, which would be nearly indistinguishable from an unkempt lawn. The Commission discussed that the plants would have to be native plants to comply. The Commission also discussed permits, inspections, and parameters. There is some sentiment supporting the idea, but the Commission will require more examples of ordinances and more data to consider before putting it in front of City Council.

OTHER BUSINESS: Discussed the Roans prior development permit application.

ADJOURNMENT: Adjourned at 8:00 PM.

Approved by:

Zach May, Secretary