



# Minutes

Planning and Zoning Commission  
20 Second Avenue SW, Oelwein  
June 20, 2022 - 5:30 PM

## Roll Call

Present: DeJong, Boleyn, Sherrets, Tousley, Hull

Also present: Mulfinger, Castro, Fisk, Crawford, Ganske, Noll, O'Connell, Mike and Donise Recker

Excused: Gearhart

## Approve Minutes

1. Consideration of a motion to approve the minutes of the May 16, 2022, meeting. Motion by Sherrets, seconded by Tousley. All in favor.

## Variance Requests

2. Discussion on variance request 22-Z-02.

Mulfinger reminds commission members the point of a variance is embedded in state code a hardship must be met and while the additional space would be a great addition to the property, according to code and staff, it does not meet the conditions for a hardship. Mulfinger added it is up to the commission to make that decision.

Hull stated he took a closer look at the ordinance and stated it looks at floor area, not the exterior size of the building. He looked at the existing floor space, pointing out there is a second level to the garage with two additional stalls, bringing the total to 916 ft<sup>2</sup> of additional floor space requested.

Sherrets asked the applicants, Mike and Donise Recker, about the current facility, and Mike Recker explained the tight quarters and the difficulty involved in finding rental storage units and that nothing is available.

Hull stated he feels the current allowances are not proportionate to the various acreages of lots and with the size of the applicant's lot, he feels it should not be limited to 2000 ft<sup>2</sup> and that this should be changed in the ordinance to allow for this.

Mulfinger stated if the commission wants to change those rules that they should make a recommendation to City Council, or even make a recommendation to city staff to research that change.

Boelyn stated he feels if they can meet the setback requirements, and he doesn't see why the Reckers should be denied. His concern is more with construction method.

Hull makes a motion to deny the request. Sherrets seconds the motion. DeJong, Boleyn, Tousley voted nay to the motion. Motion failed.

Mulfinger asks if anyone would like to make a different recommendation to the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

Sherrets asks if the item can be tabled and return to it when ordinance is changed. Mulfinger explains that if the ordinance is changed, the item will no longer matter since it would be permitted under the new ordinance.

DeJong makes a motion to approve the request, Boleyn seconds the motion. All were in favor; motion carried and will move on to Zoning Board of Adjustment.

Mulfinger advises the Zoning Board of Adjustment to come sit at the tables with the Planning and Zoning Commission to discuss the next items.

**Old Business**

**New Business**

3. Discussion on accessory structures, including but not limited to sizes of structures being tied to lot and or home size, height allowances, what other communities do, allowing construction of accessory structures on lots with no primary structures and other related discussion.
4. Discussion regarding Ordinance 831 addressing corner lots and through lots having multiple frontage and front lot lines.

Mulfinger introduces the topics stating that these questions will not be answered tonight, but with a goal one of two things: 1) make a recommendation to council or 2) get more information from staff

Hull begins the discussion with sizes of accessory structures and how they are not proportional to the lot sizes and should be more uniformly scaled, and the scale should be more readily understandable.

Ganske agrees with Hull adding the bottom end should be 750 ft<sup>2</sup> because he does not want someone with a ¼ acre lot building a 1500 ft<sup>2</sup> structure.

The discussion moved into taxable structures and how buildings without permanent foundations are not taxable and they should be. However, the city has no say regarding whether it is taxable or not.

The discussion returns to lot sizes and charts, with people in favor of a chart rather than percentages, as well as a desire to avoid multiple small structures.

The definition of detached vs attached accessory structures came up.

The consensus towards detached structures distilled to not allowing the square footage of accessory structures to exceed the square footage of the principal structure with attached accessory storage. For example, a 1000 ft<sup>2</sup> home with an attached 1000 ft<sup>2</sup> may not have an accessory structure larger than 2000 ft<sup>2</sup> on a ¼ acre lot, with a maximum of 2 accessory structures on any given lot. So, if you have an attached garage, you would be permitted 1 other structure.

Potential suggested accessory structure alternative footage allocations.

<b>Acres</b>	<b>Option 1</b>	<b>Option 2</b>
0.25	850 ft <sup>2</sup>	850 ft <sup>2</sup>
0.50	1550 ft <sup>2</sup>	1700 ft <sup>2</sup>
0.75	2650 ft <sup>2</sup>	2550 ft <sup>2</sup>
1.00	3000 ft <sup>2</sup>	3400 ft <sup>2</sup>
1.50	3500 ft <sup>2</sup>	4250 ft <sup>2</sup>
3+	5000 ft <sup>2</sup>	5100 ft <sup>2</sup>

Accessory footage may not exceed total footage of home including attached garage. Maximum of 2 detached structures.

Turning to height restrictions, currently at 18 feet, 20 feet and 35 feet. Questions arose regarding whose views are being restricted or why there are height restrictions at all, whether it is for power lines or something else. Discussion on “mother-in-law suites” above garages began and what is allowed. It would be illegal under current ordinances since there would be two residences in an R1, for example. Any square footage added to a second story on an accessory structure counts towards the total square footage.

The board and commission would like to find out common heights of garages to get a better understanding.

Do we allow accessory structures on a vacant lot? As soon as it is built, it doesn't hold its value. What else can be done with it? Tiny houses came up for discussion. Mulfinger pointed out the Planning and Zoning Commission can discuss at any time and could meet more often if they wished.

Fisk was concerned there is already enough stuff sitting outside garages and in yards throughout town, and then to have that happen on lots with new garages on them. Everything needs to be kept on the inside of the new garage.

Hull proposed that, if allowed, the accessory structures need to be built at the rear of the property, with size limitations, to allow for construction of a principal structure in the future. Access to garage was questioned, with discussion stating that if this is what the property owner wants, these would be rules they would need to comply with. Requiring the driveway is a growth opportunity for a future house to be built on that lot.

Ideas put forth would include a plan that includes space for a house and the approach would have to be rock or pavement. They also include if no vehicles were stored then no driveway was required, or if there was no alley access a driveway was required. Anyone can own it, not just the immediate neighbor.

Discussion began on corner lots and two front property lines.

Property owners are not having enough space to put an accessory storage because of two-front properties. Discussion was started on considering only one of the sides as the front. The narrow side should be considered the frontage to accommodate access to the accessory structure(s) rather than going by address since there are several properties within the city that would then not be allowed to do this.

Discussion began on use of steel siding on all buildings.

Corrugated steel usage stopped because of its appearance after time. The ag steel in use now is much higher quality and has multiple colors, is much more durable and comes in a variety of appearances. The subject of the colors, including earth tones, and its decorative nature came up. Another thought entertained by the group was there should be wainscot up 3 or 4 feet so that part can be replaced if needed when damaged by snowblower or lawnmower.

## **Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn made by Sherrets, seconded by Hull. All voted aye.

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Dylan Mulfinger, City Administrator