

**Cannon Falls Planning Commission  
Regular Meeting  
City Council Chambers  
May 13, 2024**

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Chair Steve Gesme, Commissioners Diane Johnson, Bruce Hemmah, Chris Nobach, and Jesse Fox

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:** All members were in attendance

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Neil Jensen, City Administrator; Zach Logelin, Permit & License Technician

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Gesme called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Roll call was conducted. Chair Gesme and Commissioners Hemmah, Johnson, Fox, and Nobach were in attendance.

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

A motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Hemmah and unanimously carried, to approve the agenda as presented.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: April 8, 2024**

Permit & License Technician Logelin requested a correction to the meeting minutes on Page 2, Item B, relating to the variance request for Ed Rymer.

*He stated that the applicant is hoping to split off and sell a 44,000 **4,466 square foot** parcel in the northwest corner of the property.*

A motion was made by Commissioner Fox, seconded by Commissioner Nobach and unanimously carried, to approve the meeting minutes as amended.

**5. PUBLIC INPUT**

There was no public input regarding items not listed on the agenda.

**6. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**A. Variances, Dollar General.**

Permit & License Technician Logelin provided background information. He described the proposed variances to allow the construction of a new store on the corner of Dakota Street and Fifth Street. He stated that the applicant is requesting two setback variances and a reduction in the number of required parking stalls. He referenced the agenda materials and noted that representatives of the applicant were in attendance remotely to answer any questions.

Chair Gesme opened the Public Hearing for this item at 6:33 p.m. No one spoke during the Public Hearing. The Public Hearing was closed at 6:34 p.m.

**B. Conditional Use Permit, Dollar General.**

This item was discussed following discussion of Item 7A.

Permit & License Technician Logelin indicated that a Conditional Use Permit is required to operate a retail use in a Residential Business district. He referenced City Code requirements for retail uses, including off-street parking, vehicular entrances, screening, and signage.

Chair Gesme opened the Public Hearing for this item at 6:59 p.m. A representative of the applicant provided additional information and spoke in support of the retail use on the site.

No one else spoke during the Public Hearing. The Public Hearing was closed at 7:01 p.m.

**C. Variances, 620 Grove Street North.**

This item was discussed following discussion of Item 7B.

Permit & License Technician Logelin provided background information. He stated that the applicant is requesting to construct a new home on the site of a home that burned down. He referenced the current setbacks and discussed the practical difficulty presented by the lot.

Chair Gesme opened the Public Hearing for this item at 7:04 p.m. No one spoke during the Public Hearing. The Public Hearing was closed at 7:05 p.m.

**D. Vacation Application, William Marsh.**

This item was discussed following discussion of Item 7C.

Permit & License Technician Logelin reviewed the vacation request, noting that this is being requested in order for the applicant to construct a new home. He described the location of the parcels under discussion.

Chair Gesme opened the Public Hearing for this item at 7:10 p.m.

Kyle Rapp, 615 North Oak Street, Cannon Falls, requested clarification of the location of proposed vacated property, and additional information was provided.

No one else spoke during the Public Hearing. The Public Hearing was closed at 7:12 p.m.

**7. DISCUSSION**

## **A. Dollar General Variances for New Building.**

This item was discussed following discussion of Item 6A.

Commissioner Johnson commented that the parcel under construction is located close to a railroad track and a church. She asked whether church representatives have expressed any concerns about the proposal.

Zach Logelin reviewed the Public Hearing notification process and stated that no comments were received prior to the meeting. The notification process was clarified.

The location of the railroad track was discussed.

Commissioners asked about access to the store and the anticipated number of trucks per week. A representative of the applicant provided information in this regard. Commissioner Johnson asked whether the streets would be able to handle large trucks, and City Administrator Jensen indicated that Dakota Street can handle the anticipated volume and weight load of truck traffic.

The parking stall variance request was discussed. A representative of Dollar General reviewed parking needs for this size of store and market and indicated that this is a common request. Snow storage was discussed. Commissioner Nobach asked about past precedent in terms of granting a variance relating to parking stalls, and Commissioner Johnson provided an example.

Clarification was requested relating to the setback variance requests. Permit & License Technician Logelin provided additional details.

Commissioners further discussed truck access and referenced the location of the proposed driveway near a State highway. A representative of the applicant summarized communication with a representative of MnDOT, who stated that this was out of their jurisdiction. He noted that a preference was expressed for a driveway off of Dakota Street as opposed to a driveway off of Fifth Street.

Commissioner Johnson asked whether other locations for the new store were considered. A representative of the applicant indicated that this site and one other site were considered.

Commissioners further discussed truck navigation and the proposed location of the driveway. A representative of the applicant provided additional information.

Commissioner Johnson commented regarding the benefits of the proposed store location. She also stated that it would be nice to see a productive use for the property.

Commissioner Fox further discussed the setback variance requests. The proximity to the railroad track was further discussed.

Parking needs were further discussed, and representative of the applicant provided customer statistics from other stores.

A motion was made by Commissioner Johnson to recommend that the City Council grant the three requested variances. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Fox. A vote was conducted and the motion carried unanimously, with Chair Gesme abstaining from the vote, citing a conflict of interest.

**B. Dollar General Conditional Use Permit to Operate Retail in Residential Business District.**

This item was discussed following discussion of Item 6B.

Commissioner Johnson asked whether the City Code criteria have been met, and Permit & License Technician Logelin indicated that, with the approval of the variances, the criteria would be met.

A motion was made by Commissioner Johnson to recommend that the City Council approve a Conditional Use Permit for Dollar General. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hemmah. A vote was conducted and the motion carried unanimously, with Chair Gesme abstaining from the vote, citing a conflict of interest.

**C. 620 Grove Street North Setback Variances.**

This item was discussed following discussion of Item 6C.

Permit & License Technician Logelin indicated that no comments were received prior to the meeting. It was noted that the home would be constructed on a portion of a platted alley. City Administrator Jensen stated his understanding that the alley was vacated in the past.

The footprint and location of the proposed home on the lot was discussed. Lot elevations were reviewed.

A motion was made by Chair Gesme, seconded by Commissioner Nobach and unanimously carried, to recommend approval of the requested variances for 620 Grove Street North as discussed.

**D. Vacation of City Right-of-Way (PID 521400440).**

This item was discussed following discussion of Item 6D.

The location of the proposed property to be vacated was clarified.

Permit & License Technician Logelin and City Administrator Jensen provided additional background information and rationale for the proposed property vacation.

It was noted that the property vacation would be contingent upon constructing the home. City Administrator Jensen clarified that property vacations have to go to abutting properties.

Setback requirements and the flood plain were further discussed.

A motion was made by Commissioner Nobach, seconded by Commissioner Fox and unanimously carried, to recommend approval of the proposed vacation request as discussed.

## **8. ADJOURN**

A motion was made by Chair Gesme, seconded by Commissioner Nobach and unanimously carried, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 7:21 p.m.