

City of Alamosa
Planning Commission
July 28, 2010
6:00 p.m.
Minutes of the Meeting

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order on the above date at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Mark Manzanares. Present were the following members: Robert McWhirter, Don Thompson, and Shirley White. Excused: Don Martinez and Debbie Clark. A quorum was declared. Staff present: Don Koskelin, Jeff Rilling and Julie Scott.

Agenda Approval: M/S/C. White, Thompson. Motion was made to approve agenda with the following addition: Under Other Business: brief discussion of intersection improvements, update on landscape improvements at ASD solar array. (Unanimous)

Approval of the Minutes: M/S/C. White, Thompson. Motion was made to approve the minutes of June 23, 2010 as submitted. (Unanimous)

Regular Business

Zoning Issues:

The request of Alfred Magee for relief from the required rear yard setback of 25 ft. to 5.5 ft. The property affected is Lot 1, College Subdivision, Block 12, City of Alamosa, Alamosa County, also known as 87 El Camino.

The public hearing opened at 6:02 p.m.

Manzanares: Please step forward and state your name and address.

Magee: Alfred Magee, 87 El Camino, Alamosa CO. What I would like to do is I have a single car garage attached to the house currently; my best guess is that it was a carport that was enclosed. I would like to remove that and turn it into a two car garage. I submitted an ariel photo and schematic, you can see the way the house is situated on the lot, I'm in violation of the setback for the rear. I'm close to 20' and the setback requirement is 25'. I would like a variance to extend the garage towards the alley another 14 ft. which would give me 5.5' setback. Any questions?

Manzanares: Is there anyone else that would like to speak on behalf of this request? Against? Being none, my question for Jeff is there any issue in the alley for wires?

Rilling: No. It should be an improvement to the property and neighborhood.

Thompson: I assumed it will be used as a garage and enter off El Sol? Is there a curb cut?

Rilling: He does have a curb cut for the existing car port and he plans to apply for an excavation permit.

McWhirter: Is there a fence in the alleyway? Will it remain?

Magee: Yes.

The public hearing closed at 6:05p.m.

M/S/C. Thompson, McWhirter. Motion made to approve the request of Alfred Magee for relief from the required rear yard setback of 25 ft. to 5.5 ft. The property affected is Lot 1, College Subdivision, Block 12, City of Alamosa, Alamosa County, also known as 87 El Camino. (Unanimous)

The applicant was informed that this was final action on the request and he could obtain a building permit and proceed with his project.

Next item:

The request of P & D Investments, LLC for relief from the required front setback of 25 ft. to 10 ft. and rear yard setback of 25 ft. to 5 ft. The property affected is Lot 16, Block 2, Bellview Subdivision, City of Alamosa, Alamosa County.

Manzanares: Whoever is here to speak on behalf of this please step forward and state your name and address.

Porter: Preston Porter, 603 Country Club Circle. We have an unbuildable vacant lot on the corner of First and Bell. It is zoned residential medium now so we are not asking for a zoning change but a variance, relief from the setbacks. If we went with the current setbacks as they are, we would have an eight ft. deep building, it wouldn't work. To the west, for some precedence there is a duplex there now. They have a rear setback of zero.

We have amended because the original plan I submitted we realized it was at 43% lot coverage and residential medium only allows for 35% coverage. We've made the building less wide and you should have copies of that revision. I'm planning on building a duplex or triplex there. There is an elevation of what we would like to do. We are looking at a vacant lot that has no value to something that does.

Manzanares: Is there anyone here that would like to speak on behalf of the proposal? State your name and address.

Frederick: Fred Frederick, 724 Berkeley Ave. I own the duplex to the west that Preston was talking about and one statement was not accurate, I do have a five ft. setback. There is a sidewalk to the property line. I have no problem at all with what he's trying to do across the alley to the west. I want to say I don't have an issue with it at all.

Manzanares: Anyone else on behalf? Anyone against? Please step forward.

DeVore: Suzanne DeVore, I own the house at 19 Bell. I hate to speak against affordable housing but I think a triplex would be too much on that lot. The duplex I think looks okay to the west. I don't know, is it one story?

Ms. DeVore was given a drawing depicting the proposal.

DeVore: I think for the quality of life for the people that live there I think that's too much of a building for too small of a space. As a property owner and speaking on behalf of the neighborhood, there is a mixture there but most are single family homes. I hope the board will reconsider the proposed triplex.

Manzanares: Are you against the triplex or the whole project?

DeVore: I think I'm against the triplex, something smaller perhaps and the setbacks should not be reduced that much. Thank you.

Koskelin: As a point of information, and I should have caught this earlier, I apologize, The lot is only 6,000 sq. ft. and in a residential medium zone, there can only be one dwelling unit per 3,000 sq. ft. A triplex would not be possible. That is a matter of density and that's not something a waiver can be granted for.

Manzanares: That was a question I was going to ask you. It sounds like only a duplex. Anyone else that would like to speak against this? We will close the public hearing.

The public hearing closed at 6:12 p.m.

Porter: I was not aware of the one dwelling unit per 3,000 sq. ft. The floor plan would obviously have to be reconfigured for a duplex. One of the nice things on the development side is that with the new building codes a triplex or four plex would require overhead fire sprinkler system at approximately \$10,000.00. A duplex does not require it.

Thompson: I looked at site and the unit next to you and even as a duplex I question where the residents would be parking vehicles?

Porter: There are three options, there is street parking on First or Bell, and to the west of the building there would be enough space off the alley for up to three cars, we might pour a concrete pad for parking. With this new information, we might have to do something a lot more similar to the one on the west although I'm not really a fan of having driveways on First St. We do own the two lots to the south, with the brown duplex and potentially create an easement and ask for a building permit for garages.

Thompson: The other question I had was it's fronting on First and in relation to the building on the west. Would this be lined up with the building to the west? My feeling is

to see you go to no setback in the back if that were possible to make it appear more compatible to the building on the west.

Porter: Right and that is something that we could look at.

Frederick stated that he applied for the variance on his project because of the old home that was there and the lot wasn't buildable at the time. There is a five ft. setback in the back.

Porter: Another point is there is a really nice sidewalk from the alley to Bell and not looking at a driveway situation, but parking off the alley or to the south of the building on the vacant portion of the lot.

Thompson: Thank you.

White: Is there any action we can take tonight?

Koskelin: You have a couple options. The request for front and rear yard setbacks, you can act on those. You cannot give a variance to allow a triplex so no action is required on that. If you want to grant the setbacks and place some sort of condition on the variance you could probably do that but I urge you to be careful with that so that they are enforceable provisions, so twenty years from now they are not going back trying to figure out what we did.

Manzanares stated he had concerns on how the parking would be dealt with and something more specific to a duplex instead of the triplex submitted.

Rilling: The parking requirement is two spaces per dwelling unit.

Koskelin: They would have to show us that before we issued a building permit.

Thompson: My impression of that area is that multi-family is appropriate, a duplex but I would like to table this to see what kind of variances are needed and it might well be a different variance would be appropriate and I would like to be issuing the variance knowing what is being proposed.

Porter: With all due respect, it does create somewhat of a hardship. We would have another month to wait and two months away from construction. With the information and building codes as they are, I'm asking for relief from the setbacks. The people issuing the building permit are here and we are going to have to show the layout of the building and to show that it is only a duplex and not a triplex and parking. I would humbly request we try to figure something out tonight even if it is with restrictions on the approval.

Koskelin stated that this variance request would not have to go to Council for approval.

The public hearing closed at 6:28 p.m.

M/S/C. White, Thompson. Motion made to table the request of P & D Investments LLC pending additional information on parking and building footprint. The property affected is Lot 16, Block 2, Bellview Subdivision, City of Alamosa, Alamosa County. (Three years, one day)

The issue would be heard at the next regular meeting to be held on August 25, 2010 at 6:00 p.m.

Planning Issues:

The request of SLV Habitat for Humanity for review of a replat. The property affected is Tract 32, McClain Fink, located in the NE1/4, NW ¼ of Section 15, Township 37 North, Range 10 East, N.M.P.M., City of Alamosa, Alamosa County.

The public hearing opened at 6:30 p.m.

Manzanares: Who is here to speak on this request?

Liu: Audrey Liu, our office is at 601 State, I live at 704 Stadium Dr. This is a lot that Habitat owns and would like to divide into two smaller lots to put affordable homes there. There is a lot just to the north that we did the same thing ten years ago.

Manzanares: Anyone that would like to speak on behalf of this? Opposed? Please step forward.

Martin: Jessica Martin, 1429 Ross which is directly across the street and we also own property right next door to this which is 1628 Ross. I'm against this, with due respect to Habitat, they build it but I have to live with it. There is a home that's already set up like this. They break up the lot and the home is sideways. The front door faces the side of another home. To me it's overcrowding, I think my property values decrease, there's too many homes in one area. I support affordable housing, I work for an agency where we finance affordable housing I just have a difficult time with the maintenance, the Habitat properties, roofs aren't repaired, yards aren't cleaned. I know that's not just with Habitat it's just in general. We try to keep our property clean and maintained. I think that adding two homes to one lot that I would have to look at right across the street for 30 yrs or whatever, it wouldn't be good. I also don't think it's fair to the homeowner; they get a home but no yard to play in. If they ever want to sell it's going to be hard to sell if it's back to back or facing each other. Is it a normal request to build two homes on one lot?

Koskelin: For a point of clarification, the plan is to split the lot into two separate lots. You cannot put two homes on one lot.

Martin: So is it the legal size for a home so that they wouldn't have to be sideways and they could be facing the street?

Koskelin: The orientation of the home is the choice of the people who design, build and purchase the home. The front door could very well be facing the street. It depends on how the home is designed. Is this a normal lot width for the City of Alamosa, yes it is.

Martin: It's a normal size lot and do we normally break them out to fit two homes.

Koskelin: If you look at all the homes north of 17th on San Juan and Edison and all those homes on lots similar to this and a number scattered throughout McClain-Fink subdivision .

Martin: My biggest concern is having the home sideways. It doesn't help the appearance of our street and property values, appraisals. If the homes could be set normally with the door facing the street. It's the overcrowding with what's already there.

Manzanares: So what I'm hearing is you object more to the way they build them and opposed to the lot being split.

Martin: Yes, I would say so. I don't know all the size, dimensions and setbacks and there is not much room between the homes.

Liu: The homes have not been designed yet. The width of the lots does have the amount required for a single lot. They are also long so there would be yard.

Koskelin: As a point of clarification do you have any idea on the square footage of the homes?

Liu: They would be 1,000 – 1,200 sq. ft homes.

Koskelin: Most of the homes north are 1,400 sq.ft., Jeff?

Rilling: 1,200 – 1,300 sq. ft.

Koskelin: It is very similar to what was built with Colorado Rural Housing.

The public hearing closed at 6:37 p.m.

Liu stated that the maintenance of homes is the property owner's responsibility. Garages are not normally part of Habitat projects.

M/S/C. Thompson, White. Motion made to approve the request of Habitat for Humanity for a replat. The property affected is Tract 32, McClain Fink, located in the Ne ¼, NW1/4 of Section 15, township 37 North, Range 10 East, N.M.P.M. City of Alamosa, Alamosa County. (Three yeas, one abstained)

The applicant was informed that the recommendation would go to City Council on August 18th, 2010.

Next item:

The request of Gregory R. Goodwin for a rezone of property from Residential Light Density (RL) to Residential Medium (RL) to allow construction of a duplex. The property affected is Lot 55, Alamosa Park, lying generally at the northeast corner of First St. and Bell Ave.

Manzanares: Please come forward and state your name.

Goodwin: Greg Goodwin, 195 Edgemont. I own this lot and I'm here to request the zoning change for several reasons. It's a large lot – 80 x 150 the way it's set up it's configured for a wider home which lends itself to a duplex. I own a duplex on First St. on the north side. I don't think putting a duplex on this lot will change the dynamics of the neighborhood all up and down First St. there are multi-family units. I have tried to sell it for years and a single family residential lot and have not had very good luck. I have either two types of buyers interested, one was for a duplex but I don't want to buy it until I know I can build one on there and the other buyers who would like to put a manufactured home on the lot. Personally, I don't want to see a manufactured home going in there. I don't think there are any restrictions that would stop them from doing that. It's still up in the air if I'm going to sell it. If I keep it, I'll put a duplex on it. Getting this done will be one step ahead. I'm in business, I sell property for a living, going back to someone who wants to sell a residential home all the buyers are looking to build in an established new neighborhood – the Golf Course, Riverwood Estates, Riverbend, River Trece.

Manzanares: Anyone who wants to speak on behalf of the proposal? Against? State your name and address.

Chapman: Cindy Chapman, 905 First St. My house would be directly to the east of this lot. I've talked to Greg, I worry about property values decreasing. I purposely bought two lots so I would have a larger area and set my house so the entrance would not be from First St. but the alley. My concern is encroachment on that part and the positioning of the house.

Manzanares: Anyone else? We will close the public hearing.

Thompson: When I looked at the property I can understand not being able to place a single family residence there and concur with the changing to a duplex. I believe having something there is better than having an empty lot there. I would support the zoning change. A duplex would still not be crowding.

Manzanares: Are you looking at just a duplex? Does it open it to a triplex?

Rilling: Yes. He does have the required footage.

M/S/C. Thompson, McWhirter. Motion made to recommend approval of the request of Gregory Goodwin for a rezone of property from Residential Light Density to Residential Medium for construction of a duplex. The property affected is Lot 55, Alamosa Park. (Unanimous)

The applicant was informed that as a rezone it would go to City Council as an ordinance change and the first reading would be August 18th. The second reading and public hearing would be on September 1, 2010.

For the record, all adjacent property owners were notified of the public hearing.

Other Business: Discussion of intersection improvements.

Staff brought forward preliminary options for the intersection of Bell Court and Clark and Murphy. One possible solution is to square off Bell Court to enter at Murphy. Another option would be to dead end it. It seemed that most of the residents do exit towards Oliver than more to the north.

There would be a meeting set up with the council member from that Ward to speak to the neighbors in the area. It was also brought up at that intersection on the southeast corner that the shrubbery be trimmed for line of sight and safety. Staff informed the Commission that other intersection issues would be brought forward such as Murphy and First, Victoria and Stuart, and Weber, Clark and Oliver.

Other items discussed included the landscape project at the solar array. Lighting bases and wiring for the street lights would be installed by Xcel within the next three weeks and they could proceed with the landscaping.

Improvements to the area near Rock Creek Medical Center would be completed in September.

After no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Scott
Recording Secretary