

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
GREAT FALLS BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT/APPEALS
February 1, 2018

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Great Falls Board of Adjustment/Appeals was called to order by Chair Jule Stuver at 3:00 p.m. in the Commission Chambers of the Civic Center.

ROLL CALL & ATTENDANCE

Great Falls Board of Adjustment/Appeals members present:

Mr. Jule Stuver, Chair
Mr. David Saenz
Mr. David Carlson
Ms. Krista Smith
Mr. Kyle Palagi

Great Falls Board of Adjustment/Appeals members absent:

None

Planning Staff members present:

Mr. Thomas Micuda, Deputy Director Planning & Community Development
Ms. Erin Borland, Planner II
Ms. Connie Tryon, Sr. Administrative Assistant

Others present:

Mr. Joseph Cik, Assistant City Attorney

Mr. Raymond affirmed a quorum of the Board was present.

MINUTES

Chair Stuver asked if there was a motion to approve the meeting minutes as stated for March 23, 2017. Seeing no corrections, Mr. Carlson moved to approve the minutes as submitted, seconded by Ms. Smith. All in favor, the minutes were approved.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

Election of new Board chair and vice chair.

Ms. Smith moved to elect Mr. Stuver as Chair and Mr. Carlson as Vice Chair. Mr. Palagi seconded, and the motion was approved.

Ms. Smith moved that the Director of Planning and Community Development, Craig Raymond, continue to serve as secretary of the Board. Mr. Palagi seconded, and the motion was approved.

NEW BUSINESS

3527 10th Avenue South Variance: Sections 17.36.2.020, Minimum Off-street Parking

Ms. Smith recused herself from discussion and voting on the request.

Ms. Borland, Planner II, said the variance request is from Ace Hardware, and she reviewed the aerial map and site photos of the current location. The applicant is proposing a 23,100 square foot new Ace Hardware store with a configuration different than what currently stands. The proposal will move the store to the north part of the site, with parking on the south. The existing entrance off 10th Avenue South will remain.

Ms. Borland explained City Code currently requires 77 off-street parking spaces, and the applicant is requesting a 7-10 space reduction. Ms. Borland reviewed the Basis of Decision as detailed in the staff report, and highlighted key points in the Code for consideration. She explained that due to some unique site constraints, staff does feel that compliance with the required parking creates an unnecessary hardship for the applicant. She reviewed the site plan without the proposed reduction, and then what the site plan would look like if the variance is granted. Ms. Borland said staff supports the request for the variance.

PETITIONER'S PRESENTATION

Dale Nelson, Nelson Architects, noted that approval of the request for the reduction in parking would improve the site greatly. He also noted that the current site is 100% building and asphalt, and the proposed project will incorporate 13,000 square feet of green space and landscaping to the site.

PROPOSERS OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK

Larry Johnson, 3523 9th Ave South, asked where the outdoor items for sale and excess items will be stored. He also asked if there will be a fence along the drainage area on the south side of 9th Avenue South.

OPPOSERS OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK

There were no opponents.

PETITIONER'S CLOSING

Dale Nelson, Nelson Architects, said the storage will be along the west side of the building, where a concrete drainage swale is currently. The swale will be maintained and a rack system built on top of that for storage. The chain link fence along the west property line will be maintained.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Peggy Johnson, 3523 9th Avenue South, expressed her concern that the reduced parking request would create additional customer parking on 9th Avenue South.

BOARD DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Mr. Carlson asked if 36th Street South was wide enough for off-street parking. Ms. Borland said yes.

Mr. Stuver stated he felt the proposed design would decrease parking on 9th Avenue South with the relocation of the parking lot.

MOTION: That the Board of Adjustment, based on the Findings for the Basis of Decision approve the variance request from OCCGF Title 17, Chapter 36, Article 2, Section 020, Exhibit 36-1, minimum off-street parking requirements to allow a reduction in parking as requested, subject to the conditions of approval.

Made by: Mr. Palagi
Second: Mr. Saenz

There was discussion on the number of proposed handicap spaces, and that number being driven by federal regulations. There was also discussion on stormwater requirements.

VOTE: Ms. Smith recused herself. All others being in favor, the motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Stuver adjourned the meeting at 3:38 p.m.