

NOTICE

A meeting of the City of Evansville Plan Commission will be held via video and/or audio remotely on the date and time stated below. Notice is further given that members of the City Council and Historic Preservation Commission might be in attendance. Requests for persons with disabilities who need assistance to participate in this meeting should be made by calling City Hall: (608)-882-2266 with as much advanced notice as possible. Submit Public Comments in advance by email to jason.sergeant@ci.evansville.wi, by leaving in the drop box in front of City Hall at 31 S Madison Street, or by mail to PO Box 529, Evansville, WI 53536.

City of Evansville **Plan Commission**
Special Meeting
Tuesday, December 15, 2020, 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Due to County, State and Federal social distancing recommendations in response to COVID-19, this meeting is being held virtually. Commission members, applicants, and members of the public will be required to participate via the virtual format. To participate via video, go to this website: <https://meet.google.com/fes-vcir-rfv>. To participate via phone, call this number: 1 608-764-9643 and enter PIN: 352 918 263# when prompted.

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Motion to Approve Agenda
4. Motion to waive the reading of the minutes from the December 1, 2020 meeting and approve them as printed.
5. Civility Reminder
6. Citizen appearances other than agenda items listed
 - A. Introductions and Goal Statement (10 minutes)
7. New Business
 - A. Staff Overview of Ordinance 2020-13, Chapter 130 Zoning. (15 minutes)
 - B. Public and Commission Discussion of Ordinance 2020-13, Chapter 130 Zoning. (50 minutes)
 - C. Commission Discussion and Possible Motion to Remove from the Table and Recommend Ordinance 2020-13, Chapter 130 Zoning to Common Council (15 minutes)
8. Next Meeting Dates: Tuesday, January 5, 2021 at 6:00pm
9. Motion to Adjourn

-Mayor Bill Hurtley, Plan Commission Chair

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developers, and wanted to remind everyone of the Comprehensive Plan guidance around this topic, including: The state requires the City to maintain a comprehensive plan and update it accordingly. The City of Evansville's Comprehensive Plan outlines a response to state planning requirements to house an increase of population growth over the next 20 years. Most importantly, the state requires the City to follow the plan's guidance. The plan was created with extensive public input and public involvement, including multiple in-person input sessions as well as extensive written and visual preference surveys.

Dating back to efforts began in 2014, the plan guides the Plan Commission to update zoning ordinances to reflect public input, and this includes increasing density on a lot, putting pedestrians first, and creating a visually appealing streetscape. Some highlights from the plan:

- Written survey data showed that many residents had concern over the idea of multifamily housing and accelerated community growth. However, over 70% preferred Evansville be a highly walkable community.
- The visual preference survey used 50 images of different types of building and development to ask the public to rate each image and leave comments if desired. The results of the visual survey contrasted and clarified the results of the written survey, specifically demonstrating that multi-family homes were often rated higher than single family homes. All of the highly rated images of multi-family homes had a traditional appearance with large porches and limited or no garages. Excerpts from the surveys are attached.
- Page 34 of the Comp Plan outlines ADUs as a priority, and as an opportunity to convert existing living space into a dwelling with minimal cost. Staff has been approached by two homeowners that would like to build ADUs on their property and three additional who would like to convert vacant space above garages back into legal rentable units. ADUs open up the possibility to generate income to offset high housing costs. The net result would be a more affordable rental unit as well as a more affordable single family home. Effectively this creates two affordable living units simultaneously.
- Pages 39-41 highlights the importance to change the zoning code to respond to the communities' preference for a variety of housing types, including smaller units, and units with a higher quality of design
- Page 44 outlines specific action steps to update the zoning code
- Page 162 outlines a plan theme of making residential development more attractive and more walkable as requested in surveys. This includes more sidewalks, range of lot sizes, building design that reflects historic character, narrower streets, homes that can be used multi-generationally, and homes that include entrances oriented toward the street, and rear parking.
- Pages 168 and 169 include examples of housing types requested by survey data and again outline subdivision revisions that need to be undertaken, including buildings placed

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closer to the street, mix of land uses, neighborhood amenities, narrow streets, pedestrian oriented design of housing, reducing the visual impact of front facing protruding garages.

The proposed Ordinance responds to the plan, but doesn't go as far as suggested (EG allowing only rear loading garages) the proposed ordinance:

- Increase access to affordable housing by allowing homeowners to add ADUs to their property, provides the ability to build two equally sized units on one lot, and reduces the minimum required home size.
- Increases equity of housing amongst various demographics by allowing seniors to “age in place” and provide ability for a true multi-generational home.
- Responds to public input for more pedestrian friendly neighborhoods by encouraging front porches, reducing setbacks, allowing architectural details in setbacks, reducing amount garage and driveway oriented towards pedestrians
- Increases amount of house that can be placed on a lot
- Increases the visual appeal and safety of the streetscape and encourages pedestrians to feel like they have priority by encouraging garages to be recessed, thereby getting parked cars further from the sidewalk, adding front porches to better allow for ‘eyes on the street’ to monitor neighborhood.
- Reduces the total amount of the lot that can be covered by impervious surface.
- Reduces the rear yard setback for accessory structures

City Staff and Plan Commission have heard numerous concerned residents comment on the appearance of many developments with a typical list of concerns that include, quality of design, landscaping, and reducing the amount of garage facing the street. Evansville has seen this type of construction since the plan's adoption. Three homes in the historic district have been constructed without front facing garages. An additional home has been constructed in the last year with a similar traditional appearance. The City has seen the value of these properties compete with newer construction and outpace the neighborhoods they are located in.

Traditional neighborhood design that reduces garage clutter and increases density is being constructed more and more often as a response to buyer's demand in city's north of Evansville. This represents Evansville's “competition” and further highlights the importance to assure Evansville stays the fastest growing community in the county.

Sergeant shared some high and low rated images from the Visual Preference Survey. He noted the opposition demonstrated by comments and ratings for multi-family home with majority garages in the front yard.

Sergeant reviewed the drafted ordinance explaining front porches can now be in the front

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setback areas and side yards can be reduced if the home has a smaller garage, front porch, second story, or narrow driveway. Driveway widths are limited to 20 feet at sidewalk, most seem to be 18'.

- ii. **Public Hearing.** Hurtley opened the public hearing at 6:43pm. Matt Brown asked where the 50% garage frontage number comes from. Sergeant shared it is a number used by other communities and is a very easy number to enforce. Brown asked that the 50% get reconsidered. His house is 32 feet wide and his garage is 36 feet wide and he sees the percentage as not accurate. He sees far reaching consequences and would like to have someone tell him his house doesn't look good. Stuart asked brown what the impact is for him as a developer. Brown responded that he would have to build a bigger house than he needs and get a bigger lot. Stuart asked if this means he would have to build less houses in a development and asked if he only has a problem with the 50%. Brown added he thinks the percentage is inaccurate.

Roger Berg said three car garages are popular and this would cause problems, he would like to see a committee created with one designer, two builders, two residents, and two commissioner members. If not, he would want to see some workshops with Jason to understand the ordinance. He would like to see some examples brought forward to demonstrate this is doable. Berg added that he wants to find the best product and thinks it is hard to argue with the study about what people want. Ry Thompson said he sees a lot of traditional neighborhoods around the country. He thinks a lot of people in Evansville want a front porch, with smaller houses and garages behind the house. Thompson said it is short sighted to assume people only want one type of house and thinks developers should provide a diversity of products. ADUs are a positive addition and he would like to see those implemented. They would provide people to not own a car that could walk around Evansville.

Berg said those comments are an example of why we shouldn't rush and that housing is very expensive and affordability needs to be considered. Berg said it is a hard pill to swallow when you tell someone they can't have a three car garage. He wants a study on this. Stuart asked if three car garages are possible. Berg said there are unintended consequences, every square foot adds 226 dollars on the house. He sees creative ways and is not against the ordinances. He thinks it is too quick and no designer has been aware of this. Possibly these problems are answerable by Jason. Thompson asked if the photo in the visual preference survey is possible to build. Berg said he is not qualified to answer that. He said this is why the designer needs to come in. Berg said if you turn a garage you will get more concrete in the front yard. Thompson said you would have less concrete, because the driveway would be one car wide. Berg said he would need to see that on a drawing from a designer or architect. He gets where everyone is coming from but thinks it needs more buy in. Sergeant informed Stuart that 3 car garages would not be outlawed, also existing homes are not affected by the ordinance. Other communities have seen the use of a "double loaded" three car garage with the storage bay being accessed from back yard. Sergeant shared the intention is to meet the ability to get more density through narrower lots, this is only achievable if the garage frontage is reduced. Creative solutions to push garage back and add porches, he sees all future lots platted would be able to have a 3 car garage. Berg said his architect said there are unintended consequences for the house and window lay outs. Berg wants a chance to have

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an architect lay out designs that would work. He said you can't keep hurting affordability by adding cost to everything. Berg agrees with everything.

Cole added we aren't reinventing the wheel and it has all been done. People have said they want this and it can be done. Berg said he wants an expert to look at it. Cole asked why an expert was needed when there are examples of this already being done. Berg said the designer he spoke with couldn't do it. Cole said he didn't believe that. Brown offered to meet on west side to evaluate the houses with garages and thinks they look great even though they don't meet the 50% rule. Berg said the duplex problem is even worse. Berg said he has read the ordinance three or four times and has questions and concerns and isn't considered a dummy.

Gishnock said he struggles to understand if other communities are doing a 50/50 rule and even further that it would seem that this would be on the builders to create suitable plans, especially if they work in surrounding communities. He said he would not want to see the west side, he doesn't see three car garages and porches as aesthetic. The Plan Commission has a duty to follow the comprehensive plan and reviewed the ordinances and has no misunderstanding. He thinks there should be some consideration given to 50% and this community means a lot to him especially to represent the opinions of the residents. Brown said no one in Rock County has an ordinance like this. Berg asked this get tabled and the builders are given Jason for a couple workshops to go through the ordinance line by line.

Scarmon asked Sergeant and said he supports meeting the goals of the ordinance and doesn't want to upset the apple cart if further discussion is possible. He asked if the number of garage bays was considered in the 50% rule. Sergeant said the 50% number is from looking at nearly all 2 car house build in the city meet this rule. The number growing past 50% would no longer promote change of the development patterns as described in the plan. The more garage added makes meeting the ordinance difficult to meet. Sergeant measured existing houses on aerial maps and has now seen some plans that would need a 2 to 4 foot adjustment. He said the duplex would be the toughest one to meet the new rule, aligning with the type of design that has attracted the most negative public comments. Berg said they haven't addressed duplexes yet and afford affordable housing and would like to see this tables to work with Jason. Gishnock asked how many duplexes want three car garages, Berg said that's not an issue. Berg said you might end up with a boat on the side of the house instead. Gishnock is open to a one hour session to answer questions and unsure if a workshop should be accommodated. Berg said he agreed with what he said and wants access to Jason to walk through the concerns. Gishnock asked Sergeant if he could accommodate this and the changes are only a month old. Sergeant said he is more than willing to answer any questions. The ordinance was reviewed almost a month and noted these goals have been discussed often since 2014. He has discussed the provision extensively with developers and some builders. He is unsure though what is expected of him in assisting builders meet the rules. A delay in implementation is another solution. Sergeant would like to see the builders bring some designs they may think meets the ordinance for commission review and will follow the guidance given.

Stuart thanked everyone for the comments. If a special meeting is scheduled to table, she would not want Settlers Grove to move forward until this is resolved. She reminded the

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commission that originally the discussion was to put the 50% provision in the agreement for the subdivision, and the preference by the developer was to instead have an ordinance. Becker asked if the concern was over understanding the ordinance or just not agreeing with it. She thought it was very clear and has been discussed for 6 years and has clients that want more historic looking homes and cannot find them. Berg said he thinks they are more on the same page then not and things might be off by a couple feet. She would be okay with a special meeting to review examples. Noah Hurley shared the ordinance makes the duplexes he builds impossible. Dave Olsen said there is a lack of builders and thinks they might go to other communities instead of Evansville.

- iii. **Plan Commissioner Questions and Comments.** Commission discussed a meeting date and goals for the meeting and concern over time available in December. Concern was expressed with approving and holding from council action. Sergeant would prefer a public meeting was published. Hurtley wants to have the meeting and explained he would like to make sure the builders get questions to Jason in advance of the meeting.
- iv. **Motion to Recommend Approval of Ordinance 2020-13 to Common Council.** *Motion to table ordinance 2020-13 to December 15th at 2pm by Cole, second by Gishnock*

C. Discussion of Final Land Division and Draft Development Agreement for Settler's Grove.
Sergeant had nothing new on the agreement to share, Olsen didn't either.

- 8. **Next Meeting Dates: Tuesday, January 5, 2020 at 6:00pm.** Commission would like to meet virtually for next meeting.
- 9. *Motion to Adjourn by Cole, seconded by Stuart. Approved Unanimously.*