

CITY OF PALOS HEIGHTS



Planning and Zoning Committee Meeting Minutes April 27, 2021

Call to Order

Chairman Clifford called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm on April 27, 2021. In attendance were: Chairman Clifford, Alderman Key, Alderman McGrogan and Alderman McGovern. Also in attendance were Community Development Coordinator Ken Busse and Recording Secretary Liz Gutierrez.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Clifford called for the approval of the minutes of the March 23, 2021 Planning & Zoning meeting. So moved by Alderman Key, seconded by Alderman McGrogan. All in favor, motion carried.

New Business

Right of Way Vacation & Sale: Consider proceeding with vacating south one-half of the remaining alley Right of Way immediately north of 12258 S 75th Ave.

Discussion: The committee gave the approval for this process to move forward. Mr. Busse will contact the property owner and Morris Engineering to proceed. The hearing for this purchase will need to come before Council, however it will have to go through Committee first.

Fence Variances: Consider updating fence code provisions for corner lots and properties along high traffic roads and adjacent to commercial properties.

Discussion: The purpose of this discussion is to initiate possible updates to the fence code and zoning code, where necessary, in connection with fences installed on corner lots and properties adjacent to commercial uses and high-volume roads. Fence variance requests for these types of properties are often similar in type and character to those discussed tonight. Moreover, with few exceptions, the variances are granted. An updated fence code would allow these property owners to follow city guidelines, apply for a fence permit, and install a fence in an expeditious manner. Currently, these frequently granted fence variances require a long drawn out public hearing and approval process.

Mr. Busse stated that, prior to the committee meeting, he had spoken with Tom Brown, City Attorney about the manner with which changes could be made. Mr. Brown said it is possible to draft the changes and present them to the License, Permits and Franchise Committee. Mr. Brown indicated that no public hearing would be required for such changes.

Mr. Busse then presented a variety of fence code updates to accommodate frequently requested and granted fence variances. Examples include:

Example 1: A Corner Lot on a 2-Lot Block – Allow for a 6-foot tall privacy fence to extend beyond the building line along the 2-Lot Block side a distance of approximately 33% from the building line to the lot line. For example, 10 feet for a 30-foot front yard along a 2-lot block, and 6.5 feet for a 20-foot front yard along a 2-lot block.

Example 2: A Corner Lot on a 2-Lot Block – Allow for a 4-foot non privacy fence to be placed along the property line on the side of the 2-Lot Block. For example, picket fence or wrought iron look fence. However, such a fence must not enclose the front yard immediately in front of the residence.

Example 3: A Corner Lot on a 1-Lot Block (e.g., a non-through street that dead ends) – Allow for a 6-foot privacy fence to be placed along the lot line of along the 1_Lot Block.

Example 4: Corner lots adjacent to unused Rights-of-Way.

Alderman McGrogan suggested an aesthetic design guideline for fences along major streets. For example, material type, color, look, etc. He also suggested the City may financially assist owners with fences that meet the aesthetic design guidelines. Where fences do not meet the aesthetic design guideline, no assistance would be granted. This would not be mandatory but an option for residents in the event they were installing a new or replacement fence. Alderman Key mentioned there would be a limit to the amount of money for this, but likes the idea of a uniform look along major streets. Alderman McGovern referenced 82nd Avenue in Orland Park where all fences are matching/uniform and how nice it looks.

Alderman Clifford likes the idea of possibly allowing picket and wrought iron fences, but only on end cap lots (e.g., 2-Lot Blocks, 1-Lot Blocks, etc.). It can enhance the look of the house and the neighborhood.

Alderman McGovern stated that line of sight is of utmost importance for all lots when considering these type of changes.

Alderman Key is in support of looking at the fence ordinance to see how it can be updated to accommodate these frequently requested and granted variances.

Ken Busse then presented the last two examples to the committee:

Example 5: Corner lots along major roadways with high traffic counts (ADT>5,000 vehicles) – Allow a 6-foot privacy fence.

Example 6: Properties along major roadway with high traffic counts (ADT > 5,000 vehicles) – Allow rear 8-foot privacy fences along lot lines abutting major roadways.

Mr. Busse explained such roadways would be limited to Harlem Avenue, 127th Street, 131st Street (west of Harlem), Illinois Route 83, and Ridgeland Avenue.

Alderman Clifford suggested to Mr. Busse to look at or contact neighboring cities whose ordinances might already address the issues presented tonight.

Alderman McGrogan would like more detailed visual examples to help make a decision regarding changing the ordinances.

Old Business

None

Adjourn

There being no further business, Chairman Clifford entertained a motion to adjourn, seconded by Alderman Key. All in favor and motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Gutierrez, Recording Secretary