

Minutes  
City of Monona  
Plan Commission  
Monday May 8, 2023

The meeting of the City of Monona Plan Commission was called to order (6:00pm).

Present: Alder Nancy Moore (Chair), Alder Patrick DePula, Ms. Coreen Fallat, Mr. Robert Stein, Mr. Chris Conrad, Ms. Susan Fox, and Mr. Chris Homburg

Excused: Mr. Brandon Gries

Also Present: Doug Plowman, Planning Director and Thor Jeppson, Assistant Planner

**Approval of Minutes**

A motion by Mr. Stein, seconded by Alder DePula, to approve the minutes of April 24, 2023 carried with one correction.

**Order of Business**

There were no changes to the order of business.

**Appearances**

None.

**Unfinished Business**

**A. Discussion of Housing Data for Monona and Dane County. (Case No. 2-028-2022)**

Assistant Planner Jeppson introduced the draft housing assessment, which was created in response to a request from the Plan Commission for more information on the City's demographics and housing profile in order to better inform decisions. The assessment provides an overview of housing in Monona, demographic trends, and an update to the data provided in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan. It also provides a comparison to Dane County's demographics and housing profile. 2020 Decennial Census datasets were used when available; otherwise, 2021 5-year estimates from the American Community Survey (ACS) were used.

Planning Director Plowman shared highlights from the draft housing assessment. For overall population, the 2016 Comprehensive Plan used DOA estimates to project a 3.08% population decrease from 2010-2020. In actuality, the population increased from 7,533 to 8,624 during that time. Demographic data also show an aging population and an increase in the share of family households in Monona.

The number of housing units in the City was 4,342 in 2020, with approximately 62% of units being single-family homes, and 23% being units in buildings with 20+ units. The vacancy rate is approximately 3.3%, which suggests a shortage of rental units. 58% of units are owner-occupied. 13.6% of single-family homes are rented, which is higher than the County average. The City has an aging housing stock, with over 50% of units built before 1960.

Assistant Planner Jeppson discussed recently approved housing developments. Since 2010, Monona has added 533 housing units through multifamily development. Most of these are

rental apartments, but six owner-occupied single-family homes were added through the Raywood small-lot subdivision. Added units include 68 units of senior living, 4 townhomes, and up to 25 workforce housing units at Yahara Terrace. Another potential 443 units are currently in the entitlement and review process including 16 live-work units, 89-104 workforce housing units and 22 townhomes.

Self-reported financial data from the ACS show a 23.1% increase in median home value and 21.4% increase in contract rent from 2017-2021. 19% of Monona renters are severely cost burdened (greater than 50% of household income goes to housing costs). Data from the City's assessor shows a median assessed home value of \$384,850 in 2023, a 10% increase since 2022.

Planning Director Plowman identified key talking points and trends from the assessment. He mentioned the City's aging housing stock, aging population, and increase in families, which points to the need for varied housing options. He also pointed out the large increase in contract rent price. He suggested that the report be updated when more 2020 Census data is available, when more historic assessment data is received from Accurate Appraisals, and if more detailed rent data can be obtained.

Alder Moore suggested the Commission discuss additional data that is needed. She felt that the important trends were Monona's older housing stock, aging population, and increasing property values. She identified the need to address missing middle housing, especially for seniors who are looking to downsize but are not ready for senior living.

Ms. Fallat asked if staff is participating in the Dane County Regional Housing Survey, and if it aims to identify strategies that municipalities can implement. Alder DePula responded that he is involved in the effort, and that it will identify best practices to address the housing crisis across the County. Ms. Fallat wanted to compare the percentage of Dane County residents who are severely cost burdened to Monona. Alder DePula said that in Dane County, about 33% of households are cost burdened. Ms. Fallat was surprised that townhomes made up only 0.3% of housing units.

Mr. Conrad felt that the report should be shared publically. He wants to explore how Monona can encourage more small-lot subdivisions, such as through zoning changes. He asked how many short-term rental properties operated in Monona. Alder Moore responded that there are 48, and that a short-term rental ordinance was recently passed because they are impacting housing prices. Mr. Conrad wanted to explore incentives for developers to build owner-occupied housing units.

Alder Moore said that small-lot subdivisions are identified as a goal in the Comprehensive Plan, and that they should result in owner-occupied housing. Mr. Stein asked how the Commission could ensure units are not rented, and Alder Moore responded with incentives or zoning changes which remove barriers. Mr. Stein added that the right types of developers need to be solicited and asked why there is a perception that architects won't design condos. Mr. Homburg replied that some architects will, but that there is less liability in designing rental apartments.

Ms. Fox stated that the Raywood small-lot subdivision developer also built a duplex and tried to buy more lots but was outbid. She felt that the purchase of properties by investors was an issue. She added that previous discussions about small-lot subdivisions and accessory dwelling units (ADUs) received mixed reviews as they can change the feel of the community. She stressed the need to consider what the community wants, and to identify appropriate locations where lots could be subdivided while being sensitive to the neighborhood.

Mr. Homburg asked if the report clearly defined missing middle housing. Alder Moore responded that it is approximately defined as 4-16 unit buildings. Mr. Homburg asked if missing middle housing included apartments and Alder Moore responded that it includes rental units or owner-occupied housing. Mr. Homburg liked the idea of using incentives to encourage the right types of developments, and felt that more TIF money should be used for the Renew Monona loan program, as it helps rehabilitate older homes and prevents homes turning over to investors. He said that the City could not use zoning to prevent rentals, only incentives. Alder DePula added that Renew Monona's threshold needed to be increased so that more homes qualify.

Alder Moore asked if HOAs could limit the number of rentals. Alder DePula said that they could, but that the developer has to create the HOA in the first place and might not be incentivized to do so. Mr. Homburg stated that the Commission could require rental restrictions in the HOA documents during the approval process.

Mr. Conrad asked why zoning could not be used to limit rentals. Planning Director Plowman said that it is likely not legal and would be challenged very quickly. He said that the Commission could use the Comprehensive Plan to build a framework that identifies the types of housing which is desired and where it could be located. Mr. Homburg added that it is on the Commission to hold up the framework in the existing Comprehensive Plan.

Alder Moore stressed the need to be more proactive. Alder DePula said that the best way is for the City to purchase properties. Alder Moore said that the City is not in a position to buy many properties. She said that the City used that strategy for the Heritage and Riverfront developments, but that missing middle housing is more about smaller developments.

Alder Moore agreed that the Commission must determine where zoning changes or lot divisions would be appropriate. She also felt that developers will need assurances that small-lot subdivisions will be approved before they invest resources.

Ms. Fallat asked for examples of strategies that have worked for other communities. Alder DePula said that many communities use TIF to create missing middle housing, which Monona hasn't done much of.

Alder Moore offered revising parking minimums as another potential tool. Ms. Fox agreed that Monona's parking minimums may be too restrictive, especially for residential buildings. She felt that they drive up costs for developers, and that revising minimums could help with affordability and in creating more units. She asked for examples from other communities.

Alder Moore asked the Commission for other housing trends to further explore. The Commission discussed the idea that many in the younger generations are less interested in home ownership.

### **New Business**

#### **A. Review and Possible Recommendation to City Council for an Ordinance Amendment to Chapter 473 of the Monona Municipal Code of Ordinances Regarding Certified Survey Maps. (Case No. 2-010-2023)**

Planning Director Plowman gave an overview of the ordinance amendment. The change is in response to a Plan Commission request to revise the Land Division Ordinance following several requested exceptions to the ordinance as Certified Survey Maps were being reviewed. The changes specifically relate to the Access to Streets section and the width of the street and right of way adjacent to the newly created parcels.

As currently written, any land division shall result in lots fronting a street at least 60 feet in width. The Commission felt this was unlikely to be met given the existing conditions of streets and that the goal of the ordinance should be to ensure adequate right of way.

The Public Works Department recommended the typical roadway width that is outlined in City ordinance, which is 28 feet of asphalt and 33 feet measured from curb to curb. The new ordinance will reference that as a minimum, and also that the street should be located within a right of way at least 60 feet in width.

The draft ordinance was reviewed at the May 3<sup>rd</sup> Public Works Committee meeting where it was unanimously recommended for approval. Staff is seeking a recommendation by the Plan Commission for approval to City Council.

Ms. Fox suggested an update to the language so that it reads “the resulting lots adjoin a dedicated street at least 28 feet in width and are located within a right-of-way at least 60 feet in width.”

Mr. Homburg said that roads are defined face to face on curb and gutter, not by the asphalt. He said that if the goal is to have 28 feet of asphalt, then the required road width should be 32 feet. He said that while there are some 28 foot roads in the City, the decision should be up to the Public Works Committee as long as the language in the Ordinance has more clarity. He proposed the language be amended to “No proposed land division shall be approved unless all of the resulting lots adjoin a dedicated street at least 32 feet in width (face to face) located within a public right-of-way at least 60 feet in width,” with Public Works deciding the street width.

Alder DePula said that the Public Works Committee approved the language with a 28 foot road width, meaning 28 feet of asphalt. Mr. Homburg stressed that that would require a 32 foot wide road with standard curb and gutter.

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Mr. Stein asked if there are situations where land divisions result in lots abutting private drives. Mr. Homburg replied that it happens when a development results in roads which have less than 60 feet of right-of-way, such as with the Whitehorse property or South Towne Mall.

A motion was made by Mr. Homburg, seconded by Alder DePula, to recommend to City Council for an Ordinance Amendment to Chapter 473 of the Monona Municipal Code of Ordinances Regarding Certified Survey Maps as amended.

The motion carried unanimously.

### **Reports of Staff and Commission Members**

#### **A. Staff Report Regarding Status of Development Project Proposals.**

##### **1. Economic Development Update**

Planning Director Plowman shared that the project at 5105 Monona Drive will likely be on the agenda at the May Community Development Authority (CDA) meeting.

##### **2. Potential Upcoming Plan Commission Items**

Planning Director Plowman reported that the dental clinic at 220 W Broadway has been through the FEMA map amendment process and is looking to break ground soon. He expects a few zoning permits for new businesses and prehearings for a few redevelopment projects at upcoming meetings. The MG21 landscaping plan will be presented at the June 12 meeting.

##### **3. Updates/Discussion on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Efforts**

None.

##### **4. Updates/Discussion on Sustainability Efforts**

None.

##### **5. Upcoming Meetings: May 23, 2023 and June 12, 2023**

Alder Moore pointed out that the next meeting is on May 22, 2023. Planning Director Plowman said that the meeting will likely be cancelled.

#### **B. Plan Commission Requests for Information from City Staff**

None.

### **Adjournment**

A motion by Alder DePula, seconded by Mr. Stein, to adjourn carried. (7:16pm)

Respectfully submitted by:  
Thor Jeppson, Assistant Planner