

POLK COUNTY ZONING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

The Polk County Zoning Commission held their regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, February 22, 2021 at 7:00 P.M. **Due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, the meeting was held by voice and video conference only. The Public Works building is currently closed to the public. All Commissioners, staff, applicants and public were invited to join the meeting by using the link or phone number provided.**

Zoning Commission members Present: Frank Steinbach, Merle Hicks, Maryfrances Evans, and Pennie Carroll. Absent: Dave Campbell, Kasi Wolfer and Michael Fairchild

Present from the Polk County Public Works Department: Bret VandeLune, Planning and Development Manager, Brian McDonough, Land Use Planning Coordinator, Jennifer Ellison, Planner, Chris Meeks, Planner, and Ashley Davidson, Recording Secretary.

Also present were Chris Shires and Jane Reasoner with Confluence, and Eric Burmeister with the Polk County Housing Trust Fund.

There were no regular items of business. The Zoning Commission held a work session on the Comprehensive Plan update process.

Comprehensive Plan Work Session

Chris Shires and Jane Reasoner presented a review of the County's current Comprehensive Plan, emerging trends and demographics, as well as current progress and timeline for the new, 2050 Comprehensive Plan. Additional topics included Polk County's regional role in housing, conservation, economic development and overall leadership, as well as the County's approach to rural land use issues. The consultant team asked for input from Commissioners regarding issues and opportunities they see through this process.

Chairman Steinbach provided input on the County's approach to rural land use. He discussed the challenge in preserving agricultural land given many cities current approach to annexation, urban sprawl and infill development. He also discussed various challenges and opportunities related to rural development generally, including broadband internet access. He stated a challenge would be informing the public, and suggested the use of television or other media.

Commissioner Hicks referenced past development decisions made by Polk County Conservation in the Jester Park area.

Eric Burmeister spoke about the issue of housing as an opportunity to address racial and social inequality, and provide affordable and convenient workforce, missing middle and first-time buyer housing. He referenced a carrot and stick approach is needed. He also stated the County's role in this issue has been financial support of local nonprofit organizations, such as the Polk County

Housing Trust Fund, Neighborhood Finance Corporation, Neighborhood Development Corporation, and the newly formed Invest DSM.

Jane Reasoner walked the attendees through the Social Pinpoint website, and provided a brief tutorial and review of the engagement activities.

Bret VandeLune thanked the Commissioners and attendees for their participation. He stated that staff was eager to provide their comments and input as the Comprehensive Plan process moves forward.

The meeting was adjourned.