

**CITY OF JAMESTOWN**  
**102 3rd Ave SE - Jamestown, ND 58401**  
**Phone: 701-252-5900**  
**MINUTES**  
**Planning Commission – January 13, 2020 - 8:00 a.m.**

Members Present: Hillerud, Paulson, Trautman, Frye, Rath, Bensch, Ritter

Absent: Bayer, Ostlie

Others: Mayor Heinrich, Hellekson, Steele, Blackmore, Harty

1. Chairman Hillerud opened the meeting. Commission member Trautman made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 12, 2019 Planning Commission meeting. Seconded by Commission member Bensch. Unanimous aye vote. Motion carried.
2. Scott Harmstead, SRF Consulting Group, Inc. presented on zoning ordinance updates. Previously the Planning Commission had started working on items related to zoning districts and dimensional standards. The objective is to reformat each zoning district in order to make the material more user friendly for staff, developers, etc. Now the districts are 5-6 pages in length, with updates, they will be 1-2 pages in length. All uses that require additional requirements have been put in another chapter. City staff will need to review them and bring items back to the Planning Commission. This would be a restructuring of the ordinance, not making ordinance text changes. City Administrator Hellekson stated that May of 2020 will be a good time to discuss this change after staff has had time to review the draft text.
3. Subdivision process update from SRF Consulting Group, Inc. Scott stated the current practice for lot line adjustments, splits & mergers are now considered “minor subdivisions”. This means a surveyor must prepare a new plat for any of these applications. This is very unique and costly when compared with other cities in North Dakota. Recent meetings between staff have made some progress about lot mergers or combinations. Important aspects to consider will be confirming ownership, ensuring city assets are protected, and providing notice about applications. The goal is to move toward a process that minimizes the need to use a surveyor where possible and shortens the review process.

Mayor Heinrich spoke to the Commission about his concerns relating to the current lot merger procedures in that it is very different from other cities in the state. He has visited with Minot, Grand Forks and Bismarck which have a simple process to allow building across lot lines when lots are owned by the same party. Mayor Heinrich is not in favor of Jamestown residents incurring undue expenses for this process and is in favor of changing the procedure to be simple and routine for lot mergers by utilizing a checklist or changing the ordinance.

Chairman Hillerud stated that the Planning Commission hadn't made changes to the ordinance to cause the undue expenses and delays that the Mayor had expressed. The ordinance was previously amended to reduce the timeline for simple, less complex plats. In working with staff, SRF and the City attorney, the ordinance was amended by creating a “minor subdivision”, which allows for a preliminary and final hearing to be held at the same hearing in order to reduce the timeline by one month from the previous requirement provided that the subdivision meets the criteria that was established. After the ordinance was amended, staff, while reviewing the City's policy regarding simple lot splits and mergers determined that the practices that were being used, didn't matching the City's policy. At that time, it was determined the practice needed to align with the policy. That is how we got to this point. An ordinance change is needed if we intend to establish a simpler and more streamline procedure, similar to what the other Cities mentioned are utilizing, to alleviate the lengthy procedure for simple lot splits and/or mergers. Staff is to work with SRF Consulting Group, Inc. to develop the considerations, submittal requirements, timeline and form of

public notice needed and, present this to the City attorney for review, prior to forwarding to the Planning Commission and the City Council for their approval.

Chairman Hillerud agreed with the Mayor that properties could be merged and subdivided through personal agreements between private parties without consent from the City, but the re-platting process is the process that gives the City the opportunity to have input regarding any future development.

Mr. Harmstead, SRF Consulting Group, Inc., stated that changing definitions in the municipal code could help alleviate some of the problems; for example, the term "lot" has two different definitions in some cities.

4. Commission member Trautman made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ritter. Meeting adjourned.