

## CITY OF DUBUQUE - COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

**GOVERNMENTAL BODY:** Resilient Community Advisory Commission (RCAC)

**DATE:** December 1, 2022

**TIME:** 5:00 pm

**LOCATION:** Jule Operations and Training Center (JOTC) Circle Conference Room, 949 Kerper Blvd.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Josh Chamberland, Katharine Connolly, Steven Drahozal, Sandra Evans, Adam Hoffman, Lalith Jayawickrama, Robin Kennicker, Jake Kohlhaas

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Dean Boles

**STAFF PRESENT:** Gina Bell and Amanda Lewis

Chair Kohlhaas called the meeting to order at 5:03 pm.

### **TEST AGENDA**

**OATH OF OFFICE:** Steven Drahozal

**MINUTES APPROVAL:** Chamberland motioned to approve the October minutes. Kennicker seconded. Motion carried.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Ken Bichell – No Mow May (NMM) Dubuque – explained idea behind NMM; Main objective is to say thanks for the grant. Currently have 12-15 that come to the meetings. The group has had many conversations with City Council members and City staff, and they don't want people to get cited for people with their grass too long during May. Some cities have abolished this ordinance altogether, some cities have pushed the ordinance for a later month. They are working to design signage for educational / participation purposes.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- a) City Clerk's Office – City Clerk Adrienne Breitfelder gave an update on commissioner terms after a clerical error was discovered.
- b) Policy Work – Review ordinances and policies as they relate to Climate Action Plan and determine subcommittees and where to focus plant height, urban agriculture, and tree canopy  
Justine Hull, Engineering Department reviewed letter to City Council about plant height and addressed the Commission. Current policy doesn't not allow plants above 18" to be planted in the corner visibility areas  
Currently have a 10-foot triangle that cannot be obstructed in an intersection. Justine tests it out in city vehicles to check sight distance and corner lot visibility lot can't impede vision between 2-8 feet  
Justine shared during the past summer she received ~100 complaints from different addresses and that many departments are involved so who is doing what specifically is sometimes a question. Engineering issue is visibility, signs, lights, etc. Complaints must be verified by Justine and are more of a case-by-case basis. Commission discussed a lower plant height within the 10-foot arc and will look at Mowing to Monarch plant list to determine what plants are less than 18" for that 10-foot arc for visibility. Commissioner Kennicker motions to contact Mowing to Monarchs and revise letter to city council. Commissioner Evans seconds. Motion carries.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

- a) Climate Action Plan and Policy Work - Review ordinances and policies as they relate to Climate Action Plan and determine subcommittees and where to focus plant height, urban agriculture, and tree canopy

Reports from Commissioners regarding Climate Action Plan (CAP) activities and City Ordinances

Front Yard Gardens – Commissioner Hoffman

Idea is to publicize what you CAN do - Ex. Des Moines has detailed, public list of where you can grow food

Citizen calls - Issues are 5 days' notice from when it was being sent which is not enough time allowance for homeowner to do something before city comes to cut something down.

Want clarification for health, safety, fire risks

And best practices for how to inform citizens

10 days might be better/more reasonable/more efficient

Don't need to do anything with code, just giving people more information of where they can plant food/fruit trees

#### No Mow May – Commissioner Kohlhaas

No city code with yard height or aesthetics - just talks about safety, health, fire hazards. Current code doesn't say much and is open for interpretation. The policy is for enforcement purposes but not currently available to public (Ex. Have been told lawns taller than 8 inches are non-compliant but it doesn't say a specific height in the code). The commission doesn't want to make more rules, the desire is to be clear on enforcement policy and understand what constitutes safety, health, and fire hazards as well as areas of property not addressed (ex. Wooded areas).

Additional discussion included homeowner association rules/covenants and where they fit into this discussion.

Commissioners determined best next step is to invite Ben Pothoff from Housing to address the enforcement policy issue at a future meeting and table the discussion until then.

#### Livestock – Commissioner Chamberland

Commissioner Chamberland gave an update on his findings related to livestock in the city including:

- Prohibiting sale and giveaway of chickens unless you are accredited seller
- Horse drawn vehicles are restricted unless get permit from Leisure Services
- Store animal food – needs to be rat proof
- Animals can't roam freely
- Zoning: R1 and R2 districts; R1 is where chicken and backyard hen ordinance allows for chickens and ducks for egg production and there are backyard and side yard, setback requirements, height of structures as well as a conditional use application which is submitted to zoning board. Additionally, you can have ponies and horses on R1., but must meet certain conditions.

Commissioners questioned where goats and bees fit in for non-commercial purposes? Other animals? If not currently allowed, could it be permission based after notifying neighbors? What state laws might supersede local laws related to animals? Recommendation is to leave it as open to interpretation and revisit chicken policy/guidelines and investigate beekeeping policy. Commissioner will start drafting a policy to understand concerns before talking to someone from the city to understand the concerns and eventually invite health department and zoning/planning to weigh in. Commissioner Chamberland will look up sample policies for poultry to see how we can expand or clarify things and Commissioner Kennicker will investigate bee policies from other areas.

#### **HOW DID I SHOW UP? COMMISSIONER REPORTS:**

- Jayawickrama – final for science class for students to build a better Dubuque
- Kennicker – budget for filter systems for pools and new guidelines for staffing and looking at alternatives for every avenue for how people to get employed
- Chamberland – Colleges Coalition – topic was Food Access and Food Recovery with 25 stakeholders in attendance – involvement database to link volunteers and launching Food Recovery Working Group

**NEXT MEETING:** The next commission meeting will occur on January 5, 2023, at 5 pm at the Jule Operations and Training Center (JOTC) in the Circle Conference Room, 949 Kerper Blvd.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The Commission adjourned at 6:51 pm.

Minutes approved by:   
Jacob Kohlhaas, Commission Chair

Prepared by:   
Gina Bell, Sustainable Community Coordinator