



**Planning Commission
October 7, 2025
North Liberty City Council Chambers**

Call to Order

Chair Amy Yotty called the Tuesday, October 7, 2025, Planning Commission to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers at 360 N. Main Street. Commission members present – Barry A’Hearn, Josey Bathke, Sheila Geneser, Dave Willer, Amy Yotty; absent – Zach Mickelson.

Others present: Ryan Heiar, Ryan Rusnak, Tracey Mulcahey, Grant Lientz, Josiah Bilskemper, Jon Marner, Brandon Pratt, Ardi Stoner, Allan Schau, and other interested parties.

Approval of the Agenda

A’Hearn moved, Bathke seconded to approve the agenda. The vote was all ayes. Agenda approved.

Public Comment

No public comment was offered.

MLDC, Inc. Zoning Map Amendment

Staff Presentation

Rusnak presented the request of MLDC, Inc. for a Future Land Use Map amendment from Urban Low Intensity (ULI) to Urban Medium Intensity (UMI) on approximately .49 acres and a Zoning Map Amendment (rezoning) from RS-6 Single-Unit Residence District to RD-10 Two-Unit Residence District on .49 acres and RD-10 Two-Unit Residence District to RS-6 Single-Unit Residence District on .37 acres. The property is located approximately 180 feet north of Suttner Drive as extended westerly from its western terminus approximately 209 feet. Staff recommends the Planning Commission accept the listed findings: 1. The Future Land Use Map amendment request from Urban Low Intensity (ULI) to Urban Medium Intensity (UMI) on approximately .49 acres would achieve consistency with Comprehensive Plan locational standards for the UMI Future Land Use; and 2. The rezoning request from RS-6 Single-Unit Residence District RD-10 Two-Unit Residence District on .49 acres and RD-10 Two-Unit Residence District to RS-6 Single-Unit Residence District on .37 acres would achieve consistency with the approval standards enumerated in Section 165.09 of the Zoning Code; and forward the request for a Future Land Use Map amendment from Urban Low Intensity (ULI) to Urban Medium Intensity (UMI) on approximately .49 acres and a Zoning Map Amendment (rezoning) from RS-6 Single-Unit Residence District to RD-10 Two-Unit Residence District on .49 acres and RD-10 Two-Unit Residence District to RS-6 Single-Unit Residence District on .37 acres to the City Council with a recommendation for approval.

Applicant Presentation

Jon Marner, MMS Consultants, was present on behalf of the applicant and offered additional information on the application.

Public Comments

No public comments were offered.

Questions and Comments

The Commission had no questions or comments on the application.

Recommendation to the City Council

Geneser moved, Willer seconded that the Planning Commission accept the listed findings and forward the Future Land Use Map amendment and Zoning Map Amendment to the City Council with a recommendation for approval. The vote was: ayes – Yotty, Willer, Geneser, Bathke, A'Hearn; nays – none; absent – Mickelson. Motion carried.

UCD Holdings, LLC Zoning Map Amendment

Staff Presentation

Rusnak presented the request of UCD Holdings, LLC. for a Future Land Use Map amendment from Commercial/Industrial Flex (FLX) to Urban High Intensity (UHI) on approximately 9.86 acres and a Zoning Map Amendment (Rezoning) from I-1 Light Industrial to CU C-3 Central Urban High Intensity Commercial District on approximately 9.86 total acres and P Public on approximately .32 acres. The property is located south of West Cherry Street, north of West Zeller Street and west of CRANDIC Railroad. Staff recommends the Planning Commission accept the listed findings: 1. The Future Land Use Map amendment request from Commercial/Industrial Flex (FLX) to Urban High Intensity (UHI) on approximately 9.86 acres would achieve consistency with Comprehensive Plan locational standards for the UHI Future Land Use and other adopted land use policies; and 2. The rezoning request for Zoning Map Amendment (Rezoning) from I-1 Light Industrial to CU C-3 Central Urban High Intensity Commercial District on approximately 9.86 total acres and P Public on approximately .32 acres would achieve consistency with the approval standards enumerated in Section 165.09 of the Zoning Code; and forward the request for a Future Land Use Map amendment from Commercial/Industrial Flex (FLX) to Urban High Intensity (UHI) on approximately 9.86 acres and a Zoning Map Amendment (Rezoning) from I-1 Light Industrial to CU C-3 Central Urban High Intensity Commercial District on approximately 9.86 total acres and P Public on approximately .32 acres to the City Council with a recommendation for approval subject to the following condition:

1. That building height be limited to a maximum of 60 feet measured vertically from grade to the highest point of the coping of a flat roof, or the deck line of a mansard roof, or the top of a gable, hip, and/or gambrel roof.

Applicant Presentation

Brandon Pratt, Lion Development, was present and offered additional information on the application.

Public Comments

Ardi Stoner stated that the rezoning does not comply with Comprehensive Plan, apartments should only be allowed on 965, traffic concerns on Zeller and Cherry Street, the proposed area should be commercial, acknowledged how tough the market is, create something different, disputed the traffic counts presented by staff, the City Planner is motivated by the City's dollars, destination commercial building, gateway to Cherry Street District that will people will walk to Heyn's and splashpad from there, citizens are taking responsibility for a \$20 million bond, residents want it to be what is beneficial to them and the community, wants a quaint destination

multipurpose business district. She is opposed to the location of the residential versus commercial. She asked Lion Development group use this opportunity to show integrity. She equated the Planning Commission to Family Court and asked them to make the best decision.

Allan Schau offered thanks to staff for presentation. He stated that since the city is considering the development quite seriously, staff should be committing as much effort into this rezoning to make sure it makes sense, providing effort to beautify the space instead of high-rise apartments, the 2018 Comprehensive Plan shows traffic at more than 5000 cars on Zeller and Cherry on a daily basis, should be a lower emphasis on 2022 traffic numbers. He presented a petition, that the Mayor has responded to, with 214 signatures to not rezone. The property is not suited for commercial/flex zoning, either, should be rezoned as something more appropriate. He equated it to the Centennial Park events facility possibility, but with rooms filling up due to concerns about the issue. The effort by staff is because the city has already made the deal with a 20-million-dollar handshake and is now trying to make it work. The cart is before the horse with no asking of the neighbors until after the Good Neighbor meeting. He was surprised to hear the number of units increased at the Good Neighbor Meeting from what was originally proposed, saying the reduced number is not what was proposed originally, can't look at details that floated in and then pulled them back. He compared it to living in the woods in the nice part of town, where the acceptable thing would not be to move it back 50 feet, it would be assessing the appropriateness. In the memorandum, on the Comprehensive Plan – page 87 of the plan – best things that would be there are included, it states in there small residential and townhomes. He asked the Commission to assess this as if it were your own neighborhood. He spoke directly to Pratt.

Amy Brainerd, Old Fox Run, spoke regarding the Land Use Compatibility. This use is allowed with special approval and this is the special approval. She lives in a walking/biking community, adding 350 residential homes will change the dynamic. She is very concerned about schools and Rec Center. She appreciates that you reached out to the school and rec center, but there should be a professional consultant that comes in to do the assessment on schools and rec center. This will have a negative impact on the community. She doesn't want to give up walking/biking due to 1000 more cars on the road. She spoke regarding the impact on Rec Center/Schools.

Barb Winborn is worried about the cost. She asked if water and trash will go up. She can't imagine any more cars going past her house when she is out working in her flower garden. There is car after car and siren after sirens, 10 – 12 sirens this summer. She asked how much more are surrounding families are going to have to pay.

Karen Johnson doesn't see the need to put high-density housing in that area. It has been a green space for residents, this is taking away greenspace. This is ruining the trail by putting in these buildings. She stated that all you are going to see is 5-story high buildings. The setback is going to be ugly. It is blocking off the street where you come into town. Blocking off those streets is not inviting. She suggested that this is not Downtown Portland Oregon, can put these buildings there. Everything is urban and compact. Our town is not urban and nothing screams high rise development. She stated they are neglected in the old town area and that nobody cares about old town. This type of development is unnecessary and ruining a quiet neighborhood. Strangers will be walking around and there is no way to get to know those people. This ruins tranquility. She really doesn't want extra traffic and people you don't know. Many other things that could be done. She suggested ideas from other towns and offered a list of reasons to not put it in the center of the small town.

Bonnie Winslow-Garvin mentioned that this is the charming part of town. She lives in the original Zeller farmhouse. The 1000+ people being brought in to this area can't be handled by Penn School. An audience member offered that it is in Garner district. The infrastructure is not set to handle this many people. This will destroy the property values.

Clifton Watson said that if this was here, he would not have bought here.

Michelle King spoke regarding the 2023 Comprehensive Plan for this area. The Plan doesn't reflect the natural boundary of Muddy Creek, it goes into residential area and is not drawn perfectly. Commercial apartments will not bring the charm. The apartment buildings by Penn Street result in trash ending up in the creek from residential. This will impact the creek. Noise pollution doesn't stop when building is done. This does not reflect North Liberty. Schools will drop with over population, and property values will drop. She is fine with commercial on Ranshaw Way, not here.

Questions and Comments

The Commission discussed the application including 2022 traffic study vs. current data, capacity of roadways, uses allowed in current zoning, affordable vs. subsidized housing, supply is a huge factor in affordability, new development going in adjacent to Commissioner's property knew the complexion was going to change, avoided 965 due to the eyesores, developer taking a gamble on this development, TIF, progress and improvement, new amenities, lower costs by new development, possibilities in FLX area in Comprehensive Plan, comparison to Naperville, IL, new residential development drives commercial development, commercial development is in crisis, the factors for zoning map updates, takes out the questionable land uses from FLX, change in zoning is better for the city, proposed amendment and recommendation – only rezoning and Land Use Map, change is not easy, focus on job tonight, support for filling empty commercial spaces in town and height limitation.

Recommendation to the City Council

Bathke moved, A'Hearn seconded that the Planning Commission accept the listed findings and forward the Future Land Use Map amendment and Zoning Map Amendment to the City Council with a recommendation for approval subject to the condition recommended by City staff. The vote was: ayes – Geneser, Bathke, A'Hearn, Willer, Yotty; nays – none; absent – Mickelson. Motion carried.

Approval of Previous Minutes

A'Hearn moved, Geneser seconded to approve the minutes of the September 2, 2025, meeting. The vote was all ayes. Minutes approved.

Planning Updates

Rusnak presented Planning updates.

Adjournment

At 8:07 p.m., Willer moved, A'Hearn seconded to adjourn. The vote was all ayes. Meeting adjourned.

Signed:

Tracey Mulcahey, City Clerk