



City of Oakbrook Terrace
Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting
Tuesday, March 18, 2014
Case #14-12

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Noble at 7:42 P.M.

Present: Chairman Noble, Commissioner's, Ventura, Myszkowski,
Almeroth, Donoval, DeVries

Absent: Commissioner Schneider

Also Present: Building and Zoning Administrator Mihaela Dragan, City
Attorney Peter Pacione, Planning & Zoning Commission
Secretary Janice Coglianese

Chairman Noble said the third order of business was to consider the following text amendment to the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Oakbrook Terrace:

Amend Section 156.036 to read as follows:

“§156.036 UTILITY SERVICE CONNECTIONS.

(A) All utility service connections for new construction shall be installed underground in all zoning districts.

(B) All utility service connections to structures with proposed additions of fifty percent (50%) or greater of the original structure square footage shall be relocated and installed underground in all zoning districts.”

City Attorney Pacione commented that for esthetic and safety reasons for conserving and preventing power outages it would be better to have all utilities brought underground for new construction or any remodeling of 50% or more. He said it is currently required for any Planned Unit Developments. If there is a Planned Unit Development, all utilities must be placed underground.

He continued to say since the City is adding new language to the Zoning Ordinance; we will have to have a text amendment.

Chairman Noble asked for comments from the Commissioners.

There were none.

Chairman Noble asked if there were any comments from Building and Zoning Administrator Dragan.

Building and Zoning Administrator Dragan commented at the February 11, 2014 City Council Meeting, the Mayor and City Council directed a public hearing before the Planning and Zoning Commission concerning the proposed text amendment to amend the code; however, it will take some considerable amount of time before this is accomplished throughout the City. The date the ordinance becomes effective, the City will then start to enforce the ordinance for new homes, and additions as well as any new construction, specifically all utility service connections to structures with proposed additions of fifty percent (50%) or greater of the original structure square footage, and shall be relocated, and installed underground in all zoning districts.

City Attorney Pacione indicated that this was the standard in all new communities where there is substantial construction. He said as you go further west you will not see a lot of utility lines, because they are required to be placed underground. This is going to bring the City of Oakbrook Terrace, which is an older community, in line with others.

Commissioner Myszkowski stated that the City of Elmhurst has many power outages, especially due to all the lines running through the trees.

Commissioner Almeroth mentioned that very few of the power outages are service lines to the homes; they are main lines that the City, at the present time, does not plan on placing underground.

City Attorney Pacione stated Commissioner Almeroth was correct on saying this, but this could be something the City may consider in the future. He commented that many towns are figuring this into their budget to bring the lines underground.

Building and Zoning Administrator Dragan said that the City has no intention of doing this at this time.

Commissioner Almeroth stated there were a few service drops caused by a major outage just at one (1) home. He asked what the estimated cost of placing these lines underground.

Building and Zoning Administrator said that the City has no estimated cost at this time.

City Attorney Pacione said many times it depends on the distance of how far the lines have to be buried underground.

Commissioner Almeroth commented that it would be interesting to know exactly how much per foot this will cost. He questioned if it would be thousands of dollars.

Commissioner Donoval pointed out that it would be thousands of dollars; his brother-in-law, while building his home, had to extend the line 50' which cost him \$8,000.00. He continued to say that his brother-in-law had to buy the cable, dig the trench, and place the lines underground to the pole and only then would Com Ed come and arrange the connection.

Commissioner Donoval commented to Com Ed that he had lived in the City of Oakbrook Terrace for 34 years; the first 30 years he never had a problem until now having four (4) to five (5) outages every year. He indicated that it is Com Ed's responsibility to place these lines underground not the City's; Com Ed owns the lines, not the City.

Commissioner Donoval asked what would happen if there wasn't a pole on the homeowner's property, but only every third yard, how would they get it to you.

Commissioner Donoval mentioned that the homeowner would pull it from the easement of the nearest pole.

Commissioner Almeroth asked if the homeowner was responsible from his/her property line, or to the pole.

Commissioner Donoval & City Attorney Pacione both responded the homeowner was responsible for the line to go to the pole.

Commissioner Almeroth said this could be hundreds and hundreds of feet.

Commissioner Ventura mentioned the homeowner's yard could be hundreds of feet.

Commissioner Almeroth commented that he meant from his house to the back property and through the entire neighbors backyard to the next pole. He wishes he had contacted Com Ed to find out an estimated cost and is not taking the \$8,000.00 as the true cost.

City Attorney Pacione mentioned that is the reason why the City places verbiage in its ordinance so that people are not taken off guard; so they are prepared to budget in new construction or 50% or greater in remodeling.

Building and Zoning Administrator commented they could request a variance, or demonstrate true hardship.

Commissioner Donoval mentioned that he wished he could have done this earlier when he was building his house; it would have been done for free. Com Ed would have brought the lines up to your meter. He said he has a big tree in the backyard with a line running through it, which is dangerous, but does not want to spend that kind of money to place the lines underground.

Commissioner DeVries noticed when they lose power; it is due to a transformer on the street, and not so much a line going down. She continued to talk about Elmhurst with their many trees with lines running through them and power outages. She said because of the City of Oakbrook Terrace's country theme, with its wider streets, it lessens the outages.

Commissioner Donoval mentioned that he was planning to put in a gas generator, which would cost him \$10,000.00.

Commissioner Almeroth stated when you go underground you have to change the meter box, causing it to be a big project, big expense.

Chairman Noble indicated that there was no audience in attendance; therefore, there is no positive, or negative testimony.

Chairman Noble closed the audience portion, and asked if there were any other questions, or comments from the Commissioners.

Commissioner DeVries said she did understand that this hearing was for new-builds and extensive remodeling.

Building and Zoning Administrator Dragan indicated that a new bathroom would not fall under this category.

Commissioner DeVries proceeded indicating that it was more for a new family room or upstairs bedrooms.

Building and Zoning Administrator Dragan said an example, for the home on MacArthur Drive building a second floor addition, which is 50% or greater, this rule would apply; however, they received their permit back and are not obligated to conform to this rule.

Chairman Noble asked if there were any questions from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Ventura said why wouldn't people want to place the line underground since it is so much more attractive not to have those wires hanging off of your home, and she was curious to know if many of the newly constructed homes had lines placed underground.

Building and Zoning Administrator Dragan commented that she was not sure since this was not one of the things that had to be enforced in the past.

Commissioner Ventura thought it was a great idea and ultimately all lines should be placed underground.

Commissioner DeVries mentioned that it doesn't impact a homeowner as it stands at the moment; if someone plans financially for the future they could do it.

Commissioner Almeroth asked if this includes cable TV, telephone, and other utilities.

City Attorney and Building and Zoning Administrator chimed in and said all utilities.

Commissioner Ventura thought all the wires are encased together underground.

Commissioner Almeroth thought they had to be different heights.

City Attorney Pacione mentioned the electrical had to be buried deeper than the other utilities.

Chairman Noble asked for a motion to approve Case #14-12.

MOTION Commissioner Myszkowski entertained a motion to approve Case #14-12 to consider the following text amendment to the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Oakbrook Terrace:

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Commissioner Donoval seconded the motion.

Chairman Noble asked if there were any other discussion.

There was none.

Chairman Noble asked for a roll call.

Ayes: Ventura, Myszkowski, Almeroth, Donoval, DeVries, Chairman Noble

Nays: None

Absent: Commissioner Schneider

MOTION WAS PASSED.

Building and Zoning Administrator Dragan stated the Letter of Recommendation will be placed on the March 25th City Council Meeting. The next public hearings will be held on April 15th, there may be three (3) and she asked to cancel the April 1st meeting. Planning and Zoning Secretary Coglianese will contact the Commissioners when the agenda packets are ready.

Commissioner Almeroth asked what the three (3) cases were.

Building and Zoning Administrator stated One Trans Am Plaza, Summit Oaks, and another text amendment for public notice signs.

Chairman Noble asked for a motion to cancel the April 1, 2014 Planning and Zoning meeting.

MOTION Commissioner DeVries entertained a motion to cancel the April 1, 2014 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting.

Commissioner Myszkowski seconded the motion.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY THROUGH A VOICE VOTE.

Chairman Noble asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION Commissioner Ventura entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Almeroth seconded the motion.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY THROUGH A VOICE VOTE.

Chairman Noble adjourned the meeting at 7:59 P.M.

