

CITY OF WARRENVILLE  
PLAN COMMISSION/ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS  
Minutes of Regular Meeting  
Held on Thursday, January 20, 2022

A. CALL TO ORDER

Plan Commission Ch. Cosgrove called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. Ch. Cosgrove explained the opportunity interested parties would have to provide remarks during the Citizens' Comments item of the agenda.

Ch. Cosgrove explained the Citizens' Comments portion of the virtual meeting protocol, including how public comment would be accepted via GoTo Meeting and call in, which would include:

1. Public comment from anyone at City Hall;
2. Public comment from anyone participating in the meeting via GoTo Meeting with camera; and
3. Public comment from anyone participating in the meeting via phone.

Ch. Cosgrove explained all meeting participants should stay muted until they are asked to provide their comment, and start their comment by announcing their name and address. No public comments were received electronically prior to commencement of the meeting.

B. ROLL CALL

PC Present: Tim Cosgrove, Robert Pepple, Jessica Tullier, Byron Miller, Mark Taylor, Erin Schultz, John Lockett, Bob Vavra, Elizabeth Chapman

Absent/Excused: None

ZBA Present: Tim Cosgrove, Robert Pepple, Byron Miller, Jessica Tullier, John Lockett, Mark Taylor, Elizabeth Chapman

Absent/Excused: None

Also Present: Community and Economic Development Director Ron Mentzer, Planner/GIS Technician Andrew Kieffer, Sr. Civil Engineer Kristine Hocking, Recording Secretary Marie Lupo

C. NEW BUSINESS

City of Warrentville Zoning Ordinance #1018 Lot Coverage Regulation Text Amendment Review and discussion of a City staff-administered municipal survey, which poses relevant questions regarding lot coverage regulation in area municipalities that would inform potential text amendments to Warrentville's lot coverage regulation.

Pl. Kieffer provided a presentation, as follows:

Warrentville's Current Regulations:

- ▶ Lot coverage is the percentage of a lot covered by principal and accessory structures.
- ▶ Footnote (h), pursuant to Zoning Ordinance #1018 Table 4A: Residential District Requirements sets forth the following regulations:

(h) Unless otherwise approved by Planned Unit Development, the lot coverage in residential districts shall be as follows:

Lot Size	Max Lot Coverage
>= 30,000 sf.	18%
>= 14,000 sf. and < 30,000 sf.	22%
>= 10,000 sf. and < 14,000 sf.	26%
>= 7,000 sf. and < 10,000 sf.	30%
< 7,000 sf.	34%

Including accessory buildings and structures, **except driveways and fences** shall be excluded from the lot coverage calculations. An additional 2% lot coverage shall be allowed for accessory structures that do not qualify as a principal or accessory building.

Background information on lot coverage:

- ▶ Purpose
  - ▶ “Perceived clutter” mitigation
  - ▶ Improves storm water management
- ▶ High Priority Text Amendment
  - ▶ Provides additional flexibility
- ▶ Timeline
  - ▶ Research stage
  - ▶ Regulatory formulation
  - ▶ Public hearing preparation

Staff sent the following survey questions to 15 area municipalities, nine of which provided a response, including Glen Ellyn, Wheaton, Naperville, Lisle, Itasca, St. Charles, Carol Stream, Villa Park, and Lombard:

1. Does your municipality currently regulate lot coverage on residential properties? If so, please provide a brief summary or a website link to those standards/
2. Are any buildings or accessory structures exempt from lot coverage calculations?
3. Is any relief or special allowances provided for pervious pavers? Are any other storm water BMPs integrated into your lot coverage regulation?
4. What, if any, challenges has your staff faced administering your lot coverage regulation?
5. Is your community considering any modifications/amendments to its existing lot coverage regulations?

Staff Conclusions:

- ▶ Opportunity to increase the City’s permitted lot coverage percentages
- ▶ Opportunity to integrate driveways into calculation
- ▶ Opportunity to exempt pervious pavers and green roofs
- ▶ Other possible exemptions

Staff questions/prompts for Plan Commission:

1. In the past, the Plan Commission has generally expressed its desire to increase flexibility in the City's lot coverage so as to allow homeowners to add more structures on their properties. Does this remain the case?
2. Are there specific concepts presented in the Conclusion section of the staff memo that the Plan Commission supports or opposes?
3. Any additional comments, questions, or concerns?

Upon Ch. Cosgrove's request for the number of communities that exempt driveways (explicitly or technically) from lot coverage, Pl. Kieffer listed Carol Stream, Wheaton, St. Charles (and Warrenville). Villa Park abides by DuPage County's interpretation, which excludes pervious pavers.

Upon Ch. Cosgrove's request for the approximate number of requests that are annually rejected by the City, Dir. Mentzer estimated five to ten projects are typically not allowed due to lot coverage issues, whereas another five to ten projects require petitioners to modify conditions on their lots to allow their projects to materialize. Overall, there are two overlapping reasons for lot coverage regulations: (i) control stormwater runoff that each individual property creates; and (ii) reduce clutter on a property. Lot coverage regulations offer no perfect solution, as they must balance the competing desires of a homeowner, stormwater control, and reducing clutter.

Eng. Hocking described how the current stormwater management regulations apply to a single-family property. Rather than restricting the amount of impervious surfaces on a lot, if a homeowner meets certain thresholds for best management practices for net new impervious surface, they are generally allowed to proceed with a proposal. Warrenville considers permeable pavers and decks (as long as surface underneath them is pervious) to be pervious surfaces, and pools as impervious surfaces, because they do not allow water to soak into the ground, but rather collect it and flow over. Asphalt or concrete surfaces such as sidewalks are considered impervious surfaces.

Eng. Hocking recalled a recent engineers' seminar discussion on pools drew mixed opinions on whether pools are pervious or impervious surfaces. Ch. Cosgrove stated above-ground pools are typically surrounded by decks, which have a visual impact on neighbors.

Com. Chapman inquired as to the types of projects that were denied in past years. Dir. Mentzer replied that if proposals are administratively denied and staff does not hear from them, these projects are not typically tracked, of which the file is then disposed. She suggested that if a certain type of request repeatedly is denied, perhaps that should be the Commission's focus for changing requirements.

Com. Lockett provided his opinion that homeowners should have some leeway on what they are doing in their backyards, as they do not necessarily consider lot coverage when they purchase their home. He is in favor of increasing lot coverage by up to 50 percent, with a certain percentage of credit for pervious surfaces, including driveways, and excluding pools in coverage. It is difficult to define "permeable" paver, because permeability is based on the subgrade underneath it, which the City must determine is acceptable. Permeable pavers cannot be utilized around pools because granite chips will eventually enter into the pool, causing filter problems.

Dir. Mentzer stated that there are two reasons for lot coverage regulation, namely clutter/general coverage of property, and stormwater runoff management—both of which apply to driveways. It is likely that whatever is decided this year may be revisited in the future, as there is no perfect solution to this issue. The City has the option of tweaking regulations-- or recreating them to be more technically sound by including driveways and increasing the amount of lot coverage allowed on a property--but then incorporate a credit/incentive for the amount of permeable pavement on a lot. At present, the City provides no incentive for installing a permeable pavement driveway. Pl. Kieffer added that currently, driveways can cover up to 50 percent of a front yard. An unregulated driveway that is not included in overall lot coverage calculations amounts to a large amount of lot coverage.

Since the storm system only runs through parts of the City, Com. Miller felt it needs to be a consideration in lot coverage regulations. He then requested the definition of a BMP, and Eng. Hocking provided it and offered examples such as a drywell or rain garden. In looking ahead to the next 10-20 years, he felt more rain in larger rain events is likely. In such context, he is in favor of including all hard surfaces (including driveways and swimming pools) in the lot coverage definition, and increasing lot coverage percentage--but providing a reduction for pervious surfaces such as green roofs, rock storage gardens, or retention ponds. This would offer ample flexibility for residents. Basically, Com. Miller would like to incentivize homeowners to hold more water on their lots before it runs to the street. He clarified that if hard driveways are not included in lot coverage, he would not be in favor of increasing lot coverage space.

Ch. Cosgrove summarized Com. Miller's sentiment as essentially being the function of BMP requirements. He stated that Warrenville has either bank run (gravel and sand), which absorbs the water naturally, or hard clay. BMP requirements are not necessary in bank run areas.

Com. Pepple provided a list of things he felt should be excluded from lot coverage: Pools and decks without any concrete under them, patios not consisting of asphalt or concrete, walkways if not asphalt or concrete, and driveways. Included in lot coverage should be garages, carports, houses, sheds, stables, and chicken coops. He felt the City should take into consideration excluding driveways because of the amount of flag lots and houses set back on deep lots. Moreover, sidewalks were installed by the City. Credit should be offered to those residents that change impermeable surface into a permeable surface. The City should slightly increase lot coverage percentage because it would be eliminating things that are now counted as coverage. Com. Pepple prefers to take subjectivity out of the equation. Pads adjacent to driveways should not be defined in the same manner as driveways. Lot size should be taken into account.

Com. Schultz expressed concern regarding graduated percentage coverage, and was not in favor of increasing lot coverage percentages on smaller lot sizes below 10,000 square feet, especially if driveways are included, because driveways on the East side of town would place these properties over their allotted percentages. She agreed with Com. Pepple that adding more exemptions would be a cleaner way of addressing lot coverage issues than modifying percentages.

Com. Taylor stated that if action is taken, he would be open to a two to four percent increase in lot coverage. As to driveways, he asked if pavement on the side of a house for extra parking would be considered a part of the driveway; Dir. Mentzer replied in the affirmative, in general.

Com. Taylor felt that 50 percent lot coverage would be excessive. He was in favor of clarifying the term “driveway.” Decks and pools should be assessed for what lies underneath them.

Ch. Cosgrove noted the percentage of a front yard being covered by a driveway should also be reviewed. Com. Pepple suggested a portion of the driveway that runs from the street to the garage could be exempted, whereas extra parking pads would be excluded from lot coverage exemption.

Com. Tullier agreed that lot coverage should be increased overall—but definitely if the City includes driveways in calculations. She felt pools and decks with pervious pavers underneath, or other permeable surfaces, should be excluded in lot coverage. If driveways are included, credit should be provided to residents who change them to consist of permeable surfaces. If the City includes driveways, lot coverage percentage should be increased, keeping in mind small lots. She noted that Summerlakes prohibits RV parking for an extended period of time. Alternatively, the City could exclude a certain square footage of deck up to a limit, and include the remainder.

Dir. Mentzer suggested that if the Commission moves to exclude decks and pools, it is essentially increasing lot coverage compared to existing conditions. He advised caution if it recommends increasing lot coverage percentage on top of excluding relatively common things.

Com. Vavra inquired as to the number of properties that fall into certain categories, and if the ranges are currently appropriate. He expressed that the impact of percentages on a property varies greatly depending on size of lot, and equity should be taken into consideration. He felt the City should regulate pools and decks based on percentages, rather than on whether it makes neighbors happy, and is not in favor of excluding pools and decks from lot coverage. He was in favor of increasing lot coverages, excluding driveways and providing residents the opportunity to enjoy their properties without placing a burden on stormwater and aesthetics.

Ch. Cosgrove suggested that the Assessor’s Office may have the property information that Com. Vavra seeks. He agreed that the impact of percentages on a property varies greatly depending on lot size. The east side of town lots average 7,500-square feet, generally built to the maximum area of lot coverage. If the table is changed to exclude pools and decks, the Commission may want to leave percentages as is. Administrative flexibility may also be something the Commission should consider.

Com. Schultz inquired whether modeling impacts of additional lot coverage percentages on stormwater runoff were performed. Planner Keiffer directed attention to the staff memo’s Exhibit A under the Regulatory Framework section, wherein the Commission’s guidance garnered from tonight’s meeting will create regulatory framework, which will result in applying it to a random sample of lots and testing it.

Ch. Cosgrove summarized a majority of Commissioners appeared to be in favor of excluding pools and decks from lot coverage. Pl. Kieffer commented that the goal of this process is to create flexibility and provide common sense exemptions, which will be determined by the Commission in this process. Ch. Cosgrove replied that if we exempt pools and decks, the lot coverage could be left as is. This may clear up problems for which most petitioners are rejected. The Commission can determine driveway percentage of front yard coverage as a separate issue.

Dir. Mentzer stated he would like to see the Commission move forward on providing direction for this issue before the upcoming spring permit season to avoid rejecting applicants due to current regulations, as opposed to changing the regulations later in the year and allowing other applicants to proceed with a similar project. Pl. Kieffer will conduct the next meeting, at which he will provide the Commission's survey results and a staff recommendation.

D. CITIZENS' COMMENTS

None.

E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Regular Meeting of January 6, 2022

COM. PEPPLE MOVED, SECONDED BY COM. LOCKETT, TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 6, 2022, MINUTES.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYE: Cosgrove, Tullier, Miller, Taylor, Schultz, Lockett, Vavra, Pepple

NAY: None

ABSENT/EXCUSED: None

ABSTAIN: Chapman

MOTION ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY.

F. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Ch. Cosgrove announced this will be Com. Lockett's last meeting as a Plan Commissioner, because he would be moving up to City Council. He thanked him for his service and congratulated him.

G. COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dir. Mentzer also thanked Com. Lockett for his loyal service to the Commission and the entire community. Com. Lockett thanked all for their good wishes.

The City filled the vacant Assistant Community Development Director position with Consuelo Andrade, Villa Park's current Community Development Director, who has 16 years of experience. Her first day with the City will be February 22, 2022.

H. PLANNER'S REPORT

Pl. Kieffer reported the next meeting will likely include a courtesy review and potential minor amendment for a sign in Cantera.

I. ADJOURN

CH. TULLIER MOVED, SECONDED BY COM. LOCKETT, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:34 P.M.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Aye: Cosgrove, Pepple, Miller, Tullier, Taylor, Schultz, Lockett, Vavra, Chapman

Nay: None

Absent/Excused: None

MOTION ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY.

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Marie Lupo, Recording Secretary