#2013-15
City of Crystal Lake
Project Review for Planning and Zoning Commission

Meeting Date:	April 3, 2013
Zoning Requests:	UDO Text Amendment from various provisions of the Unified Development Ordinance
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Background:

- When the City Council adopted the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) in 2009, it was intended to be a dynamic document that would be updated periodically. Accordingly, reviews were completed at 6 months and 1 year after the adoption of the Ordinance. Additional text amendments have since been approved by the City Council based on Planning and Zoning Commission and staff recommendations.
- The proposed text amendments would address issues observed by staff based on their day-to-day application of the UDO and would simplify the requirements and procedures for businesses and residents.

Discussion

1. Accessory Structures

Ordinance Requirements • SUP required for all accessory structures greater 600 SF • Requirement applicable to all accessory structures at least 12-inches above ground, including decks, aboveground pools, etc.
Issue • Majority of the requests are for garages or above-ground pool/deck combinations • 3-car garages are more common today and range from 720 SF (24'x30') to 1440 SF (40'x36') • Deck and pool combinations often exceed the 600 SF minimum
Possible Solutions • Require accessory structures greater than 600 SF to meet greater setbacks and require a SUP only above a certain higher threshold. • Review the applicability of this requirement for various accessory structures - i.e. is it applicable only for enclosed structures or does this apply also to decks and pools.

2. Height and Story

Ordinance Requirements

- Accessory structures in residential districts are restricted to 1 story.
- Definition of a half-story is dependent on the height of the wall plate.
- These requirements are not applicable to non-residential properties.
- Gambrel roofs are measured similar to gable and hip roofs to the mean height level between the lowest eaves and the highest ridge.

Issue

- There has been some discussion recently regarding a 'story' versus 'half-story'.
- Discussion has also included whether an attic or storage should be considered a half-story or story.
- The mean height measurements allows certain roof types to gain an advantage

Possible Solutions

- Review the definition of a 'half-story' and its applicability to non-residential structures.
- Add requirement that attic or storage area will be considered as a half-story if a certain percent of the area has a specified clear interior height or more.
- Prohibit exterior knee walls above the second story under a gambrel, mansard or flat roof.
- Revise the height calculation for gambrel roofs to account for the varied pitch breaks found in gambrel roofs.

3. Dimensional Standards for Parking Spaces

Ordinance Requirements

- The UDO currently requires all 90 degree parking spaces to be 9' x 19' in size.
- Angled parking spaces are required to be 9' wide and range from 17'8" to 19'6" in depth.
- Two-way drive aisles are required to be 24' in width.
- One-way drive aisles vary from 13' to 16' in width.

Issue

- Directed by the Planning and Zoning Commission to review the parking standards to determine whether a change was warranted.

Possible Solutions

- The UDO standards are fairly consistent with other (municipal) standards that were reviewed by staff.
- Recent trends suggest recommending more flexibility in the physical dimensions of the parking bay design, including recommending a minimum area for a parking stall.

4. Landscaping and Screening Standards

Ordinance Requirements

- Foundation landscaping is required around the entire perimeter of all buildings, except for development in the Downtown Business and VSC overlay District

Issue

- Providing landscaping along the entire perimeter of the building can be onerous.

Possible Solutions

- Eliminate the requirement to provide foundation landscaping for rear elevations.
- Exceptions can be made where the rear elevation abuts a right-of-way or the primary drive aisle in a shopping center.

5. Signage

Ordinance Requirements

- Political signs are currently treated as Temporary Signs.
- In Residential Districts, these are limited to 6 square feet in area.

Issue

- The temporary sign category includes other sign types such as real estate signs. Recent years have seen larger political signs that may not meet the area restrictions of the Ordinance, particularly in residential districts.

Possible Solutions

- Research typical sign size areas for the various temporary signs.
- Review any changes that can be made to the Ordinance to accommodate the commonly prevalent signs.

6. Involuntary Annexation

Ordinance Requirements

- Any property involuntarily annexed into the City is zoned "E" Estate upon annexation.

Issue

- For involuntarily annexed property, there is no provision within the Ordinance to bring into compliance nonconforming structures and/or uses such as billboards, other signs, parking lots, etc.

Possible Solutions

- Include an amortization clause in the Ordinance which requires compliance with relevant City Ordinances a specific number of years after annexation

7. Land Use

Ordinance Requirements

- Uses are permitted as Permitted, Limited or Special Uses through Article 2, Land Use of the UDO.
- Criteria for Limited and Special Uses are listed in the Ordinance.

Issue

- Several uses have requested a Use Variation - for e.g. gymnasium-type uses typically seek manufacturing facilities that offer higher ceilings and larger uninterrupted spans.
- Several use variations have been approved by the City with standard conditions, but have added time and expense for the applicant.

Possible Solutions

- Reexamine the Land Use Table to identify uses that are currently Limited or Special Uses that could be permitted by right or could be permitted as a Limited Use in other districts where they are currently not allowed.
- Reexamine the Limited and Special Use criteria.

8. Administrative Adjustment

Ordinance Requirements

- All variations from the requirements of the UDO require approval of a variation by the City Council with recommendations from the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Issue

- Adds time and cost for minor modification requests.
- No flexibility for existing buildings even when the modification does not adversely affect nearby properties or neighborhood character.

Possible Solutions

- Introduce the administrative adjustment process to provide a streamlined approval procedure for minor modifications of selected standards.
- List specific standards that can request adjustment through this process.
- Require notification of the request to abutting property owners.
- Provide general criteria for approval of an administrative adjustment and provide for imposing conditions of approval.