

Letter From the Mayor:

August 16, 2023

Greetings Neighbors,

As mentioned in my last letter, the Agrihood is moving forward! The Planning & Zoning Commission will hold a public hearing at their regular meeting August 22 for the rezoning to Planned Unit Development (PUD). Please email or call-in comments to city hall beforehand or feel free to attend the meeting in person or Zoom.

After P & Z, the City Council will have a public hearing on August 28. The same applies for the council, send in comments or attend via Zoom or in person. The council will have three readings of the ordinance on rezoning before it is adopted. We have heard about and talked about the Agrihood for several years now and it is exciting to be moving it forward. The build out process will take considerable time and grow at a pace dictated by the economy and other factors. We will likely see the first projects start at the block south of Cumming Avenue on S.44th, the main street village area. This Planned Unit Development (PUD) is a flexible document, it will change as times and needs change over the years.

<https://app.box.com/s/yfudn9fwc5lm53j4vye71ksathnxfyyd>

Your council has moved the bike/walking trail originally planned for the north side of Cumming Avenue to Hy-Vee Fast & Fresh to the southside of Cumming Avenue. Diligent Developers agreed to give us the right of way without a fee, the north side would have cost the city money for the right of way. Another consideration is the planned development on the southside with trail access and no development is planned for the northside.

We will install safe crossing signals to cross Cumming Avenue to Fast & Fresh. The trail will curve south behind the two houses next to the bike trail (4448 & 4500 Cumming Ave). The city has a right of way already in place for the abandoned sewer next to the trail. The trail will be connected to The Great Western Trail without cutting down trees.

We will put this project out for bid around January 2024 with work starting in the spring of 2024.

Hy-Vee Fast & Fresh has submitted a building permit to be reviewed by city staff and building inspectors. The site plans include a Starbucks Coffee House. Fast & Fresh was originally planned to be completed this fall, the schedule will adjust into 2024 for opening.

Casey's convenience stores have submitted a site plan for the southwest corner of Cumming Avenue and 50th Street, South of the Fast & Fresh. The plans are a regular Casey's with no semi diesel islands. Planning & Zoning will review at their regular meeting on September 26. Please feel free to weigh in as stated above. We do like resident input.

The Old Town project McClure engineering is facilitating is moving forward. This project is from Cumming Avenue north along 44th & 43rd streets, the original town of Cumming. McClure has done soil samples and will do more as a follow up. We will hook up all residents and businesses to the sewer system at NO cost to the homes and businesses. You will be paying a monthly sewer fee after the connection. We also intend to pave the streets. The next step is to form a committee of Old Town residents to gather and discuss priorities. Do we want sidewalks all over town? These and other questions will be discussed. We are targeting 2024 for a start date for the project and to be complete by 2025.

On the November 7 ballot for our city will be a hotel and motel tax vote. The state of Iowa allows cities to charge a hotel and motel tax on folks staying in these hotels and designate where the funds go. The tax must be passed by a majority of the voting residents of the city. The city of Cumming Council has designated these funds, this will be the wording on the ballot.

“SHALL THE FOLLOWING PUBLIC MEASURE BE ADOPTED?”

Shall the City of Cumming, Iowa be authorized to impose by Ordinance a Local Hotel and Motel Tax at a rate of seven percent (7%), effective (January 1, 2024), with at least fifty percent (50%) of the revenues derived from the Local Hotel and Motel Tax to be used for parks, recreation and cultural enhancement; and the remaining revenues derived from the Hotel and Motel Tax to be used for all other purposes permitted pursuant to Chapter 423A of the code of Iowa?”

As you can see fifty percent would be for parks, recreation and cultural enhancements. This will make our city a better place to live as we add parks and maintain our current ones. The rest will be designated as needed at the time.

Our city DOES NOT have plans for a hotel/motel nor has anyone approached us. This is so someday if we get approached, we do not need to wait for the next election to pass this tax. Norwalk is building their first hotel now and they are a city of 13,000 +. I do not anticipate a hotel in the near future. This is your city planning for the future.

We currently have volunteer positions open for the Planning and Zoning Commission, Parks and Recreation Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment and HomeTown Pride. *Our small community survives on volunteers.* Please contact city hall for more information.

We have a new City Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/cumming.iowa.gov> Councilmember Pastor Thomas Cackler has been working hard on a new City website and we will be able to link messaging from the website to a weekly email to Facebook.

Wow, we have a lot of really neat stuff happening in our city. Our City Staff (two) and I try to keep you informed. Your City Council is all in on our community, they are informed and very responsive to comments. Please share feedback or ask questions.

City Hall 515-981-9214

Brent Highfill - Mayor
515-238-8056
cmbhighfill@gmail.com

Rita Conner - City Administrator
rconner@cumming.iowa.gov

Nichole Onstot - City Clerk
nonstot@cumming.iowa.gov

Charlie Ochanpaugh - Mayor Pro-Tem, Council
councilmemberochanpaugh@gmail.com

Dino Goode - Council
cmdgoode@gmail.com

Kathie Hungerford - Council
cmkhungerford@gmail.com

Pastor Thomas Cackler - Council
tcackler@cumming.iowa.gov

Martin Squire - Council
pzmsquire@gmail.com