

## City Council/Planning Commission Workshop

Tuesday, February 21, 2023 6:00pm

**Present:** Kevin Nyenhuis, Lon Pardun, Wendy Ward, Scott Spisak, Jennifer Henry, Kristina Smitten, Tim Casey, Ed Sanderson

**Citizens Present:** None

Mayor Nyenhuis called the workshop to order at 6:00pm.

Commission Chair Spisak updated the Council on recent developments with the City's zoning code, including: work on substandard structures to allow the marina to be rebuilt if it were destroyed; minimum lot sizes; and vegetative cutting.

### **Minimum Lot Sizes and Substandard Lots**

Spisak noted that the Commission would like guidance from Council on minimum lot sizes. The City has a large percentage of homes on lots smaller than the minimum lot size. Lower the threshold would bring many of them into compliance. In the river districts, reducing the minimum from 1 acre to 20,000 square feet could lead to increased development along the river, which the Commission doesn't support. Outside of the river districts, where the minimum is 30,000 and the average lot size is closer to 20,000, the Commission would support lowering the threshold but the City would need to consider sewer capacity.

Pardun said septic should be considered before changing the lot size minimum, because the requirement for space for a backup septic system is what's driving the 30,000 minimum. In places with access to the City-run septic system, the smaller lot size is feasible.

Commissioner Smitten noted that it is now common practice in many places to allow flexibility in lot size by describing the setbacks and relationship to well, septic, etc. Smitten added that the Commission isn't comfortable reducing the minimum to 20,000 along the river, but doing so west of Judd St. would be fine. What is the City hoping to accomplish with the development pattern? It would be good to help more lots come into compliance by decreasing the minimum, but the City needs to do so with care.

### **Zoning Code: Next Steps**

Planner Beth Richmond sent an updated draft for the river districts to the DNR on February 21. Once the DNR and City agree on language, the City will have to go through the public hearing process to officially approve the code updates.

### **5G Design Guidelines**

The City's consultant on the guidelines, Carly Kehoe, had Long Covid last year which has slowed progress. The Commission is currently reviewing the most recent draft and will try to wrap it up in the next couple of months.

## **PC Workplan: Pending Projects**

Top of the Commission's list are: Comprehensive Plan consistency and error corrections; lot area requirements; solar ordinance; residential care facilities ordinance.

Smitten emphasized the need for council feedback on lot size. Pardun said the most pressing issue is where the sewer lines run. The city won't be expanding infrastructure, so only those along the current line could hook up. Within that guideline, Pardun is in favor of having some flexibility in the lot sizes. Spisak said they would have to set criteria. Pardun noted that the city upgraded Pump 1 to increase capacity, and could handle up to 46 lots. When the Commission is ready, Pardun can send an overlay of where everything lies. Sanderson noted they would also want to take into account capacity that would be needed for the Marine Mills Folk School or an expansion of the elementary school.

## **Items with Possible Intersection with the Planning Commission**

- Burris Park Picnic Shelter: The park is in the SC-UR District, where public parks are a conditional use. It will take some background work before any structure can be considered.
- Downtown Greenspace Plan: Spisak asked for clarification on what this meant. Ward said it was a general term to include existing plans for downtown, such as the MnDOT landscape partnership plan and water basins created in coordination with the Watershed District.
- Cemetery Expansion: Cemetery isn't a permitted use in the Single Family Rural District, where the existing cemetery lies and potential sites for expansion have been proposed. One possible solution is adding this as a conditional use in the district, which would allow the city to memorialize the current use, expand when needed, and closely regulate the use.
- Electric Vehicle Charger at 41 Judd St. (outside Edward Jones): Moving parking to the east side of the building and using the south side for EV charging conflicts with 20% impervious surface rules set by the state, Spisak noted.
- Other Topics:
  - Lack of parking continues to be a problem downtown.
  - An enclosure to screen the Brookside dumpster is still desirable but not imminent; no additional permit is needed for the screening.
  - There is some potential for Canadian Pacific to abandon the rail line running through Marine. Spisak voiced concern that if that happens, the line could become a parking lot for unneeded train cars. A Congressional delegation might have some influence through the Federal Railway Administration. Nyenhuis spoke with a representative recently and will circle back with them.

There was consensus to hold a joint Council-Commission meeting annually, preferably after Council Committee responsibilities have been assigned.

*Nyenhuis moved and Ward seconded to adjourn at 7:23pm.*

*All in favor, motion passed.*

Minutes taken by Suzanne Dammann, Assistant City Clerk