

**MINUTES
PEQUOT LAKES PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 17, 2011**

PRESENT: Tom Adams, Deb Brown, John Derksen, Bill Habein, Scott Pederson and Cheri Seils. ABSENT: Mark Hallan.

CITY PLANNER: Ben Oleson, AICP

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR: Absent.

COUNCIL LIAISON: Jerry Akerson and Nancy Adams

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DISCUSSION

a. Draft of Comprehensive Plan

b. Discussion on Strategies

The Planning Commission began their discussion of Action Plans with the Natural Resources section and edited the remainder of the text.

The Public Hearing on the Comprehensive Plan will be held on April 21, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Pederson.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: None

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

a. School Bus Shelter in Business/Industrial Park, Discussion

Chairman Pederson explained that this is not a public hearing but a discussion for the Planning Commission and others to get educated on our Ordinances regarding the potential School Bus Garage in the Industrial Park/Business Park. Chairman Pederson explained that he met with the property owner, the Mayor and Staff and read a letter that had been received by the City from Mr. Johnson, the property owner. Mr. Johnson requested variances from the ordinances to allow the bus garage.

Chairman Pederson noted that a Memo was included in the packets from Chuck Marohn, City Planner, addressing the ordinances. There were people in the audience and

Chairman Pederson stated this will be an open discussion. Mr. Oleson addressed the Memo and explained the ordinance and the Matrix. If the proposed use doesn't fit the Matrix, it isn't allowed. The letter from Mr. Johnson asks for a variance and a use variance is not allowed by State statute; the ordinance would need to be amended. There is a process that would include a public hearing.

If the ordinance was amended to allow the bus garage, the property would then come off the tax rolls; there was significant public investment creating the Industrial Park. The Comp Plan update discussions called for increasing the tax base in the Industrial Park and creating jobs.

Council Member Akerson stated the existing building is set up with lifts, etc for large vehicles, such as buses. By not allowing this type of use the City is limiting potential purchasers of the property.

Brandon Andersen and Curt Johnson were in attendance representing the School Board. Mr. Johnson stated that our definitions are too restrictive and that other jurisdictions and entities use broader definitions. Mr. Andersen stated the use of the property as a bus garage does provide a service to the community, storing equipment that fulfills a service. The service is provided off site.

Mr. Johnson further stated that when the building was designed, it was specifically designed for buses. In addition, the Commission stated earlier that there would be no tax collected from a public entity and by his calculations that amount would only be \$22 per day.

Chairman Pederson stated that the ordinance has been in place for many years and is there to protect people. He also explained that he had Mr. Marohn contact Rick Linnell as a courtesy, to explain the use is not allowed before the School District went too far with this proposal.

Mr. Johnson stated that he does not agree with the Planning Commission's or Mr. Marohn's interpretation of the ordinance.

Mr. Oleson explained that there is a process to appeal the interpretation of the ordinance or there is the process to amend the ordinance. He also advised Mr. Johnson that a Conditional Use Permit would not apply as the use is not allowed.

Chairman Pederson stated that the City will get back to the School as to where within the City could a bus garage be located. Correspondence will be directed to Mr. Linnell.

OLD BUSINESS:

a. Sign Concept Plan, Jesse Jane Signs

Kimberly Ziesemer, Seriously Fun Marketing, was present and explained that she and Jessie Nornberg met the previous week with City Staff and 2 representatives of the

Planning Commission to look at the various sites for the signs. At that time it was decided that the earlier proposed signs were too large and the locations would not be permitted. The new design hugs up close to the corner of a building and the signs are smaller. Proposed locations are Clearwater Creek, Wells Fargo and by the Post Office. The signs would only include a logo and an arrow, no advertising.

Mrs. Ziesemer's next step will be meeting with the business owners where the sign locations are proposed, as well as working with Mike Loven, Street Superintendent on City and County Road locations. There will need to be some type of agreement approved by the City Attorney. The Planning Commission gave permission to pre-sell the signs. She will provide an update at the April Planning Commission meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made by Deb Brown, seconded by Cheri Seils, to approve the February 17, 2011 Minutes as corrected. All members voted "aye". Motion carried.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

The Zoning Administrator was not present and the Planning Commission had no comments.

OPEN FORUM:

John Derksen stated that he has had a number of residents ask when the road to SuperValu will be constructed (from Olson Street) so they can walk to the store. With NFK closed, there is no way for residents to walk to the grocery store. Mr. Derksen was asked to contact Chris at SuperValu and explain the needs for the roadway for the walkers.

Council Member Akerson asked if this would be a trail or a road. The Planning Commission clarified that it will be a road.

Mr. Habein stated that there is quite a bit of traffic coming from the area of the apartments through the Church for access to the highway.

Mr. Adams asked to clarify a comment made during the bus garage discussion regarding the amount of TIF given to the grocery store. There were quite a few jobs created and that is something to keep in mind. The dollar amount of TIF quoted during that discussion was also inaccurate.

Mr. Derksen stated he had heard approximately 6 months ago that the school was looking to use private companies for the bussing. If the school were allowed to move forward with the Industrial Park property and should private bussing happen in the future, the City would be left with a parcel in the Park not on the tax roll and not being used for the intended purpose.

Chairman Pederson encouraged the Planning Commission to look at our ordinance and if changes should be made to bring them forward. The Planning Commission is here to help; it is not a decision making body. We can only do what we can do, based on our ordinances.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Tom Adams, seconded by Cheri Seils, to adjourn the meeting. All members voted "aye". Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn Bittner
Zoning Administrator