

**MINUTES  
PEQUOT LAKES PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING  
OCTOBER 17, 2013**

PRESENT: Deb Brown, Todd Engels, Bill Habein, Mark Hallan, James Oraskovich, Cheri Seils and Wesley Wilson. ABSENT: None.

CITY PLANNER: Justin Burslie, Community Growth Institute

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR: Dawn Bittner

COUNCIL LIAISONS: Jerry Akerson and Tyler Gardner

**GATEWAY DISCUSSION:**

Mr. Burslie showed a short video of a town square created in Pittsburgh. The Planning Commission discussed the three concepts for a town square included in the Staff Report. The general consensus was to support Concept Three.

The Highway 371 Turnback Committee would like to receive the Planning Commissions analysis of the area between Pillsbury Street and West Grove Street. Next month the Staff Report will include the information from previous discussion on this area and a final report will be forwarded to the Committee.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Seils at 7:00 p.m.

Chair Seils opened the Public Hearing.

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

**APPLICANT: City of Pequot Lakes**

**Applicant requests an Ordinance Amendment Regarding Penalties for Land Use Violations**

Mr. Burslie explained the Staff Report. The new underlined language gives the ordinance a penalty for a violation of the ordinance. The City Clerk, Police Chief and City Attorney agree this language needs to be included. The language was drafted by the City's Prosecuting Attorney.

Council Member Gardner questioned whether the penalty should state "and/or". Council Member Akerson was concerned that the wording "Council is empowered" could be misinterpreted that the Council is supporting punishment for minor violations.

There was no public comment.

Planning Commission Member Habein stated he felt that considering each day a violation continues can be a separate offence was too harsh.

A motion was made by Bill Habein, seconded by Wesley Wilson, to table the ordinance amendment. All members voted “aye”. Motion carried.

Chair Seils closed the Public Hearing.

**ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA:** None.

**OPEN FORUM:** None.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**a. Highway 371 Screening:**

Mr. Burslie explained the Staff Report. Staff has received comments as to why certain properties are not maintaining their properties when they are leaving them in a natural state as required. Staff is looking for input from the Planning Commission. The ordinance does not say that you need to have tall grasses, but be screened with a 50% buffer. Screening would be trees or nice shrubs, not grasses.

It was the general consensus that there needs to be consistency along the Highway 371 corridor, although most of the parcels that mow up to and including MN/DOT right-of-way are grandfathered in, having been approved prior to Sibley Township having the Highway 371 Corridor Overlay District.

Throughout the Comprehensive Plan it refers to the north woods feel.

It was decided rather than change the ordinance, if a property owner wants to change their landscaping plan, they just will need to come to the Planning Commission and make the request.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

A motion was made by Bill Habein, seconded by Mark Hallan, to approve the September 19, 2013 Minutes, as read. All members voted “aye”. Motion carried.

**ZONING ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT:**

Bittner pointed out the six permits issued and the 3 letters or emails sent and received. The following Potential Violations/Enforcement Actions were discussed:

1. Virgil Dahl – Staff reported the Prosecuting Attorney is charging this out as a Public Nuisance; Planning Commission Member Wilson stated that Mr. Dahl has removed about 80% of his animals.
2. Gary Peterson – Staff advised this will be removed from the Violation List when the MPCA releases it as resolved.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

A motion was made by Bill Habein, seconded by James Oraskovich, to adjourn the meeting. All members voted “aye”. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Bittner  
Zoning Administrator