

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
PEQUOT LAKES PLANNING COMMISSION
DECEMBER 15, 2011**

PRESENT: Tom Adams, Deb Brown, John Derksen, Bill Habein, Mark Hallan, Scott Pederson and Cheri Seils. ABSENT: None.

CITY PLANNER: Charles L. Marohn, Jr., PE; AICP

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR: Dawn Bittner

COUNCIL LIAISON: Jerry Akerson

DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN AND PARK PLAN DISCUSSION:

Mr. Marohn explained a handout he had prepared regarding the Comprehensive Plan and Community Assets.

A lot of effort has been put into the Comp Plan over the last couple of years with no input from the two Council Members who voted against it. Staff had provided a copy of the Draft Council Minutes to the Planning Commission indicating the 7 comments from Council Member Ryan. It was suggested that the Planning Commission respond to these 7 items and address his concerns.

1. A document showing the changes has not been provided: The time and effort would not be worth it. There are some sections where this could be done, but some parts were actually deleted. It would be a huge cost with no real value.
2. There is no provision in the plan for commercial development in the bypass area: The Council passed a resolution for no development in the bypass area and the plan has been written in accordance with that resolution. There currently is commercial zoning along County Road 11. A map indicating the locations was suggested. The City should look at development along there only after receiving input from the existing business community.
3. The Plan lacks details for an audience: Who is the audience he refers to? The Comp Plan is not a marketing brochure; it is for the City to do positive things for our community. The target audience is the elected officials. The strategies are for the commissions/committees to put into action.
4. Park Plan does not provide essential parks: There are no ball fields. The Recreation section is not detailed and specific beyond a few action items. It is not a detailed Park Plan. Let's pass the Comp Plan and deal with it; we can make a Park Plan an action item.

5. Redundancy in document: Some action items were put in several sections on purpose. They are important for more than one section.
6. The plan makes it less convenient for use of automobiles: Narrowing the streets and adding sidewalks makes it more walkable. It is not changing it, it is enhancing it with walking. It is increasing mobility in the Downtown.
7. There are too many things in the plan that are contrary to the conveniences of people: Pedestrian traffic is better for businesses than automobile traffic going on by.

Mr. Marohn was directed to put the amendments together; the Chair and Vice-Chair will comment on them. Another public hearing is necessary and will be scheduled.

Mr. Marohn further explained that the Park Plan is part of the Downtown Plan. He explained the drawings and that this information had been presented to the Park Committee. They thought it was a good plan and had good ideas. Mr. Marohn will formalize the drawing and include with the next version of the Downtown Plan.

Mr. Hallan pointed out that plans for the Park should coordinate with the Government Drive project. A Landscape Architect could provide a rendering. Plans for the Park should be in conjunction with Government Drive improvements.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Pederson at 7:30 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Applicant: City of Pequot Lakes

Applicant requests an Ordinance Amendment Regarding Composition of the Planning Commission

Mr. Marohn explained the City Council had requested this amendment to reduce the number of Planning Commission members to reduce costs. It would save approximately \$1,000 in the budget for 2012. Mr. Marohn pointed out a letter that had been received from Tommy Woog, former Planning Commission Chair, addressed to the City Council and the Planning Commission urging the number be kept at 7.

Mr. Derksen stated keeping the number at 7 is not a great cost to the City and provides a greater cross section of the community.

Mr. Hallan suggested dropping the monthly fee to \$50, rather than \$100; he doesn't serve on the Planning Commission for the money and would still come to meetings if it were a volunteer position. He had suggested this a few years ago. A lot of communities don't pay their Planning Commissions the amount Pequot Lakes does.

Chairman Pederson stated the Council suggested this solely as a financial plan to reduce the budget. Some Planning Commissions meet 11 months a year, not 12. We could look at not meeting in December and save some money to reduce costs to make the \$6,000 budget number work.

Mr. Habein stated the membership should not be less than 6 and kept at 7 if possible. Eleven meetings per year is a good idea.

Ms. Brown stated that 7 members are important; the diversity is important and what is best for the City? Saving money is important but she is not here for the money. With only meeting 12 times a year it does not give a lot of time to accomplish things, such as the Comp Plan. She agrees with decreasing the pay.

Mr. Marohn stated we could have 5 with an alternate. Seven members usually don't work, but in Pequot Lakes it works well. There is respect among the members and strong Chairmen. Mr. Hallan stated that Lakeshore has 5 members with 3 alternates; the alternates attend and comment from the audience.

Mr. Marohn suggested the Planning Commission vote on the amendment as requested by the Council and presented in the Staff Report. The Planning Commission could also make another recommendation.

Council Member Akerson stated the Council requested the ordinance amendment but the number can be more than 5, but not less than 5. Chairman Pederson stated the request had to do with money and the budget; it was budget driven.

A motion was made by John Derksen, seconded by Mark Hallan, to recommend the amendment to reduce the number of Planning Commission members from seven to five not be approved.

Public Comment: None.

Council Member Akerson suggested we could reduce the number of Planning Commission members to 3: one from the business district, one from the rural district and one from the City tax district.

All members voted "aye". Motion carried.

Mr. Marohn explained that the Planning Commission can deal with the number of members or make a change in the meeting number from 12 to 11. This can be done at this meeting as we are dealing with the same portion of the ordinance.

A motion was made by Tom Adams, seconded by Mark Hallan, for the Planning Commission to recommend to the City Council to have a minimum of 6 members and a maximum of 7 members on the Planning Commission, to reduce the meetings from 12

per year to 11 per year, and to reduce the per meeting payment to \$75 per meeting. All members voted “aye”. Motion carried.

Applicant: City of Pequot Lakes

Applicant requests an Ordinance Amendment Regarding Expansion/Replacement of Non-conforming Structures

Mr. Marohn explained the Staff Report. The original portion of this section is easy to understand and this amendment is complex and not abundantly clear. Staff would need to explain it.

Mr. Hallan suggested reducing the tiers to 3 rather than 4. A 20% addition is miniscule.

Ms. Brown stated it looks confusing. It makes sense but is there a way to simplify it?

A motion was made by Tom Adams, seconded by Bill Habein, to approve the amendment as submitted. All members voted “aye”. Motion carried.

Applicant: Stacy Hill, Sign Spot, for Mid-Minnesota Federal Credit Union

Applicant requests a Conditional Use Permit for Additional Signage in the Commercial Zoning District

Mr. Marohn explained the Staff Report. Marty Hill of Sign Spot was present, as well as Chuck Albrecht of Mid-Minnesota Federal Credit Union. When asked, Mr. Albrecht stated that there are flood lights under the eaves of the building and that will be the only light for the signs.

A motion was made by Bill Habein, seconded by John Derksen, to approve the Conditional Use Permit for Additional Signage, based on the following Findings of Fact:

1. The request for a conditional use permit is for additional signage than what is typically allowed by the code in the Commercial Zone.
2. The proposed sign meets the one foot setback requirement.
3. The proposed sign measures 3.99’ x 9.82’ (39.18 sq. ft.) will read, “Mid-Minnesota Federal Credit Union”.
4. The code allows 45.8 sq. ft. (ten percent of building façade) of wall signage for a structure in the Commercial Zone.
5. The existing structure has already been permitted for 39.18 sq. ft., the conditional use permit request is for 39.18 sq. ft. in additional signage.
6. The proposed sign would be located at the north entrance to the property. It would be visible to southbound traffic on Highway 371 and to patrons of the business on the adjacent property to the north.
7. The proposed sign will not be lighted. There is lighting under the eaves of the structure which may allow the sign to be visible at night.

8. The proposed signage will be used to identify the Mid Minnesota Federal Credit Union. There will not be any negative aesthetic impacts from the proposed signage.
 9. The proposed sign is appropriate within the Commercial Zone. The area is heavily wooded and hilly, ensuring that the sign will not affect neighboring properties.
 10. The Comprehensive Plan does not specifically address this request.
 11. The use of the signs in the proposed configuration is compatible with the existing neighborhood. The surrounding properties are used for commercial purposes.
 12. The proposed use will not impair values nor substantially diminish properties in the immediate vicinity.
 13. The proposed sign will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of surrounding vacant properties.
 14. The proposed signage will not create a cost for additional public facilities or services.
 15. The subject property is already established with a vehicular approach to the property. The proposed sign will be one-sided and will face the driveway entrance at the north side of the property.
 16. There is no need for additional parking with the request of a sign.
 17. The requested signage will not create any odor, fumes, dust, noise or vibration.
 18. The proposed use will not cause any pollution to ground or surface waters.
- All members voted "aye". Motion carried.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA: None.

OPEN FORUM: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

a. SuperValu's NW Driveway Exit, Discussion

Mr. Adams stated that the access to Olson Street was designed for slow traffic and there is an area where traffic is cutting across a berm making the traffic pattern dangerous. Shrubs or a fence could be placed to deter the traffic. It was recommended that Staff send a note to SuperValu requesting them to block the berm area.

OLD BUISNESSES:

a. Building Code Enforcement, Tom Nelson – Fire Chief (continuation)

Staff will provide the requested information in January.

b. CSAH 11 Corridor Study (continuation)

Staff explained the engineering firm conducting the study understands the Planning Commission will not have time to accurately study the proposed improvements to County Road 11 west of the new highway and that they are just looking for something to include in their study.

Without knowing what they are looking for the Planning Commission was hesitant to make suggestions. They directed Mr. Marohn to contact the engineer to determine what they need and to put that information together and have the Chair and Vice-Chair approve prior to submitting it.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made by Mark Hallan, seconded by Tom Adams, to approve the November 17, 2011 Minutes, as corrected. All members voted “aye”. Motion carried.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT:

There were no permits issued in November; Bittner pointed out the three letters that were sent.

The following Potential Violations/Enforcement Actions were discussed..

1. Kris Sivanich – Mr. Derksen asked why her name had not been removed from the Violation List. Staff stated she is still listed as the property owner on the County records; Staff also informed the Planning Commission that the property has been sold.
2. David Anderson – Mr. Marohn will move forward with this.
3. Lloyd Wass – Staff will visit the property to verify the exterior of the cabin has been completed.

Chairman Pederson noted that this is the final meeting for Mark Hallan and John Derksen. He thanked them for their dedication and appreciated their input over the years. The City Council should look at where new applicants live in the community as it is important to have a cross section of the residents and business people.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Mark Hallan, seconded by Bill Habein, to adjourn the meeting. All members voted “aye”. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn Bittner
Zoning Administrator