

**MINUTES  
PEQUOT LAKES PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
JULY 19, 2012**

PRESENT: Tom Adams, Deb Brown, Bill Habein, J. J. Levenske, Scott Pederson, Cheri Seils and Scott Snyder. ABSENT: None.

CITY PLANNER: Charles L. Marohn, Jr., PE, AICP; Justin Burslie, Community Growth Institute

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR: Dawn Bittner

COUNCIL LIAISONS: Jerry Akerson and Nancy Adams

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Pederson at 6:00 p.m.

**GROW ZONE EXPANSION:**

Mr. Marohn explained the alternative Grow Zone standards and the neighborhood expansion area. The Columbia Code was discussed as potential standards. Lot coverage standards would need to be increased from what they are today and stormwater management would need to be improved.

Landscaping and signage were not included in the original Grow Zone standards and may not be needed. A Gambrel roof is similar to a barn.

We need to design streets to fit the code, not the current street standards. The draft Comp Plan calls for this change. Porous pavement was discussed to solve stormwater issues.

Staff was directed to bring back examples of street standards and development standards next month; include North Washington Avenue and an existing neighborhood as examples. Staff was further directed to contact Mike Loven, Public Utilities Supervisor, to identify problem areas. The August Planning Commission meeting will begin at a street location.

The Residential Maturing article is a multi-generational concept.

Chairman Pederson opened the Public Hearing:

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

**APPLICANT: City of Pequot Lakes**

**Applicant requests an Ordinance Amendment Regarding Sign Concept Plan Review**

Chairman Pederson discussed the proposed sign amendment that took place at the City Council meeting July 3. He explained that it would have allowed all signs, lighted,

flashing and revolving, portable and digital, without a Conditional Use Permit, on any lot in town without any restrictions or public input. The Off-Site restriction would have been removed allowing any sign on any lot. It did not pass, but may come up again.

Mr. Burslie explained last month there was confusion regarding Sign Concept Plans. Commercial property owners wanting more signage can apply for a Conditional Use Permit, notices are sent to neighbors and the newspaper, and a public hearing is held. It is costly to the applicant; \$450 for a commercial Conditional Use Application. Residential property owners could not apply for a Sign Concept Plan.

The amendment is for any property in town, not just commercial, without fees, etc. The proposed change was added to the General section. Staff recommends approval of the amendment which gives the Planning Commission the ability to allow more signage.

Chairman Pederson stated that costs are incurred by the City to go through the process and the fee is not profit for the City. There would still be the \$100 Sign Permit fee.

Mr. Adams stated that the City will still have costs associated with the Sign Concept Plan such as paperwork, Staff time, etc. The fee is too high; a lower fee might be appropriate, such as \$100. Mr. Adams further stated that he is comfortable having the concept review for Commercial districts, but residential areas may need a voice from neighbors; residents may have concerns. Residential areas should have the opportunity for public input; we lose that opportunity without a Conditional Use Permit process. Neighbors need to be notified. Mr. Snyder concurred.

Mrs. Seils stated that a Conditional Use Permit or a Variance require a public hearing. Staff stated neighbors can be notified of the Concept Plan without holding a public hearing.

Staff stated that timing is an issue. Notices need to be mailed out. Applications would need to be received 30 days in advance of the Planning Commission meeting Agenda they wish to be included.

Most businesses or home occupations in a residential zone need a Conditional Use Permit to do a business, but signage is not always part of those initial thoughts.

Staff was directed to bring back an amendment including the following:

- Separate residential and commercial standards;
- Notification of neighbors in residential zone, no notification in commercial zone;
- Eliminate Conditional Use Permit for all zones;
- Make recommendation to change Fee Schedule.

A motion was made by Bill Habein, seconded by Tom Adams, to table this ordinance amendment until the suggested revisions are completed.

When asked about digital signs, Staff stated the sign concept plan covers that. Council Member Akerson stated that the ordinance cannot be overridden. Staff stated that bigger and more signs than allowed have been approved in the past. An applicant can ask for whatever they want. We have written into our Code a Variance process without having to prove a hardship and go through the Variance process. The Sign Concept Plan is an exception to the Code. Decisions made by the Planning Commission can be appealed to the City Council.

All members voted “aye”. Motion to table carried.

Chairman Pederson closed the Public Hearing.

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

**OPEN FORUM:** None.

**NEW BUSINESS:** None.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

A motion was made by Tom Adams, seconded by Bill Habein, to approve the June 21, 2012 Minutes, as read. All members voted “aye”. Motion carried.

**ZONING ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT:**

Bittner pointed out the 4 permits issued and the 16 letters sent. The following Potential Violations/Enforcement Actions were discussed:

1. David Kennedy, East Sibley Street rental – Bittner reported that she has been monitoring this property and it has been kept mowed and neat; it will be removed from the Violation List;
2. Frostbite of Baxter, LLC – Council Member Akerson inquired about the fire pit area and the need for a permit;
3. Karen Ettesvold – The Planning Commission questioned why that area is No Parking and why the Zoning Office responded to her request;
4. Carol Painter – The Planning Commission asked if Ms. Painter is expanding her CUP; Staff advised that the letter was to remind her of the conditions of her CUP and to caution her on garage sales and off-site signage.

Bittner pointed out that there have been very few lawn complaints as compared to previous years:

2010: 9  
2011: 14  
2012: 3

**ADJOURNMENT:**

A motion was made by \_\_\_\_\_, seconded by \_\_\_\_\_, to adjourn the meeting. All members voted “aye”. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn Bittner  
Zoning Administrator