

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

DATE: September 24, 2012

TIME: 4:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Chairman Porter; Commissioners Boettcher, Gromek, Davis, Eyden, Ballard and Buelow

ABSENT: Commissioner Briggs and Olson

STAFF PRESENT: City Planner, Mark Moeller and Assistant City Planner, Carlos Espinosa

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by Chairman Porter.

Approval of Minutes – September 10, 2012

The minutes from the Commission's meeting of September 10, 2012 were reviewed and upon motion by Commissioner Eyden and second by Commissioner Boettcher, were unanimously approved with a correction to the minute approval section of page 1. Under this correction, Chairman Porter had not seconded approval of minutes from the Commission's meeting of August 27th. With this, the minutes should reflect that the motion by Commissioner Olson was simply seconded.

Public Hearing – Zoning of Annexed Properties – Pinecrest

Chairman Porter called on Mark Moeller, City Planner, to provide a summary of this item.

Mr. Moeller explained that the purpose of the hearing was generally to consider the zoning of eight properties located along Pinecrest Road, from an unzoned status to R-1 (One Family Residence). He further explained that given a 2005 Orderly Annexation Agreement between the City and Wilson Township, a total of 18 parcels had been annexed into the City. As referenced during the Commission's meeting of August 12th, such parcels do not bear a zoning classification until given one by Council. Additionally, parcels annexed had generally been clustered around two neighborhoods, including Pinecrest and Valley View Drive.

Mr. Moeller reminded the Commission that during its meeting of August 12th, it had, given a request from staff, initiated the zoning process for all 18 parcels. The purpose and intent of this hearing relates to the zoning of those parcels located within the Pinecrest Neighborhood. Although eight properties, within this neighborhood, have been annexed into the City, an additional eight, along with right-of-way for Pinecrest Road remain in the Township. Additionally, given requirements of the 2005 Annexation Agreement, sewer and water lines have been constructed along the total length of Pinecrest Road. Given this action, he had been advised that four of the eight annexed parcels have actually connected to utilities. Further, access to City utilities had been the primary reason given for annexation of the eight parcels.

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Given analysis of the neighborhood, Mr. Moeller explained that it is generally buffered between Pleasant Ridge Road and associated blufflands to the east, and Pleasant Valley Creek floodplain to the west. Additionally, any future redevelopment opportunities that may exist within the neighborhood will likely be influenced by these environments. Although annexed parcels had not yet been zoned, those remaining in the Township are currently zoned (Township) Urban Residential, with the stated general purpose of promoting low-density residential use. Although lands to the north of the neighborhood are City zoned R-1 and R-S, Township land to the east, west and south of the neighborhood is currently Township zoned Agricultural Natural Resource.

Mr. Moeller explained that staff had undertaken an analysis of existing annexed properties. From this, it had been determined that current lot structure and performance standards vary significantly. For example, lot sizes range between 10,193 and 61,725 sq. ft. and lot frontages range between a minimum of 43 feet and a maximum of 282 feet. Additionally, the 2007 Comprehensive Plan has recommended low density residential use for all land located within Orderly Annexation areas. Given the previous data Mr. Moeller noted that recommendations of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan for this area could be achieved through three City zoning districts including Rural Residential (R-R), Residential Suburban (R-S) and One Family Residence (R-1). Given a comparison of required performance standards for these districts to existing annexed lot conditions, it was staff's opinion that the R-1 district would provide the best fit. Given this fit, existing use would be "locked in", nonconformities would be kept to a minimum, and the purpose and intent of City 2007 Comprehensive Plan recommendations would be met for this area.

In concluding, Mr. Moeller stated that, should the Commission concur with staff recommendation on this matter, it should request that Council consider and adopt the ordinance that had been included in this afternoon's meeting agenda. Should the Commission feel that a modified recommendation is desired, options for such an action could include more restrictive (R-R or R-S) districts.

At this point, Chairman Porter opened the public hearing and called for anyone who wished to speak to present first their name and address. There being no one present to speak for, or against, the petition, the hearing was closed.

Following brief discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Gromek and seconded by Commissioner Eyden to recommend that City Council consider approval and adoption of the ordinance that had been included in this afternoon's agenda package. When the question was called, the vote of the Commission was unanimous to approve the motion.

Sand Moratorium Study: Traffic Impacts and Road Wear

Chairman Porter introduced this item and began by calling for comments from any person present representing the Blasting Committee. There being none, he called for comments from any person representing the sand industry.

Rich Mikrut noted that the proposed ordinance, included in this afternoon's agenda package, would require traffic impact analyses and road use agreements for new

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projects that met certain truck traffic thresholds. Following his review of this document, he felt that it needed more work before consideration by the Commission. More specifically, he suggested that the ordinance was too broad in requiring a traffic impact analysis for a "total" haul route that might include established City truck routes or state/county highways. In his opinion, the scope of this requirement should be pared back to include the study of any such portion of the haul route that is not a truck route or county/state highway. Additionally, although the proposed ordinance would trigger a traffic impact analysis for "new" development meeting a threshold of 200 truck trips per day, he asked if this threshold would apply to existing as well as new businesses. In concluding, Mr. Mikrut stated that he had met with staff relative to these questions.

Chairman Porter then called for anyone representing the CASM group to provide comment.

Marie Kovesci noted that in her return from a recent trip, she had attempted to locate agenda's and minutes from the last couple of meetings. However, these did not appear to be posted on the City's website. Given this observation, it was very difficult for the general public to keep up with the issue when access to this information was not readily available. She further referenced the fact that no summary notes had been posted relative to the Commission's recent roundtable event.

Ms. Kovesci then provided comment to today's subject by noting that the 200 truck trip per day threshold was too liberal. She suggested that the City use, as a standard, that which had been adopted by the County. This standard does not rely on a threshold to initiate traffic study. She further noted that Winona is, and will continue to be, a high receiver of frac sand trucks and materials. Additionally, Highway 14 will continue to be a heavily used conduit for sand coming, to Winona, from future mines in for processing.

Saratoga Township sand for processing is expected to be brought to the City of Winona for washing and shipping purposes. From her understanding, it was conceivable that truck traffic from these mines will easily exceed the 200 truck trip limit.

In concluding, she encouraged the Commission to give high consideration to Community safety in developing a road use ordinance.

Chairman Porter then called for any other comments from the general public.

Jim Gurley, 22505 Betty Jane Drive, Winona, stated that he was attending this afternoon's meeting as a private citizen. Given his review of news coverage of the Commission's recent roundtable, it was his understanding that it was attended by a small handful of people. Given that, the shopper/post had quoted Mr. Porter as suggesting that the small attendance related to the fact that the Commission was doing a good job with the sand issue. Mr. Gurley suggested that the statement was dangerous and that, although a number of people are spending a significant amount of time in studying the issue, these same people do not feel that they are being listened to when they do provide comment. Although he understood that the Commission is making an effort to hear what citizens have to say during public comment periods, most

do not feel that the Commission is doing anything with this input. Again, Mr. Gurley emphasized that many local citizens have put in thousands of hours into this issue. He suggested that the Commission work a bit harder in recognizing that input from these folks can be valuable to Commission efforts.

Chairman Porter then called on staff to provide a summary of this afternoon's agenda package.

Mr. Moeller noted that during the Commission's last meeting, Commissioners had directed staff to create a draft ordinance amendment reflecting discussions of traffic impacts and road wear that had occurred at that time. He noted that the draft ordinance had been included in this afternoon's agenda as Exhibit A. In part, he explained that the proposal was largely based upon a recently adopted ordinance taken from Olmsted County, and found as Exhibit B to the agenda. He further noted that additional background research had been conducted on similar ordinances from other jurisdictions – found as Exhibit C (taken from the City of Rochester).

Following the Commission's last meeting, questions did begin to surface relative the concept. Of these, the more significant related to the following:

1. Would an addition to an existing business trigger an impact analysis?
2. What is the appropriate scope of the impact analysis and road use agreement?

In addressing the first question, it was staff's intent, (based upon Commission input at the last meeting) that any new development generating 200 or more truck trips per day would be subject to a traffic impact analysis. As defined in the ordinance, new would be any such development occurring following the general date of January 2013. In reviewing the first question, staff realized that the definition of the term "development" does need to be examined more closely. As such, staff was proposing that this term be more clearly defined and brought back to the Commission's next meeting.

Given the second question, the present ordinance defines a haul route as being the total route located between the traffic generator and City limits. Given this definition, any use that would generate a total of more than 200 truck trips per day would be required to conduct a traffic impact analysis of the "total" haul route, unless waived by the City Engineer or appropriate road authority for County or State Highways. In discussing this with the City Engineer, it was highly likely that the City Engineer would, in many cases, waive study requirements for streets that are designated truck routes within the City. As such, it may be appropriate to consider narrowing the scope of the haul route definition to include only road segments used to reach truck routes or county/state highways. In part, this is something that the Commission is being asked to discuss this afternoon. He also suggested that the Commission provide direction/feedback of the appropriateness of the structure of the proposed ordinance. Given that feedback, staff would return to the Commission during its next meeting to review revisions.

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Commissioner Gromek stated that, upon his review of the draft ordinance, he would concur that the scope of a traffic impact analysis should relate to local non truck routes only.

In response to a question from Commissioner Porter, Mr. Moeller noted that with some exceptions, most truck routes in the City are designed to a ten ton standard.

Commissioner Buelow stated that although he understood trucks had a right to utilize established truck routes within the City, many of these do flow through residential areas. Given this, it was suggested that if a proposed development was to significantly result in traffic flows on such routes, impact reviews were legitimate.

Commissioner Boettcher noted that local businesses could not work without adequate transportation systems, including local truck networks.

Mr. Moeller explained that, as structured, the present draft ordinance would become part of the City zoning ordinance, and would apply to any new business or industry use that may generate more than 200 truck trips per day. The intent of the provision is to apply it broadly to all businesses or industries meeting the threshold, and not just the sand industry.

Commissioner Eyden suggested that it was not the Commission's intent to require any specific developer to pay for road improvements that may be highlighted through a traffic impact analysis. However, road use agreement language of the draft ordinance appeared to imply that this is the case.

Commissioner Porter stated that although Rochester and Olmstead County are being used as models to develop the ordinance, the environmental setting of those areas is slightly different than bluff and river environments that constrain Winona. With this, he suggested that staff look at what other river based communities have done in addressing heavy truck traffic uses and use patterns.

Commissioner Buelow asked how many industries within the City currently generate 200 truck trips per day. Mr. Moeller responded that no survey had been taken to define this.

Commissioner Boettcher suggested that heavy truck volumes vary significantly by seasons. Again, during fall grain movements, a significant amount of truck traffic occurs at the Winona Port. During other times of the year, very little truck traffic may be seen at this area.

Commissioner Davis noted that many local, county and state highways through the City are multi functional in meeting traffic and recreational needs. In addressing safety conflicts resulting from these activities, she proposed that recreational activities, such as bike routes, be directed to non truck route streets. Her thought process here being that it would be easier to change the way truck routes are used, rather than to modify their classification. She concluded by referencing the Knopp Valley Drive/Highway 14

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Intersection. At that location, lights had been proposed in the past. However, MnDOT has concluded that such an action may result in more accidents than currently exist.

Chairman Porter again addressed his thought that ordinance models from other river communities should be reviewed.

Commissioner Gromek stated that although the ordinance seems to be on the right track, it would need to be tweaked in a number of areas.

Commissioner Boettcher stated that the previous discussion does indicate there is a very strong need to complete the Louisa Street Project that would better connect Highway 61 with east end commercial/industrial uses.

Commissioner Eyden noted concerns with cumulative impacts. She further explained that in reviewing the Rochester ordinance, she pointed to a number of provisions that she would like included in the City Ordinance. Of these, one was section 61.526 (4) related to residential street impacts.

In response to a question from Commissioner Gromek, Rich Mikrut replied that the definition of heavy commercial vehicle would be more than the 26,000 pound rating as currently defined under the draft proposal. He further noted that the business community would have significant concerns with road use agreements and potential impacts on established truck routes or county/state highways. These routes are currently designed to accommodate truck use and, by ordinance, all trucks are required to use these routes unless deviations to the destination are needed. Given this, if improvements are needed to such streets, these should be funded by the City as a whole rather than a single industry. Although he suggested that non truck route segments of a haul route could be the subject of a traffic impact analysis, how improvements or impacts are funded needs careful thought.

Commissioner Gromek noted that the truck impact analysis/road use agreement concept may translate into costs to a potential developer.

Commissioner Buelow stated that the 200 truck trip per day threshold could generate from a number of mined sources throughout the area. If all of this traffic was coming into Winona, its cumulative effect could have significant negative impacts on the City's street infrastructure.

Following further discussion, Chairman Porter directed staff to come back at its next meeting with potential ordinance changes reflecting discussion this afternoon. He further suggested that other communities be used in preparing a model for the traffic issue.

Chairman Porter opened the microphone to representatives of the Blasting Committee, CASM, Frac Sand Industry or other public comment.

In response, Marie Kovesci stated that, since she had limited access to data presented this afternoon, she would follow up with a contact to staff.

Approval of 2013 – 2022 Capital Improvements Program

Chairman Porter called on Mr. Moeller to provide a staff overview of this issue. Following a review that was focused on potential projects for the coming year, it was moved by Commissioner Boettcher, and seconded to recommend approval of the 2013-2022 Capital Improvement Plan to Council.

Adjournment

There being no other business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned. With a noted that the Commission's next meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 8th.



Mark Moeller
City Planner