

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

DATE: September 28, 2015

TIME: 4:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Commissioners Boettcher, Hahn, Buelow, Ballard, Porter, Davis, and M. Olson

ABSENT: Commissioner L. Olson

STAFF PRESENT: City Planners Carlos Espinosa & Mark Moeller

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by Commission Chair Davis.

Approval of Minutes – September 14, 2015

Minutes from the Commission's meeting of September 14, 2015 were reviewed and were unanimously approved as submitted.

Street Naming Request – Miller Scrap

Chairperson Davis called on Carlos Espinosa, City Planner, to provide an overview of this item.

Mr. Espinosa stated that the City had received a request from Miller Scrap to change the name of the public street that flows from Bruski Drive to the westerly line of the Miller Scrap property. The name of the current street is Trempealeau Drive while the company is requesting that the name be changed to Recycling Lane. Mr. Espinosa stated that the role of the Planning Commission in such request is generally to determine that a new or proposed name does not duplicate others in Winona.

Given this requirement, staff has performed a search of street names within the City as well as the County and has found no other streets named Recycling Lane. Staff had also consulted with the City Engineering Department and Fire Department, neither of which had concerns with the proposed change.

Given the previous, approval of the request was being recommended by staff. Following brief discussion, the consensus of the Commission was that the request was appropriate and appeared to be in conformance with City Code. As such, Commissioner Hahn moved to approve the request. Following a second by Commissioner Porter, the vote of the Commission was unanimous to approve the request, and forward it to Council for final action.

Approval of 2016 – 2020 Capital Improvement Program

Chairperson Davis called on Mr. Espinosa to provide an overview of this agenda item.

Mr. Espinosa explained that the purpose of this item was to both consider and provide recommendations to Council of the City's proposed 2016 – 2020 Capital Improvement Program. Again, this document will ultimately become part of Council's 2016 budget.

He noted that the attached document generally provides an overview of projected project expenditures over a 5 year period. Although the Commission is encouraged to consider all projects during these periods, its primary focus should be directed to those for the coming year.

Mr. Espinosa concluded by noting that Commission review of the document is driven by Minnesota Statutes 462.356 (Subdivision 2) requiring that once the City adopts a Comprehensive Plan, no capital improvement may be authorized until it has been approved by the Planning agency. In meeting this mandate, although the Commission could be requested to approve various CIP Projects individually throughout the year, it is more prudent/efficient to approve the plan as a whole. In part this is why the request resurfaces prior to Council budget approvals each year.

Given the previous introduction Mr. Espinosa provided an overview of major anticipated projects for 2016. In part, these included:

- Levee Park Improvements
- The City's share of bridge cost commitments
- Proposed Highway 61 Improvements
- Improvements to the Masonic Temple
- Various Port Improvements
- The construction of a rain garden at the Johnson Street Parking Lot

Upon discussion, and in response to a question from Chairperson Davis, Mr. Espinosa noted that proposed Levee Park Improvements for the coming year with focus on the west side Levee Park patio area and Main Street.

Chairperson Davis suggested that the City create more formal bike paths in the City by possibly prohibiting parking on one side of streets. From her travel observations, these types of concepts seem to work well in Canada and Europe. She further requested that the City look at establishing some sort of a pilot project to accomplish this.

Commissioner Buelow stated that, as a frequent biker, he generally has no problem in getting around the City except when attempting to cross Highway 61.

Given general discussion, Commissioner Porter noted that although he would be supportive of establishing more formalized paths throughout the City, enforcement was currently a problem.

Commissioner Porter stated that although he had no problem with the proposed CIP package, he does have concern of the "process" that is currently used in considering/adopting it. As currently proposed, the document includes development by staff, followed by a 45-minute pre-Council presentation to both the Commission and Council. This is then followed by a subsequent request for the Commission to consider/recommend approval to Council.

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Given that Commission review of the CIP is mandated by State law, he felt that it would be more prudent for all concerned to be able to more fully discuss/review the document during a reasonable time period that allows for that. In his opinion, the current joint Council/Commission review process does not allow for a full understanding of proposed projects. He noted that although the document is generally driven by staff input, it is conceivable that a more thoughtful Council/Commission review of the document might provide other reasonable alternatives to projects proposed.

In addressing his concern, Mr. Porter further suggested that the joint meeting occur outside of a pre Council meeting and that an adequate time period be established for it to provide for greater level of discussion.

It was then moved by Commissioner Buelow and seconded by Commissioner Boettcher to recommend approval of the 2016 – 2020 Capital Improvements to Council. When the question was called, all but Commissioner Porter supported the motion. In adopting this motion, the consensus of the Commission was to request that City administration consider development of a CIP review process that encourages a greater level of discussion between staff, Commission, and Council, then currently exists.

Other Business

Chairperson Davis noted that she continues to have concerns of the present relationship between the Planning Commission and Board of Adjustment. In part, those concerns pertain to recent Variance and Conditional Use approvals pertaining to the first floor residential use of building in the Downtown Area.

In response to comments by Commissioner Boettcher, Mark Moeller, City Planner, stated that new flood maps for the City of Winona had not yet been released. As it now stands, the City is undergoing additional study of its permanent dike system which does need to be completed before final maps can be prepared by FEMA/others. He concluded by stressing that staff will keep the Commission advised of this issue as progress is made.

Future Action Items

Mr. Espinosa reminded the Commission that the Hoisington Koepler firm will be in town on October 5th and 6th to conduct meetings with community stakeholder groups and to conduct a tour with staff of major issues associated with current zoning and other core provisions. He noted that the consultant's intent during that period will be to listen to what community leaders have to say about City development codes along with concerns they may have.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned.



Mark Moeller
City Planner