PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

DATE: July 14, 2014

TIME: 4:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Chairman Porter, Commissioners Boettcher, Fritz, M. Olson, Ballard,

ABSENT: Commissioner Hahn, Davis, Buelow and L. Olson

STAFF PRESENT: City Planner, Mark Moeller

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

Approval of Minutes – June 23, 2014

The minutes from the Commission's meeting of June 23, 2014 were reviewed and upon motion by Commissioner Boettcher and second by Commissioner M. Olson were unanimously approved as submitted.

Pedestrian Safety Program – Chamber Proposal

Chairman Porter introduced this item by noting that during the Commission's meeting of March 10th, incidental discussion ensued relative to the issue of pedestrians and pedestrian safety at defined City crosswalks, particularly in the area of Winona State University and the Central Business District. Following that meeting, Della Schmidt, President/CEO of the Winona Chamber Office, had contacted City staff to let them know that the Chamber's Transportation Committee had been engaged with WSU and MnDOT in developing a pedestrian safety campaign for the City. Introduced by MnDOT, the campaign is entitled "Share the Road" with ultimate statewide goals of promoting safe walking and driving behaviors and reducing pedestrian vehicle accidents. He further noted that Ms. Schmidt had submitted a PowerPoint presentation, prepared by MnDOT, summarizing the desired purposes/outcomes of the program. In submitting this information, she had presented an offer to the City to provide a summary of the safety program and to outline the Chamber's Transportation Committee's ideas related to implementing the program within the City. Given that offer, today's Commission meeting had been established for that presentation. In addition, a planned presentation to City Council is scheduled for July 21st.

At this point, Chairman Porter called on Ms. Schmidt to provide a summary of the Chamber's proposal. Ms. Schmidt noted that through the Chamber's Transportation Committee, it had defined a number of specific objectives for 2014. Of these, one related to defining a pedestrian safety program with focuses on Main Street and the Winona State University area. In implementing this objective, the Chamber had partnered with Eric Paulson at Winona State University who further connected with representatives of MnDOT. Through that, the Chamber learned of MnDOT's "Share the

Road" Program, and through that connection, have further developed plans to undertake a local event that would highlight the pedestrian/vehicle safety issue. She explained that this event is proposed to be conducted on Thursday, September 18th. In concept, the program would involve 6 shifts of volunteers working at the following intersections:

- Main & 7th Streets between the hours of 7:00 and 9:00 am.
- Huff & 9th Streets between the hours of 7:00 and 9:00 am.
- Main & 4th Streets between the hours of 11:30 am and 1:30 pm.
- Lafayette and 2nd Streets between the hours of 11:30 am and 1:30 pm.
- Main & 11th Streets between the hours of 4:00 and 6:00 pm.
- Lafayette & Broadway Streets between the hours of 4:00 and 6:00 pm.

She further noted that each shift would be staffed by a minimum of 4 volunteers. Volunteers would wear the same t-shirts and would serve to assist pedestrians through crosswalks and to hold banners promoting a greater awareness to both pedestrians and vehicle drivers. Ms. Schmidt further noted that the event would be preceded by the posting of flyers and banners throughout the Community, as well as press releases, and a presence on local talk shows. She also stated that law enforcement would be part of the event.

In response to a question, Ms. Schmidt noted that the date had been chosen on the basis that it coincides with Winona State Universities Homecoming Weekend.

Chairman Porter stated that he felt that the event was needed and would serve to initiate pedestrian safety programs throughout the community.

Louie Byrne, Chair of the Chambers Transportation Committee, stated that although the Chamber had identified 6 key intersections for the event, these could change if needed. Upon further discussion, it was decided that the proposed intersections were valid, and if the program was again undertaken next year, other intersections could be considered.

Commissioner Boettcher stated that he felt the worst pedestrian problem was between 7:00 and 11:00 am at Huff & Broadway and Washington & Johnson Streets. Additionally, as opposed to school children who are highly educated with pedestrian safety, the biggest problems he has seen relate to inattentive adults.

Mr. Byrne stated that the intent with the program was not to point fingers at anyone but simply to provide an educational opportunity. Ms. Schmidt agreed and noted her excitement to be connected with Winona State University in this effort. In part, her purpose in being in attendance this afternoon was not only to provide a summary of what the Chamber was proposing but to offer the City an opportunity to partner in the event.

At this point, Chairman Porter referenced an email that he had received from Commissioner Ed Hahn related to his perception of traffic safety issues. In summary,

his concern related primarily to evening hour on street parking when people are getting in and out of cars.

Commissioner M. Olson stated that crosswalks should be better marked.

Ms. Schmidt stated if this year's program was found to be successful, she envisioned that it would be done again next year. With future efforts, Mr. Byrne hoped that businesses located within the area of intersections would be involved as volunteers.

Chairman Porter stated that he felt driver education was just as important as that to pedestrians.

Chairman Porter stated that a major concern of his was when he does stop for a pedestrian in a crosswalk for example, on Broadway, only to have another vehicle attempt to pass him in the other lane.

Following further discussion, Commissioner Boettcher moved to recommend that the Planning Commission support the Safety Program as presented by the Chamber this afternoon, to Council. The motion was seconded by Commissioner M. Olson. Upon discussion. Ms. Schmidt said that she felt that the Chamber would be able to secure the proper number of volunteers to undertake the event. However, if any person is interested in participating, they could contact the Chamber office.

In addressing promotional ideas for the event, Ms. Schmidt stated that, given a limited budget, she would be looking for opportunities to promote the event on a non cost basis. She further noted that she had prepared a tentative volunteer schedule for the event. Chairman Porter suggested that this schedule be forwarded to the Planning Commission in the event that Commissioners are able to participate.

At this point, Commissioner M. Olson left the meeting.

Other Business

Mark Moeller, City Planner, noted that although information had not been received to include it within the Commission's agenda package, staff had received a revised landscape plan for the westerly side of the proposed Dahl Automotive development site on Highway 61. Again, following its June 23rd review of the site plan for this project, the Commission had tentatively approved the site plan subject to two conditions. Of these, the first was to prepare a modified landscape plan for the west side of the development that would serve to screen the proposed auto dealership from adjoining residences to the west. As part of developing this plan, the Commission had requested that the developer meet with adjoining property owners to present and review the it. Given a conversation he had had with Andrew Dahl earlier in the day, Mr. Dahl had directed Winona Nursery to prepare a revised landscape plan and had met the Brendels and Volkmans, those most directly impacted by the proposed auto dealership use. Given

those meetings, it was Mr. Dahl's perception that both had found the revised plan to be acceptable with minor changes.

Mr. Moeller noted that since a quorum of the Commission is no longer available this afternoon to approve the plan, he would bring it back for the Commission's July 28th meeting.

Following review, the consensus of those present was that the revised landscape plan, in concept, appeared to look acceptable. Commissioner Fritz noted that outside of the west property line, he would like to see more trees incorporated into the parking lot area where feasible. In looking at the revised site plan, it appeared that there were a few areas where green space could be enhanced with trees. However, he encouraged the developer to look at this issue. Again, Mr. Moeller noted that this is an item that could be discussed further during the Commission's next meeting.

Adjournment

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

Mark Moeller
City Planner