



**Winona Development Code Update  
Project Kickoff Session with Planning Commission  
September 14, 2015**

**MEETING NOTES**

Planning Commissioners Attending: Ed Hahn, LaVerne Olson, Brad Ballard, Mandi Olson, Craig Porter, Brian Buellow, Dale Boettcher

Planning Commissioners Absent: Wendy Davis, Ken Fritz

City Staff & Consultants: Mark Moeller, Carlos Espinosa, Jeff Miller (HKGi), Rita Trapp (HKGi)

The HKGi consultant team gave a presentation to the Planning Commission that described the consultant team's members and project experience, provided an overview of the project's work scope and schedule, outlined the key project objectives, and explained the project's community engagement approach. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to the Planning Commission members' input regarding the City's current development code issues and opportunities for the development code update project. The discussion was organized around the following questions:

- 1) *What parts of the City's current development codes have been challenging to understand and use?*
- 2) *What parts of the current development codes are outdated and/or may not be needed?*
- 3) *Where might there be inconsistencies between current development codes and the City's adopted plans and policies?*
- 4) *What opportunities might there be to simplify development application and approval processes?*
- 5) *What physical areas of the City seem to have the most issues related to the current development codes?*
- 6) *What types of changes or additions to the current development codes would make them easier to use?*
- 7) *Who should be included as "stakeholder" groups in the project's community engagement process?*

Following is a summary of the input received from the Planning Commission (PC):

General: Requested that the schedule for the project's stakeholder sessions in October be shared with PC members ahead of time so that PC members could choose to attend any of the stakeholder sessions that they have particular interest in.

Question #1: *What parts of the City's current development codes have been challenging to understand and use?*

- There hasn't been a lot of new development lately due to the economic recession, so familiarity with the development codes may be relatively low currently.
- Where the Comprehensive Plan doesn't mesh with the development codes.



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- For new PC members, the development codes are hard to understand, use, and find things.
- Need to implement the Comprehensive Plan by aligning the development codes with the plan.
- The new bluff and shoreland ordinances have not necessarily aligned with the rest of the development codes.
- Consider when the new unified development code will go into effect.
- Like the idea of adding visualization of standards to the code.

Question #2: *What parts of the current development codes are outdated and/or may not be needed?*

- Development code addresses typical lots but not atypical lots, e.g. narrow lots.
- Updates are needed but concern about how things will be “grandfathered”. Should things always be “grandfathered” or should some ordinance updates/improvements be put into effect for all properties right away, so that changes start to occur?

Question #3: *Where might there be inconsistencies between current development codes and the City’s adopted plans and policies?*

- Should bring consistency to the notification processes for various development application procedures.
- There can be a long lag time between the variance process with the Board of Adjustment and the conditional use permit process with the Planning Commission, as an example.

Question #4: *What opportunities might there be to simplify development application and approval processes?*

- Board of Adjustment vs. Planning Commission processes.
- Redevelopment process is challenging in Winona’s complex environment of river shoreland, railroad lines, highways, and the multiple government jurisdictions that need to be involved, including the city, county, state, and federal levels.

Question #5: *What physical areas of the City seem to have the most issues related to the current development codes?*

- Areas where there is an interface between downtown businesses, the college campus, and residential neighborhoods.
- Accommodating new development out in the valleys.
- As background information relating to recent development, East End development was made possible by dredging of Lake Winona and moving the dredge materials to the East End.
- An annexation agreement has recently expired.
- Interest in potential commercial development toward I-90 via Hwy 43.
- Need to focus on redevelopment.



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Question #6: *What types of changes or additions to the current development codes would make them easier to use?*

- Addition of graphics to the code.
- Learning from other cities like Duluth.
- Address heritage preservation areas.
- Visualization of the bluffs, ravines, and other sensitive resources.
- No repercussions for when people develop in a way that is not permitted, e.g. keeping development out of sensitive resource areas. An example is construction of a path and dock that is not allowed in a sensitive resource area.
- Properties that are not maintained sufficiently are a big problem in the city (includes houses, fences, placement of refuse bins)
- Zoning improvements for issues related to the 30% rule, such as transitions/compatibility between student rental housing and other residential.
- Parking requirements for rental housing should be looked at.
- As background, the PC did not recommend the adoption of the 30% rule. The public went to the City Council who then adopted the 30% rule.
- Evaluate whether fees for development processes are in line with similar size cities.
- Commercial development within the historic district. The City doesn't have lots of landscaping standards to ensure nice landscaping within the historic district.

Question #7: *Who should be included as "stakeholder" groups in the project's community engagement process?*

- Architectural Review Board – a new multi-family residential building was recently reviewed by them and should be part of the consultants' tour of the city in October.

Question #8: *What are the most important things to accomplish with the development code update project?*

- There are discrepancies in the codes that need to be cleaned up. They create the problems.
- The code should be updated to reflect what the Comprehensive Plan says, what we want.
- Discrepancies. Organization. Inconsistencies between notification processes for different development application processes.
- Congruency between the Comprehensive Plan and the development codes. The PC's hands are often tied because they are required to have reasons for recommending denial of an application.
- Bring timeframes closer together between the various development application processes.
- Combining things together.
- Update things in Winona to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Things are outdated. It seems like there is too much "grandfathering" for existing development issues.
- Enforcement.
- Alignment with the Comprehensive Plan.



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- Important that the development codes aren't so restrictive that they deter development. There is a very vocal opposition group to changes to the development codes. Need to find the fine line that works for all without being too restrictive.