



**City of Lake Elmo
Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes of September 22, 2014**

Chairman Williams called to order the meeting of the Lake Elmo Planning Commission at 7:00 p.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Williams, Dodson, Kreimer, Larson, Lundgren, Dorschner and Haggard

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Community Development Director Klatt, City Planner Johnson, and Planning Intern Casey Riley

Approve Agenda:

The agenda was accepted as presented.

Approve Minutes: September 8, 2014

Dodson asked to clarify a statement he had made concerning the Inwood PUD.

M/S/P: Dodson/Lundgren move to approve the minutes as amended; ***Vote: 7-0, motion carried unanimously.***

Business Items: Hammes Estates – Final Plat

Johnson reviewed information concerning an application for the Hammes Estates Final Plat. The final plat includes 57 single family lots that will be located west of Keats Avenue and south of Goose Lake on property that was historically used as the Hammes gravel operation. Johnson reviewed the critical approval issues that have been identified by Staff, which included City Engineering review comments, DNR approvals for Goose Lake restoration, Goose Lake Park design and improvements, and soil contamination remediation. Johnson also reviewed the recommended list of conditions for consideration by the Planning Commission.

Haggard asked for clarification concerning the conditions of approval. Haggard also asked if the fire chief is the primary staff contact for environmental issues in the community. Johnson noted that the fire chief is the City's main public safety officer and was contacted by the MPCA regarding the soil contamination.

Dodson asked if the plans would need to change in order for the applicant to comply with watershed district requirements. Johnson noted that the conditions should be able to be met without any changes to the plat, and also commented that the City Engineer has reviewed these conditions as well prior to making his comments.

Dorchner asked if the City could require park fees for the entire plat be paid up front. Johnson replied that the City may not be able to require land or fee dedications beyond the land that is subject to the final plat. He stated that he would check with the City Attorney on this matter.

The Commission reviewed the other conditions of approval as recommended by Staff.

Williams requested that Condition 15 be added to require that the proposed boardwalk segment be designed to accommodate bicycle traffic. The Commission consented to the addition of this condition.

Kreimer questioned why the northern trail segment could not be moved further to the south and adjacent to the private lots within the development. Johnson replied that the City Engineer is recommending that the trail be constructed in the planned location due primarily to the topography of the site. If it is moved further to the south, the trail would be lower in elevation than the proposed stormwater facilities, causing concern about the subgrade of the trail. Kreimer requested that the trail be moved between the two ponds.

Johnson stated that some of the City Engineering comments pertain to the western portion of the site and fall outside the final plat area. The City is still working with the applicant to resolve these issues as part of the final construction plan review.

The Commission generally discussed the process and timing for the construction of various improvements within the subdivision.

Ryan Bluhm, Westwood Engineering, stated that it might be possible to move the proposed trail between two ponds, and that a portion of this segment could be built as a boardwalk. He noted that he would need to work with the City Engineer to determine if this would be a viable option. There was a general discussion concerning the operation of the storm water ponds and the City's need for access.

Kreimer noted that the proposed trail heading east of Stonegate would go through a grove of trees within the Stonegate subdivision. He asked if the Valley Branch Watershed District would grant an exception to the wetland buffer rules in order to preserve trees. Johnson replied that Staff would investigate any options that might exist, but noted that the watershed is fairly strict in allowing any improvements within wetland buffers.

M/S/P: Dodson/Kreimer motion to include a condition that the developer inventory the trees to be impacted along the northern boundary due to trail construction within the buffer area, and that any impacted trees be replaced at the rate specified in the tree preservation and protection ordinance (Section 154.257). ***Vote: 7-0, motion carried unanimously.***

Haggard noted that the conditions should include language that all conditions should be met prior to release of the final plat for recording.

Kreimer asked if signs noting private property boundaries should be required in cases where public trails abut private property.

M/S/P: Dorschner/Dodson to recommend approval of the Hammes Estates Final Plat with the findings of fact as drafted by Staff and with 16 conditions of approval as amended and recommended by the Planning Commission. ***Vote: 7-0, motion carried unanimously.***

Haggard asked for clarification concerning the landscape islands and the plan for plantings within these areas. Mark Sonstegard, Ryland Homes, responded that after reviewing other islands that have been constructed by Ryland, he has concluded that the planting of grass would be more appropriate for the space.

Kreimer expressed a strong preference for park location number two from among the small park options presented by the developer.

M/S/P: Kreimer/Lundgren, motion to recommend to the Park Commission that the potential tot lot location number two is the preferred location for this park due to its central location and the lack of a stormwater pond adjacent to the site. ***Vote: 7-0, motion carried unanimously.***

The Commission requested that Staff research issues associated with marking private property along public trails.

Business Item: Rural Area Analysis Presentation

Klatt introduced Casey Riley as the City's Planning Intern and stated that she has prepared a report concerning the City's rural development areas. She reviewed a rural development report, which includes information concerning some high level development costs and other development issues pertaining to these areas.

Williams suggested that future versions of the report include a list of near-by streets or other mechanisms to help locate each subdivision.

Larson would like to see measures of things that were successful and unsuccessful in each development. For instance trails, septic system, egress and ingress, etc.

Dorschner – Would like to see environmental impacts included such as what are the impacts of adding more wells and private sanitary facilities to the City and can we determine the public health impacts. Riley stated that she has a program that could run some of that if we could get some of the construction documents.

Dodson – would argue that any community system is less expensive than public, but also have to factor in environmental concerns.

Williams stated that it appears that small non-buildable lots are included in the statistics and would throw off the overall numbers. These parcels should be excluded.

Dodson is wondering if plans for future sewer can be superimposed on sewer and water maps. Haggard is wondering if this can be put on the website. Klatt stated that there will be a new page on the website for current developments and this could be a sub page.

Dorschner would like to see the 201 systems listed separately from the public sewer.

Business Item: Planning System Improvements

Klatt discussed Planning Commission Systems improvements. For development applications, complete application and materials need to be submitted 2 weeks ahead of the meeting to get on the agenda. The packet will be mailed out the Monday before the meeting. Notification for public hearings will be expanded from 350 feet to 750 feet.

Haggard asked about critical issue versus technical correction. She feels that the Planning Commission should be looking at all of that.

The Commission asked if the notification distance can be tailored based on where it takes place.

Dodson stated that the developer should know their timelines and staff should not be the ones calling them and asking for the information.

Updates and Concerns

Council Updates

1. Inwood PUD Concept Plan passed.
2. Boulder Ponds Preliminary Plat and Preliminary PUD Plan passed.

3. Village Park Preserve Preliminary Plat passed.
4. Hunter's Crossing Final Plat passed.
5. Savona 2nd Addition Final Plat passed.
6. Savona 2nd Addition Developer's Agreement passed.
7. Wildflower at Lake Elmo Comprehensive Plan Amendment passed.

Williams stated that he feels that it needs to be explained to Council Members and Planning Commission members that a PUD plan has exceptions and deviations from City Code that may not go through the variance process, but are deviations from the regular City Code.

Staff Updates

1. Upcoming Meetings
 - a. October 13, 2014
 - b. October 27, 2014
2. Currently there is nothing scheduled for the October 13th meeting and the Chair may cancel.
3. October 14th 6:30 – 9:30 pm there will be a downtown summit meeting to look at economic development issues, market study and planning issues that affect downtown.

Commission Concerns – None

Meeting adjourned at 9:36 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Ziertman
Planning Program Assistant