



**City of Lake Elmo
Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes of May 27, 2015**

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

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Dodson, Dorschner, Williams, Fields, and Griffin

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Haggard, Kreimer, and Larson

STAFF PRESENT: Community Development Director Klatt

Approve Agenda:

The agenda was accepted as presented.

Approve Minutes: May 11, 2015

M/S/P: Williams/Dorschner, move to approve minutes as presented, ***Vote: 5-0, motion carried unanimously.***

Public Hearing: Zoning Text Amendment – Commercial Wedding Ceremony Venues in the RR zoning district.

Klatt began his presentation regarding the Zoning Text Amendment to allow Commercial Wedding Ceremony venues in the Rural Residential zoning district as an interim use. It is current allowed in the AG and RT zoning. The applicant is also asking to increase the maximum number of guests allowed from 150 to 200 with additional restrictions such as hours, no wedding receptions, etc.

If this Zoning Text Amendment passes, there would be a separate public hearing that would be heard for the interim use application.

Things to consider would be that the Comprehensive Plan contains numerous statements about maintaining the rural character in the City, an interim use does not run with the land, but is for a limited time and can be re-evaluated, and sites zoned AG and RT can be in as close a proximity to neighborhoods as RR parcels.

Staff heard from a number of residents in the area, and the main concern was traffic on 50th Street. The current estimate of traffic on 50th street is estimated at 500 trips per day and is expected to increase to 1500 trips per day by 2030. The average home

generates an estimated 10 trips per day. The proposed wedding venue would need 67 parking spaces to meet the ordinance standard.

Staff is recommending approval of the Zoning Text Amendment with 2 more restrictions added to limit the applicability in the Rural Residential zone to properties that 1) Have historically been used as farmsteads for the surrounding farmland and 2) Utilize a barn or other historic agricultural building over 75 years old for the wedding ceremony.

Klatt talked about the Planning and Zoning discretion pyramid. This particular item falls in the green, or towards the bottom of the pyramid which is having the most discretion, while the interim use permit is farther up and has less discretion if an application meets the ordinance requirements. This would be the time to decide if this is an appropriate use in the RR zoning district. Klatt went through the current code on Commercial Wedding Ceremony and highlighted what would be changed.

There was some discussion about the 2 additional restrictions and if they should remain.

Danielle Hecker, the applicant, spoke regarding her desired outcome in requesting the ordinance change. She wants to preserve the historic barn and rural lands through a new use. She met with many of the neighbors and the adjoining developer and got mostly positive feedback, except for the traffic concern.

Public Hearing opened at 7:56 pm

Reid Gilbertson, 11421 50th Street, is in opposition to the proposal. He does not feel it fits the current intent to continue the agricultural use. In addition, he does not feel a 10 acre parcel was intended for farming. These sites are intended for single family dwellings. He feels that the RR district was excluded from the wedding ordinance for a reason. The traffic at this venue would all be leaving at the same time and it would be difficult to get out to highway 5.

Brett Thompson, 11491 50th Street, noted similar concerns to Reid Gilbertson. The traffic will be concentrated going in and going out. He is concerned about noise generated from the events. He also noted that there is not a large group asking for the ordinance change, and the City shouldn't make the change just for 1 individual.

There were 3 letters received and put in the public record. 2 letters were in opposition to the request and 1 included concerns regarding traffic.

Klatt also spoke to a resident who did not want to give their name who expressed that they were opposed.

Klatt stated that the barn is 226 feet from the north property line. Property line to the west is about 150 feet. Klatt stated that the code states that setbacks are from

residential homes and there currently are not any that would apply. However, with the new OP development, that could be a problem.

Public Hearing closed at 8:12 pm

Williams stated that RR land is typically land that has already been developed. This land is already at the minimum. He states that in this circumstance the justification would be to preserve the historic barn.

Dodson feels that for wedding venues you need an attractive location to attract customers. He feels that it does give an attractive character of the community.

Fields asked what other commercial, retail or other would be allowed in RR. Klatt stated that there is agricultural entertainment, agricultural sales, cemetery, commercial kennel, private kennel, private stable, greenhouses and wayside stands. On other larger sized agricultural parcels the City allows for limited non-agricultural use.

Dorschner stated that he struggles between the traffic and trying to preserve the rural character. He feels that the ordinance is fairly restrictive to protect the surrounding neighbors. He likes the applicant wanting to partner with other Lake Elmo businesses is a plus as well.

Dodson stated that the traffic issue should be separated and discussed at the interim use application that is not before them now. Dorschner felt the interim use should maybe be given a year and revisited.

Griffin stated that the Comprehensive Plan would seem to support this. The barn venue seems to be becoming a popular venue. She also feels that the traffic should be discussed at the interim use permit stage.

Fields stated that they could have the same traffic issues with an agricultural venue as well and that would be an allowed use.

Williams thinks the only justification for this change is the preservation of a historic structure in a residential zone. He feels there should be some sort of certification that the structure is 75 years old and has been used for an agricultural use.

Klatt stated that there would be a lot of cost associated with renovating a historic barn to be able to bring it up to a standard to use for this venue. There has also been a number of barns restored in open space neighborhoods for community buildings.

Williams is not in favor of increasing the number of guests. One of the reasons it was restricted was for anticipated traffic and noise problems. He feels we need to have

experience with an actual operation before we raise that number. The average guest count is 140 and seems to be decreasing over time.

Dorschner asked if a variance could be applied for if they had an unusually high venue. Klatt stated that they could, but would need to meet all of the variance criteria which could be difficult.

Dodson disagrees with not increasing the number based on the average. Hecker stated that the average was probably based on all types of wedding venues.

M/S/P: Dorschner/Fields, move to recommend approval of the request to amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow Commercial Wedding Ceremony Venues as an interim use permit within the City's RR – Rural Residential zoning districts and to increase the maximum number of guests allowed at each event from 150 to 200 with the additional restrictions 1) have historically been used as a farmstead for the surrounding agricultural land and 2) that would use a barn or other historic agricultural building that is older than 75 years for the wedding ceremonies, **Vote: 5-0, motion carried unanimously.**

Williams made a motion to amend Dorschner's motion that the number of allowed guests be changed from 200 to 175. This motion failed for lack of second.

Klatt stated you could be more restrictive than what is in the code, but not be more lenient. He believes that you can request additional conditions like landscaping, but he would like more time to research that and talk to the City attorney.

Business Item: 2015 Systems Statement – Growth Management Update

Klatt presented a verbal update concerning the City's 2015 Systems Statement and recent discussions with the City Council concerning the City's growth staging plan. Discussions concern rural area planning, transit planning and planning for the 2015 system statement. Staff would like to see this done as a larger planning effort. The Planning Department has been busy this spring with a large amount of developments coming forward with their construction plans, but will be starting to spend more time regarding the growth management.

The City Council has asked staff to bring forward some growth management strategies. Staff is recommending adopting some kind of policy document with criteria for when there is enough development in stage 1 to move forward to stage 2. There should be a public facilities ordinance to ensure that growth pays for growth, and expanding on the language that we already have. Klatt stated there could also be some interim steps the City could take to slow growth to plan against the new numbers.

Klatt stated that the Planning Commission would be involved in this process as there is a public process to go through. Klatt stated that the rapid transit line could play a large role in the growth of the area. There was a general discussion regarding the infrastructure costs.

Council Updates – May 19, 2015 Meeting

1. United Land/Bremer Minor Subdivision – passed.
2. Inwood Final Plat and Final PUD Plans – passed.
3. Inwood Developers Agreement – passed.

Staff Updates

1. Upcoming Meetings
 - a. June 8, 2015
 - b. June 22, 2015

Commission Concerns

Dorschner stated that the Commission should be patient with the Planning Staff as they have a lot of work right now.

Klatt stated that Casey is still working with the City regarding gateway issues.

Dodson asked the Commission to start thinking about what they would like to receive from staff to start looking at the larger planning issues.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Ziertman
Planning Program Assistant