



MAYOR & COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

DATE: July 7, 2015
REGULAR
ITEM #21

AGENDA ITEM: Village Work Group Discussion

SUBMITTED BY: Kyle Klatt, Community Development Director

THROUGH: Dean Zuleger, City Administrator

REVIEWED BY: Nick Johnson, City Planner
Julie Fliflet, City Council

SUGGESTED ORDER OF BUSINESS:

- Introduction of ItemCommunity Development Director
- Report/Presentation.....Community Development Director
- Questions from Council to Staff..... Mayor Facilitates
- Call for Motion Mayor & City Council
- Discussion..... Mayor & City Council
- Action on Motion..... Mayor Facilitates

POLICY RECCOMENDER: N/A

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUESTED: The City Council has requested to have a discussion on the history and purpose of the Village Work Group. The following memo is intended to provide an overview of the formation of the group and its purpose, scope and activities. No formal action is requested at this time.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY/STAFF REPORT: The formation of both the Village and I-94 Corridor Work Groups occurred as a result of the City needing to update the land use chapter of its Comprehensive Plan. The City's Land Use Plan should have been updated in 2008 as part of its required decennial update to the Metropolitan Council. At that time, the City completed most of the required sections of the Comprehensive Plan, with the exception of the Land Use Plan, Housing Plan and Wastewater Facilities Plan. In order to complete these sections, the City requested an extension from the Metropolitan Council to allow the City to submit these three

sections of the Comprehensive Plan at a later date. Both the I-94 Corridor and Village Work Groups were formed to assist in the formulation of the City's Land Use Plan for those respective areas of the community.

In addition to submitting a revised land use plan to comply with Met Council requirements, the city also intended to review the land use plan that was adopted in 2005 with the following objectives:

- Integrating aspects of the Village Master Plan and Village AUAR that were completed after the 2005 Comp Plan Update. The Village Master Plan was accepted by the City Council, but never formally adopted into the land use plan.
- Reviewing the land use plan for the I-94 Corridor to accommodate different densities of housing and commercial land uses. The adopted land use plan included only two land use categories along the corridor (residential at 3.5 units per acre and business park).

The Village and I-94 Corridor Work Groups were formed at the beginning of 2011. The groups were charged serving in an advisory capacity to inform and review the Comprehensive Plan Amendments for both areas planned to be served with sanitary sewer in Lake Elmo. The groups were comprised of Planning Commissioners, City Council Members, stakeholders/landowners and citizens at-large. The membership of the groups were as follows:

Old Village Work Group

Anne Smith (Council)
Brett Emmons (Council)
Julie Fliflet (Planning Commission)
Jennifer Pelletier (Planning Commission)
Nadine Obermueller (Planning Commission)
Kathy Haggard (Planning Commission)
Steve Delapp (Citizen-at-Large)

I-94 Corridor Work Group

Dean Johnston (Council)
Mike Pearson (Council)
Todd Williams (Planning Commission)
Greg Hall (Planning Commission)
Tom Bidon (Planning Commission)*
Steve Britz (Planning Commission)*
Tom Kreimer (Citizen-at-Large)
Dan Regan (Stakeholder)
Bruce Miller (Stakeholder)

*Note: These members did not participate through completion of the effort.

In terms of the reasons for formulating two groups, the Planning Commission noted the following early in the process: 1) each project area is starting from a different point 2) more efficient use of committee/staff time, 3) able to better adjust to external issues, and 4) focus of meetings can be tailored to a more specific purpose. The groups were also operating under different timelines, with the understanding that the Village group was going to focus more on implementation while the I-94 group would be working on plan updates and broader comprehensive planning concerns.

Once the groups were formed, each group crafted a process with the end goal in mind of approving a final Comprehensive Plan Amendment for each respective area. It is important to note that the means to reach the end goal were different for each of the two areas (I-94 Corridor and Village).

While City staff led the process and drafted all proposed amendments to the City's land use plan, both groups were given discretion to inform the areas of focus and discussion topics that would ultimately lead to the final Comp Plan Update. In the case of the Village Work Group, the process and areas of focus included the following tasks:

- Stakeholder and Public Engagement
- Pedestrian and Trail Facilities
- Research and Establishment of Design Standards
- Public Facilities and Village Green
- Creation of Goals for the Village Land Use Plan
- Finalization of Revised Land Use Plan
- Input on Future Zoning for the Village
- Research of Form-Based Codes

In addition to this information, staff did present a recommended schedule of discussion topics at the beginning of the Work Group process. This recommended schedule is found in Attachment #1.

As far as the meeting structure is concerned, the Village Work Group held public meetings that were noticed with public agendas. The same procedures were utilized for the I-94 Corridor Work Group. As the planning process proceeded it was not uncommon to have various stakeholders or members of the public attend the meetings. The meetings were primarily used to present staff research on various topics, as well as work sessions to discuss elements of the future land use plan of the Village Area. These meetings occurred at least monthly, but sometimes weekly, depending on the urgency and topic of discussion.

As the group continued working on formulating a land use plan for the Village Area, conducting public engagement was another important step in the process. With the support of staff, the Village Work Group facilitated the following larger public engagement efforts:

- 9/22/11 – Visual Preference Survey
- 3/29/12 – Village Planning Open House
- 9/20/12 – Village Planning Open House
- 2/25/13 – Public Hearing – Comprehensive Plan Amendment

In early 2013, the Planning Commission recommended approval of a final land use plan amendment specific to the Village Area as presented by the Work Group. This plan was reviewed and approved by the City Council on March 5, 2013 with minor modifications to text as proposed by the Work Group and as recommended by the Planning Commission

OTHER GENERAL ISSUES/FUTURE WORK: Since the adoption of the Village Land Use Plan, there have been specific actions taken by the City to implement several of the recommendations of the plan, including adoption of the VMX Zoning District Standards, approval of the Lake Elmo Design Standards and Manual, and approval of specific development projects within the Village Planning Area.

Other general comments concerning the land use plan:

- The creation of a village green is included as a major component of the land use plan. The plan does not address the size or a specific location for the green. The previous Council did not prioritize performing additional planning work for a Village green or acquiring land for a green.
- The Work Group did not discuss the financing mechanism associated with any of the proposed elements of the land use plan. It was understood that a financing plan for improvements would be needed depending on the type of work that was performed.
- The current downtown public infrastructure, streetscape, and drainage improvement project, although supported by the land use plan, was not a specific recommendation from the Work Group. This project was initiated by the County at the request of the City to accelerate the County's planned reconstruction of Lake Elmo Avenue with the City's desire to install sanitary sewer into the Village in 2015. The project management team for this project presented updates directly to the City Council. The City Council discussed and authorized a specific level of improvements to be included in the project late last year.
- The Work Group was involved with the work performed by Damon Farber to create the Lake Elmo Theming Study. The theming study was used as a basis for the proposed Lake Elmo and Village Area streetscape.
- In order to provide a template for its work and to help visualize the various land use options that it was considering, the Work Group developed an illustrative plan that was never intended to be adopted as a formal part of the City's Comprehensive Plan. This plan included details that helped the group consider different land use options, and to discuss what the implementation of the general land use plan would look like. Because it was illustrative and not a formal master plan, it included elements that were suggested by the group as options (i.e. a central pond area, ballfields, a new City Hall, a specific Village Green location and so forth), but that were clearly going to be subject to future discussion and review by the Planning Commission and Council. In order to implement any particular element depicted on the illustrative plan, including a village green, the City would need to undertake a planning process for this particular element. No such specific work has been performed to date outside of the Lake Elmo Avenue sewer, water, storm water, and streetscape project. As a visualization tool, the Work Group did not specifically address the financial implications of the illustrative plan.
- Staff has not been able to find the specific action that was taken by the Council to disband the Village Work Group; however, shortly after the City's adoption of the Village Land Use Plan, the City Council voted to end its work. The annual work plan for the Planning Department does include some specific elements that were included on the scope of work to be covered by the Village Work Group (including considering a form-based code), and the Council may want to revisit this work plan in light of the decision earlier this year to re-instate the Village Work Group.

RECOMMENDATION:

No action is being requested at this time.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Village Work Group Discussion Topics
2. Gantt Chart of Future Work