



NOTICE OF MEETING

**The Lake Elmo Planning Commission
Will hold a meeting on
Wednesday, March 16, 2005, 7:00 p.m. at
Lake Elmo City Hall
3800 Laverne Avenue North
Lake Elmo, MN 55042**

To discuss the Comprehensive Plan Modifications.

The public is invited to attend.

**City of Lake Elmo
Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes of March 16, 2005**

Chairman Helwig called to order the meeting of the Lake Elmo Planning Commission at 7:00 p.m.
COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Lyzenga, Deziel, Fliflet, Ptacek, Sessing, Armstrong, Schneider, Sedro and Roth. STAFF PRESENT: Planner Dillerud, Administrator Rafferty, Recording Secretary Schaffel.
ALSO PRESENT: Mayor Johnston and Councilmember Johnson.

The Planner explained new calendars for the comprehensive planning schedule. He said that staging will be a necessity because the City cannot go from the development pace today to full urbanization without it. Staffing, services, and infrastructure will need to grow to keep up with demand.

The Planner said the MOU is not the only document to be concerned with. Targets for the city are in the 2030 Regional Development Framework. There is also the Regional Water Resources Management Plan with forecasts for sewered units. That document is a draft but the target population is something the city should plan for.

The Planner said there are three elements in staging, how much-based on targets, when, and where. He said he would like to have a good idea tonight of a base-when, and an idea of where. He would also like to get an idea of how much-how fast. He said a side topic will be what we do with leftover units.

The Planner said there was a great deal wrong with the math in the tables from March 14. The new table is one way to approach the staging. He said those tables offer four possibilities from most conservative to most liberal in terms of development pace.

Very Back load

The Planner said this first option approaches targets in the three documents at the slowest possible pace. This option takes numbers out of the Water Resources Plan plus the 1,000 units between Cimarron and the existing Old Village. This option spreads the residential REC's beginning in 2007. Sewer will be unavailable to the Old Village until 2008. The plan escalates as time goes by making sure the City meets the residential and REC unit mark. The Planner said that the City is capable, with current staff, to do 150 new units per year.

Kind-of Back load

The Planner explained that this option places more development on the front, less in the middle, and less at the back. With this option, in the first ten years there is little more development than now. In the second ten years is more, and in the last ten years is less than in the Very Back load option.

Roughly Proportional

The Planner said this option offers a level approach without fits and starts. He said he left the total number of dwelling units and sewered units level throughout the period. South of 10th Street will be sharing units with the Old Village in early years, and then later sewered development South of 10th will predominate.

Front Load

The Planner said that south of 10th Street in particular, the City has an infrastructure issue to deal with before any development can take place. The city drilled a well and capped it in Eagle Point. Water storage facilities and a well house must be constructed before the City builds any sewered units south of 10th Street. Two ways to approach the financing are to bond or collect the cost from developers. A city needs to collect money at the front end of development with connection charges.

Commissioner Deziel asked if the infrastructure cost for water includes running lines.

The Planner said there is a truck oversizing credit to developers by the City in some cases, but the water

laterals will be constructed by the developers at their own expense.

The Planner said the sewer from the southwest is in the WONE Interceptor pipe. The city already has a sufficiently sized lift station. As development moves eastward, the city will pay oversizing credit. The amount of infrastructure the city will have to invest in for sewer is limited compared to water supply.

Commissioner Deziel said then that the carrying costs are only for oversizing and lift stations.

The Planner said the city will cost out the system and come back with the connection charges. He said the Met Council has a connection charge that pays for the downstream infrastructure already built.

Commissioner Roth asked how rapidly senior housing would need to be developed to be feasible for a developer south of 10th Street.

The Planner said the sort of project he has heard about might have 500-700 total units. A developer would probably need to turn around 150 per year.

Commissioner Deziel suggested that in-fill units the NC areas of the City could add units as well.

Commissioner Roth said, today with a population of about 8,000, about 25% live south of 10th. If you take the 16,000 south of 10th Street and 6,000 north of 10th Street, that community will govern everything. We should balance or stage it so it makes sense.

Commissioner Deziel said if the commission is sincere about rural character, we have to accept the density there and not spread it too far out. He is in favor of different areas, some combination with NC District.

The Planner said there may be 700 – 800 units to spread around with density of about four to five per acre.

Commissioner Sessing said he would like to see, in picture form, what it would look like if we started with three residential areas below 10th Street, band or buffer them, and increase densities per acre moving toward the freeway, and then see how many acres are remaining.

The Planner said he can give graphic examples on March 28.

Commissioner Sedro asked about a multi-storied long-term care facility for seniors.

The Planner said that the Plan loads up on 1 – 2 person condos or apartments, we will not meet our target population. If we overload with senior, there might also be reconsideration of how we handle REC unit targets by the Met Council.

Commissioner Deziel talked about R-30 density in another city. He said there is the ability to put townhomes into a small area without a unpleasant aesthetic outcome.

Commissioner Lyzenga said that through the process of trying to maintain rural character and urbanizing other areas we are dividing the City in two. She said with the population below 10th Street, the demand for retail services alone becomes enormous. She said the City will feel the backlash in the future.

Commissioner Armstrong said population is a legitimate concern but he does not see it as a long-term threat to the community. He said there are people who want to live in Lake Elmo but cannot afford it right now. There will still be pride in the community. He would like to see pictures of nice looking high density developments. He said there is one on Robert Street. He said we should be focusing density close to the freeway and staggering it out to protect existing neighborhoods. He said he wants to see the maps.

Commissioner Ptacek said there is too much burden south of 10th and there might be some give on OP density, especially on peripheries of the city and where it makes sense. He would like to see a combination of banding with 5/10 or 6/10 for OP density. He said the result is a somewhat balanced population north and south of 10th.

Commissioner Sedro said the commission needs to see where the available acres are, and how many are north and south of 10th. She reminded the commission that at the Old Village Planning Meetings, we didn't get past the 440 new population in the Old Village. We heard that senior housing was wanted in the Old Village. Old Village residents' acceptance of density was relative to the density of their own neighborhoods."

Commissioner Roth said that with 6,600 RECs, we still have additional capacity of 1,725 additional REC's post 2030. He would like to see more sewer capacity to the Old Village so we are not encroaching on the Open Space.

Chairman Helwig said the plan was for 440 new units in the Old Village, and the people wanted senior housing there. He said he is not proposing a larger community like south of 10th but rather condensed housing that would pick up a few more units.

The Planner reminded the commission that the sewer reserved for the Old Village in the MOU is 500 new and 500 existing. There may not be 500 existing. Those hooking up at less than 3 units per acre will not be credited. He said the primary goal is to make sure the comprehensive plan accommodates the necessary numbers.

Commissioner Deziel said if we wanted to tweak OP, we could go back to one-half acre lots and you get 6/10 density. One half acre would still have the same amount of open space and we would increase housing by 50%. We could pick up population there.

Commissioner Armstrong said his idea of OP density is not eliminating open space. One reason the OP code was put up to ¾ acre lots was individual septic systems. He has no problem with one-half acre lots with community sewer treatment.

Chairman Helwig asked about the financial responsibilities for a sewer line to the Old Village.

The Planner said we should do the Old Village early because we have major infrastructure already in place there – public water.

Commissioner Deziel said there is another way to look at front/back loading. The densest area might develop first with less cost to the city and with less dust to the neighbors. In terms of space, it would be equal, but with REC it is somewhat front loaded and recovers costs allowing larger buildings to be built first. That would be smoother than working up to the highest density.

Commissioner Sedro said she agrees with highest density first but a chunk up front could cause a panic.

Commissioner Armstrong does not need to see water and sewer plans. He said that you must never over-commit in an agreement/plan. We are obligated to meet the 2030 Blueprint. The Comprehensive Plan is a document that financial decisions are being made upon. He said he would rather have a situation where the tail does not wag the dog. Back loading allows a developer to come forward with a good plan and the city can cherry-pick the best of them so we are not forced to accept bad development. We can always speed it up but never slow it down. The city should commit to the minimum and stay in the driver seat. We can receive units sooner than the comp plan specifies. That simplifies the discussion. Planning for twenty-five years cannot be done in next three weeks.

Chairman Helwig said those were good points but how do we pay for the services? If we front load heavy

we have to pay contract services and city costs go up, and those dollars are not recoverable. Water, sewer, and contract services are healthy chunks of money.

Commissioner Armstrong said we don't have to worry about financing a water tower if we commit to the minimum now. Then new projects help to finance the water improvements. A plan must be good enough, and let developers prove it to us. Meanwhile we commit to the minimum to retain control.

Commissioner Fliflet agreed. She said if we need to pay for something than we have to accelerate development.

Commissioner Armstrong said small, piecemeal projects will kill us.

Commissioner Sessing said most important is minimum density south of 10th Street and to protect existing residents.

Commissioner Schneider agrees we should commit to the minimum.

Commissioner Ptacek said we should be directing some attention to downtown. Fix the sidewalks, and do some of the work we have planned.

The commission indicated a preference for the second option for back loading by straw vote.

Commissioner Lyzenga agreed with Commissioner Armstrong. She said it puts pressure on the developer for quality and for funds.

Commissioner Sedro said if we leave it up to developers, it could end up not fitting. She asked if we can band out the development without commitment to the Met Council.

The Planner said we can.

Commissioner Deziel agreed that we can speed up development when we need it financially, then go slower. He said the wisest thing is not forcing more than we have to. If back loading it can make it more financially opportune then we should go with it.

The Planner summarized that if a proposal is feasible and attractive from the city perspective, and it fits our land use plan, we could look at accelerating the schedule. If there is a focus for first development, the Old Village should get precedence based on the years of effort already invested in that plan.

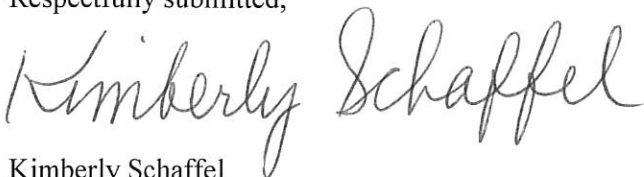
Commissioner Ptacek said if the developers come with a good plan and density is higher, we could and should consider a well done project in the Old Village.

Chairman Helwig said that would be a tough sell because those residents were definite about the number of new units.

Commissioner Deziel said that sharing the burden is part of this too.

Adjourn at 8:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kimberly Schaffel
Recording Secretary