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Lake Elmo Planning Commission
MEETING NOTICE
Monday, August 22, 2005, 7:00 p.m.



In
Council Chambers
City Hall
3800 Laverne Avenue North
Lake Elmo, Minnesota 55042



AGENDA

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Agenda
3. Minutes
4. RE Preliminary Plat – PARK MEADOWS (Continued)
5. Trails System Plan – Joint Workshop with Parks Commission (**Bring Your Copy**)
6. City Council Update
7. Adjourn

**City of Lake Elmo
Planning and Parks Commission Meeting
Minutes of August 22, 2005**

Chairman Helwig called to order the meeting of the Lake Elmo Planning Commission at 7:00 p.m. PLANNING COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Deziel, Van Zandt, Armstrong, Sedro, Schneider, Roth, and Fliflet. PARKS COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairman Bob Schumacher, Steele, Larson, Blackford, Watters, Bruchu, Ames, Heroff, and Wagner. ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Van Wormer Van Wormer and Chris Behringer, Consultants with S E H. STAFF PRESENT: Planner Dillerud, Parks Superintendent Bouthilet, Administrator Rafferty, and Recording Secretary Schaffel.

Agenda

Parks Commission will resume the meeting independently with Miscellaneous Items after the Planning Commission adjourns. Add as Item No. 8.

M/S/P, Sedro/Roth, To approve the Agenda as amended. VOTE: 8:0.

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Commissioner Schneider - Change Page 5, towards bottom, roadway width, not width of right of way.

M/S/P, Sedro/Van Zandt, To approve the Minutes of July 25, 2005 as amended.

**Comprehensive Plan Amendment, Rezoning, and RE Preliminary Plat -
PARK MEADOWS**

M/S/P, Deziel/Armstrong, To take from the Table the application of J.P. Bush Homes for PARK MEADOWS.

The Planner reminded the Commission this preliminary plat application for eight RE lots was tabled due to an access problem. Easement documents have been submitted to the city for public right of way access. The road alignment will have to be changed to create a 90 degree access. The lot sizes are compliant with the Code. The City Engineer finds the preliminary plat acceptable with minor changes. Staff recommends approval conditional upon compliance with recommendations of the City Engineer, City Attorney, and Valley Branch Watershed District.

Joe Bush, Applicant

Joe Bush said his business is headquartered in downtown Lake Elmo. This subdivision will be a nice addition to the park and the city. He said he has worked closely with staff and the City Engineer, and asked for the Planning Commission's recommendation for approval.

M/S/P, Roth/Deziel, To recommend approval of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment, Rezoning, and RE preliminary plat for PARK MEADOWS subject to the first three conditions in the staff report and upon compliance with the City Attorney, City Engineer, and Valley Branch Watershed District that the City Engineer finds applicable and practical. VOTE: 8:0.

Trails System Plan

On July 11, 2005, a public hearing was held to add the Draft Trails System Plan as a Comprehensive Plan Amendment. The Planning Commission tabled discussion for review in a joint workshop with the Parks Commission.

The Planner identified several items that were concerns from that meeting. Trail graphics were removed that showed links to Sunfish Lake Park. There was concern for paving trails within Sunfish Park. Trails on the map for off-road, on-road, and private segments along with the Legend might not have enough detail of what they mean for specific trails. A trail segment from 20th to 30th Street on Lisbon Court was moved to Legion Avenue and both were of those options were objected to by the neighbors. New trails in existing neighborhoods then became a concern. There was also concern that certain private trails within Lake Elmo Planning and Parks Commission Workshop Minutes of August 22, 2005

OP developments would become public. The Planner said the reason for converting private trails into public trails is to create an interlocking trail system available to the public. He said that staff would like to see the project move forward. Any major changes would slow its forward momentum.

Parks Chairman Schumacher explained that the Trails System Plan is a working document. The Parks Commission reviewed the old Trails Plans and did not like them. The Parks Commission hired consultants to create this document that links the city. Sunfish Park was endorsed as a destination for walkers and bikers but not a highway. The Parks Commission never specified uses for the trails. The trails would be limited to non-motorized, pedestrian, and equestrian uses. There is no plan to place trails next to a house where a resident does not want it. This is a plan that will guide development of trails.

Commissioner Schneider asked how the Parks Commission plans to protect Sunfish Trails. Chairman Schumacher said by keeping the trail as wood chips and limiting the number of entrances.

Commissioner Sedro asked if people could bike right to the edge of Sunfish. Commissioner Blackford said the trail itself was not removed, their motion was to eliminate the graphical depiction of the trails leading to Sunfish Park.

Commissioner Armstrong said it is difficult corresponding designations of trails on the maps - existing trails and on and off-road trails. He said the presumption for an on-road trail is a paved section nine or ten feet wide near the existing roadway.

Glen Van Wormer, Consultant with Short, Elliot, Hendrickson

Mr. Van Wormer said that off-road systems can be parallel with the street or through adjacent areas. North of Sunfish there is Hamlet where there are some segments parallel to the road and some that drift away from it.

Commissioner Armstrong said he would like to see a separate designation for proposed routes on private property.

Commissioner Roth pointed out the commissioners were reviewing two different maps. Mr. Van Wormer said many revisions were performed between those two draft dates.

Commissioner Roth asked about proposed bike routes. Mr. Van Wormer said bike routes are on-road trails – for example in the Legion area, the route is simply the use of the street in front of those houses. Bicycles indicate paved trails.

Commissioner Schneider said he wants a map that is not confusing. He cannot make a recommendation for what has been presented.

Mr. Van Wormer clarified that a trail is always off the road and a route is always on the road.

Commissioner Fliflet said if this plan is not going to be implemented for a long time, the intent should be extremely clear so people understand it ten years from now.

Mr. Van Wormer said one consideration in putting together a Concept Plan is to have enough documentation for what it is based on. There is a great deal of foundation here. It is extremely difficult to put a plan together with great detail because development will have input and Planning and Parks Commissions will have input in the future.

Commissioner Van Zandt said he thought this meeting was to determine whether to endorse a complete Trails Plan, after that we would then move forward to understanding it in better detail. He thought this was a partnership between the Planning Commission and Parks Commission. There is a true gas shortage and this is a plan for the future.

The Planner said without the benefit of this plan, we do not know where to place a trail when developers come. The trail in the FARMS is not precisely where indicated on the map but it is near it. Without this document, we would not know where to place those trails. He suggested the Legend could better explain between routes and trails.

Commissioner Deziel asked about some dead ends of trails. Mr. Van Wormer explained that the stubs show neighborhoods of origin. Trails enter the system from those stubs. He said residential neighborhood to residential is not an important destination. The trails indicated here have destinations that are more important. The Planner explained that there is economy in drafting a plan this way. Mr. Van Wormer said loops can be put in when there are no real destinations. The maps do not provide the most important information. The verbiage is what people should be looking at if they want to know the trail system.

The Planner explained that each new development pays at least 7% in park dedication fee. Those past trails have been done piecemeal until this plan. Last month the city worked with developers on the northeast portion of the city for a very nice trail. That trail segment is a deadend at this time because other parcels have not yet developed. When those parcels become available, the trail will have a link.

Commissioner Fliflet thought the trail segment leading to the high school was a deficiency in the plan.

The plan shows links to other cities. Mr. Van Wormer said the plan takes advantage of trails already constructed in other cities. Commissioner Wagner said residents can go to Woodbury and use their trails.

Commissioner Fliflet agreed with what Commissioner Pelletier wrote that the segment at Jamaca and Highway 5 is crossing four lanes, and that cannot be done safely. Chairman Schumacher said that getting people across Highway 5 is a hazard except where there are traffic lights.

Commissioner Ames asked if there is general support for a Trails Plan for the city. A Straw Poll revealed 7:1 (Schneider) in favor of the concept.

Commissioner Sedro asked about signalization. The Planner said that intersection is also the point where the railroad goes over a bridge so it is a better location for a trail.

Commissioner Armstrong said he does not want to see wholesale seizure of private trails within the city. He said language should be placed in the plan to say we do not endorse that. If a HOA agrees to a trail, then we should take over the trail.

Rolf said he lives in FIELDS. Negotiation is what determines what portion of a trail becomes public. The Planner said the city repairs and maintains trails and absorbs the liability. He said he sees dividing trails into little sections as being problematic. Commissioner Larson pointed out that page 22 indicates different specifications for different types of trails. Not all trails need to be 12 feet wide, some can be 8 feet, signage helps too. People going between destinations have an established route. City signage and construction helps people sort their routes.

Commissioner Steele asked where the city stands for designating trails through existing neighborhoods. The Commission agreed we can anticipate problems in existing neighborhoods. Mr. Van Wormer said there are only about one-half dozen areas like that. Some areas are semi-developed. They tried not to get too intrusive onto private property.

M/S/P, Armstrong/Schneider, To recommend that the language in the plan be changed to add that the City will engage in the process for voluntary transfers for access rights for existing private trails and not use eminent domain powers to acquire access for trails not adjacent to existing roadways.

Commissioner Armstrong said we should start with our existing street system and go from there. Commissioner Schneider said the neighbors on Legion would be representative of what we can expect from neighbors everywhere. Commissioners Deziel and Roth said the city council would do the right
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thing; they would come to terms. They do not want to limit the council's ability to take actions in the future. Commissioner Fliflet said HOAs should be properly approached with the idea, and most will probably agree.

Commissioner Blackford said the city has easements through Hamlet designated as trails. Commissioner Schneider said those easements are very unclear in his neighborhood.

Mr. Van Wormer said these questions can be successfully addressed. There is an implementation section offering parallel routes. Some routes will be negotiated where others are a problem. Implementation and prioritization come later. The plan is a concept that can be modified if you begin to run into problems.

Administrator Rafferty recommended the Legend be changed. He said people think these trails are automatically going to be placed where they are on these maps, and that makes them unclear.

Commissioner Steele said the timeline for implementation of this plan is 20 to 30 years. Forestalling now would not be good. In the future we can have those dialogs with those neighbors.

Commissioner Armstrong said language in the Prioritizing section says we are going to get going right away. That is what scares him and makes him want to protect the rights of existing residents.

VOTE: 5:3, Nay: Deziel, Van Zandt, Roth.

Commissioner Fliflet asked if public hearings are held every time a trail is created or acquired. The Planner said no. Commissioner Deziel said public hearings are held for every new development.

Administrator Rafferty reminded the Planning Commission that the Parks Commission held an Open House that was well advertised and marketed with attendant representation from most neighborhoods who then commented. He said comments were well received. Superintendent Bouthilet said he heard lots of comments from the neighbors around Legion and there was serious misinformation about that trail segment that he then corrected.

Chairman Schumacher said the Parks Commission represents the entire city and they represent the Planning Commissioners too. Parks is a very cautious commission.

City Council Updates

The Planner said the council tabled the amended OP Concept for Deer Glen after they asked for a different design better incorporating the four new lots on the north segment of the parcel. Discover Crossing removed the stamped portion of road, the bridge stayed, and lighting came out. They approved the variance to move the historic farm building. They adopted the Comprehensive Plan as recommended by the Planning Commission with the omission of "*sub recuso*" and directed staff to submit it to Met Council and surrounding communities.

The Planning Commission adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Schaffel
Recording Secretary