

**City of Lake Elmo  
Planning Commission Meeting  
Minutes of September 12, 2011**

Chairman Van Zandt called to order the meeting of the Lake Elmo Planning Commission at 6:38 p.m. COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Bidon, Fliflet, Hall, Haggard, Obermueller, Van Zandt and Ziertman. Absent: Pelletier and Williams. STAFF PRESENT: Planning Director Klatt and Planner Matzek.

**Business Item - Discussion of Accessory Building and Exterior Storage Ordinance with Exterior Storage Work Group.**

Planning Director Klatt stated that this workshop requires no formal action by the group, but offers a chance for the commission and staff to dialogue regarding potential changes to the applicable ordinances. He said the members of the commission's subcommittee are Chairman Van Zandt and Commissioners Hall, Fliflet and Ziertman. He said it is difficult to enforce the exterior storage ordinance as the rule is consistently broken throughout the City and in some cases does not make sense. For example a small camper or ATV technically needs to be against the rear property line where nothing is allowed to be built. Instead, people typically keep those items next to the garage or in the front yard. Planning Director Klatt suggested having a public hearing or town hall meeting as this ordinance impacts many residents.

Chairman Van Zandt said lakeshore lots have their own storage challenges like having odd configurations, being heavily wooded or having steep slopes.

Commissioner Haggard asked if new buildings in the Village Area or the future sewer areas along I-94 would have more restrictive covenants.

Planning Director Klatt said our current regulations do not decipher between lot sizes, so the exterior storage location is the same for a ten acre lot as it is for a 1/5 acre lot.

Commissioner Ziertman suggested having seasonal allowances as snowmobile trailers are not typically able to be stored along rear property lines because of large snow volumes. She agreed there should be different requirements based on zoning districts.

Chairman Van Zandt suggested that screening be a consideration in storage location.

Commissioner Fliflet suggested looking at existing neighborhood association language as an example.

Planner Matzek pointed out that there is a variety of lot sizes within a zoning district.

Commissioner Obermueller suggested that some people avoid associations when buying a home as they do not want the additional restrictions.

Planning Director Klatt asked the group what is it the code should accomplish – is it to protect views, combat health and safety hazards or to protect neighboring property values.

Commissioner Fliflet said the City should adopt a strict code and hold itself to a higher standard. She said she doesn't believe anyone has a right to do something that adversely affects their neighbor. She suggested the City allow a resident to drop something off for free instead of charging them.

Chairman Van Zandt thought the side yard might be okay for storage.

Commissioner Hall said he is in favor of allowing exceptions by permit in unique situations.

Commissioner Ziertman said lakeshore lots should be separated as they are often small, but have boats.

Commissioner Haggard suggested limiting the number of trailers and boats allowed.

Planning Director Klatt said Section 154.001 lists what items do not need to be screened. He asked the commission if that list was still okay in all districts.

Commissioner Ziertman pointed out that it says “prohibited without screening” but should say “allowed without screening.”

Commissioner Fliflet said she thinks people could park items if they were covered, but feels differently about larger items like RVs and large boats. She thinks the number of items stored outside should be regulated and should vary depending on lot size.

Commissioner Ziertman suggested putting the 25 foot limit back into the code and thinks there should be a limited number of items stored outside.

Planning Director Klatt asked where in the yard the items should be allowed to be stored.

Commissioners Hall and Haggard stated they were in favor of allowing storage in the side yard.

Commissioner Ziertman said she would like to see the setback to be 10 feet, from the 5 suggested.

Commissioner Ziertman said for larger lots, the side yard may not be the best location. She suggested that if an item is being stored 300 feet from a property line, it should not have to also be screened.

Commissioner Fliflet said if the item is being stored near an accessory building or home that would be okay. She suggested “recreational vehicles defined” should read

“recreational vehicles and accessory equipment defined.” She suggested changing “storage location surfaces” to “storage and accessory equipment location surfaces.”

Commissioners Fliflet and Ziertman thought it was too restrictive to say an item must be on a surface free from weeds or other vegetative growth.

Planning Director Klatt said if something is stored in one place it will kill the grass underneath and may increase runoff.

Commissioner Ziertman suggested adding “free from weeds” and eliminate “vegetative growth.” She suggested identifying the area must be “free from tall grass and weeds.”

Commissioner Haggard asked if at the bottom of page four, the 20 foot reference should be changed to 25 to be consistent.

Commissioner Fliflet suggested on page five, that residents should have 48 hours instead of 24 hours for the storage of a recreational vehicle for loading and unloading purposes.

Planning Director Klatt said he would like to bring this back to the work group again and not the entire commission just yet.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelli Matzek  
Planner