

Lake Elmo Special Agenda Item

Executive Summary

*Title of Item:* **2007 City Work Plan Items**

*Meeting Date:* **2-13-07**

*Staff/Guest Reporting:* **Ben Gozola, City Planner**

***Summary:*** At the beginning of every year, it is important for the City Council and Planning Commission to establish a list of priority areas for the City to address over the course of the coming year. For 2007, the issues surrounding the comprehensive plan and zoning code rewrites will dominate staff's time in the short term. However, this work plan will dictate where the City focuses its resources as issues are addressed. In January, the Planning Commission was provided with a list of issues to consider and was asked to give thought to other areas they deemed important. Formal establishment of a work plan was delayed until this special joint meeting.

***Suggested Issues:*** Given my short time with the City to date, I certainly am not an expert on all of the issues the City deems important to address. However, as an independent observer of issues I've seen since my arrival, I would suggest the following be given strong consideration:

- **Zoning map update:** As indicated by John Shardlow at the joint training session on February 1<sup>st</sup>, it is very important for the City to have an up-to-date zoning map current with all approved ordinances. Current the City does not have such a document. It is our understanding that the most reliable zoning map available is currently dated 1995. As a high priority, even during the current comp plan and zoning efforts, we would suggest staff dedicate time to research all zoning changes dating back to 1995, and incorporate such into a new map. Upon final adoption of all amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, staff would also suggest the City adopt an ordinance to officially rezone all parcels within the City to an agreed upon official zoning map. While this will likely mean few (if any) changes to parcels, it will establish an air-tight up-to-date zoning map that cannot be challenged.
- **Sign Ordinance:** On February 6<sup>th</sup>, Council adopted a moratorium on billboard sign changes in the City of Lake Elmo. During this year long moratorium, staff will bring issues forward for consideration by the commission and Council in an effort to modernize the ordinance to ensure that recent changes in technology are implemented only as

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deemed appropriate by the City of Lake Elmo. Because the moratorium has already been adopted, this is already a component of the 2007 work plan.

- Sexually Oriented Businesses Ordinance: It is our understanding that this issue has been examined in the past by the City, but no official controls have yet been adopted. Staff would suggest adopting a moratorium on such uses, and making this a priority item to complete in 2007.
- Interim Use Permits: Of all items discussed at the February 1<sup>st</sup> work shop, interim use permits seemed to receive the most positive reception from those present. Crafting an ordinance to allow Lake Elmo to grant such permits can certainly be a priority in 2007.
- Conditional Use Permits: Concurrent with work on an interim use permit ordinance, staff would also suggest the City take the opportunity to revise the conditional use permit regulations within code. Specifically, the City should establish a specific set of criteria to examine for all uses in the City deemed conditionally permitted along with its general list of criteria for all such uses.
- Non Comprehensive Plan Sensitive Zoning districts (by priority): The City has spent a considerable amount of time and money on examining changes to all zoning districts within the City including those not prioritized by the comprehensive plan update and changes dictated by the Metropolitan Council. This work should not be discarded, and should be reexamined once the deadlines for priority zoning districts have been met. Staff would suggest such areas be prioritized by need (i.e. which districts are generating substantial variance requests indicating the regulations need to be examined?).
- Zoning code recodification: The official zoning code for the City of Lake Elmo is currently littered with crossed out sections of text, and ordinances inserted directly into the Code book. Staff's biggest concern is that interpretation of requirements is difficult at best for both staff and for the public. Future zoning text amendments are also made more challenging as staff can only do our best using the information available to suggest which sections should be repealed. As we become more familiar with the code and the history of changes, we will be better prepared to suggest the best way to approach this issue.

Other items that were placed before the Planning Commission for consideration in January included:

- Home Occupations
- 2007 – 2011 CIP

- (cont.)
- Outdoor Lighting Standards
  - Street Design Standards

**Recommendation:** Discuss the variety of issues and establish a list of City Priorities.