



**City of Lake Elmo Planning Commission  
Meeting  
City Council Chambers – 3800 Laverne  
Avenue North  
Minutes of Regular Meeting of  
January 23, 2023**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Commission Chair Risner called to order the meeting of the Lake Elmo Planning Commission at 7:00 p.m.

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Risner, Rehkamp, Steil, Vrieze

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:**

**STAFF PRESENT:** City Planner Sophia Jensen

**Pledge of Allegiance** at 7:00 PM

**Approve Agenda:**

M/S/P: Vrieze / Steil: made a motion to approve the agenda. **Vote: 4-0, motion carried unanimously**

**Approve Minutes:**

M/S/P: Steil / Rehkamp made a motion to approve the 1-9-23 meeting minutes. **Vote: 4-0, motion carried unanimously.**

**Public Hearing:**

a)Text Amendment- Landscaping Ordinance. The City of Lake Elmo has initiated a zoning text amendment to amend the landscape requirements section of Article VIII Environmental Performance Standards.

As the City continues to develop and uses of different intensities develop side by side the City should review its standards for mitigating the impacts of a more intense use on a less intense use. One of the ways cities do this is through landscaping standards. At the September 13, 2022 workshop, the City Council directed staff to bring back to workshop screening standards that would address current concerns and add clarity to the code requirements.

At the December 13th 2022 workshop, the City Council reviewed the proposed amendments to the landscaping provisions related to screening, top soil, water, and other previously identified revisions that would aid in executing the ordinance. Council directed staff to bring forward the items related to screening for a public hearing while holding off on the top soil and watering provisions until further review is completed. The proposed amendments have also been reviewed by the City's Landscape Architect.

Revising the landscape ordinance is an item within the Planning Commission work plan for 2023.

City Planner Jensen gave presentation and answered questions.

M/S/P: Steil / Vrieze moved to open the public hearing at 7:21 PM. **Vote: 4-0, motion carried unanimously.**

No response from the public

M/S/P: Rehkamp / Steil moved to close the public hearing at 7:22 PM. **Vote: 4-0, motion carried unanimously.**

M/S/P: Steil / Vrieze moved to recommend to deny adoption of the proposed text amendment, amending the landscape provisions in Section 105.12.480 Landscape Requirements as presented **Vote: 4-0, motion carried.**

During discussion, Commissioner Steil commented that he thinks this is a good start, but it needs to be more specific to what the Planning Commission is looking for, regarding tables, and more clear-cut examples to prevent future problems any new development as this is too vague.

Commissioner Vrieze stated that the elevation requirement, the tree preservation portion and the parking lot screening is appreciated. He stated that he wants to see is having a define table showing the difference of the landscaping requirements between each zoning uses, and define “screening from above” or strike that from the language, as it is too ambiguous.

Commissioner Rehkamp concurs with Steil and Vrieze, and stated that he wants a table that addresses adjoining land-use, how it zoned and the implications of elevation and what it looks like for adjoining properties.

Commissioner Chair Risner stated that he is in agreement with much of the language, but stated that there needs to be a better definition between zones. He asked the commissioners to be very specific on facts and findings to be presented to the City Council, potentially going thru each section.

Commissioner Vrieze agrees with Risner regarding the green text is fine, but the orange text needs to be more definitive. For #6, he would like to see a defined table showing what the screen requirements are for each specific uses, and each zoning district and the definition of elevation of adjacent properties.

Commissioner Steil wants the tree height, and who determines what height is needed per each project to be more defined.

Commissioner Chair Risner doesn’t think the parking lot screening requirement decision should be left up to the Planning Director as it leave too much subjugation. He believes that sentence in item #5 “whereupon this requirement may be waived by the Planning Director” should be removed and that the applicant should have to apply for a variance.

#### **New/Unfinished Business**

N/A

#### **Communications/Updates - City Council Updates**

- a) City Council Updates
  - i. Impervious Surface Text Amendment – 1/17/2023 was approved
  - ii. Conditional Use Permit – Upper 33rd St – 1/17/2023 was approved

#### **Upcoming Meetings**

- a) February 13, 2023
- b) Joint Session with City Council on February 15<sup>th</sup> 2023
- c) February 27, 2023

Meeting adjourned at 7:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Wendt  
Permit Technician