



City of Lake Elmo

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3800 Laverne Avenue North / Lake Elmo, MN 55042

NOTICE OF MEETING

LAKE ELMO CITY COUNCIL JOINT WORKSHOP
OLD VILLAGE SPECIAL PROJECTS PLANNING
COMMISSION

OLD VILLAGE NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN WORK

MONDAY, JULY 21, 2003

7:00 P.M.

**LAKE ELMO CITY HALL
3800 LAVERNE AVENUE NORTH
LAKE ELMO, MINNESOTA**

MEETING NOTICE

**A Special Meeting of the
Lake Elmo**

**Old Village Special Projects
Planning Commission**

Will be held on Monday, July 21, 2003 at 7:00 p.m.

In Council Chambers,
Lake Elmo City Hall
3800 Laverne Ave. N.
Lake Elmo, MN 55042

7-21

City of Lake Elmo
CITY COUNCIL/OLD VILLAGE PLANNING COMMISSION
Workshop Minutes of July 21, 2003

Mayor Hunt called to order the Workshop for the Old Village Neighborhood Design Study at 7:00 p.m.
COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT: JOHNSTON, DeLAPP, SIEDOW; OLD VILLAGE PLANNING COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Helwig, Berg, Sessing, Pelletier, Bunn, Johnson, Williams, John, Bucheck (7:03), Herreid (7:25). STAFF PRESENT: City Planner Chuck Dillerud and Kimberly Schaffel, Recording Secretary.

Mayor Hunt explained that this is an informal workshop to let people know what is going on, and to keep the process open. The Old Village Special Projects Planning Commission came up with what they wish to bring to the Public Hearing for land use decisions.

A map displayed was color coded. Councilmember DeLapp explained what it meant. The purpose tonight is to come up with what each area within the mapped area will become in terms of land use. Ball fields separate the new area of development. The lumberyard is the barrier of separation.

Councilmember Johnston thought the Old Village Special Projects Planning Commission did an excellent job. He has heard some interface problem/concerns of outer edge residents of what it is going to be like after development occurs. The City should include developers in the planning process. The total number of units are 400 already. If the City starts asking for loads of other things; that will require additional incentives for developers. There are septic location and configuration concerns. We ought to proceed with the concept but involve developers and landowners. He seriously doubts it can be done with the total housing numbers as low as they are being discussed.

Councilmember Siedow said the TDR concept is unattractive to Old Village residents. They would like to see open space around them. What will it cost to hook up to sewers? That is the only benefit to many of the people he spoke to. Businesses in the Old Village would not be supported without a lot of homes. This plan is intrusive on the Old Village. This changes their neighborhood, and does it rapidly. Senior housing close to a railroad and lumberyard does not make good sense. Traffic will become a problem in the Old Village. They would like the public buildings to stay north of Highway 5. He recognizes the benefits of a new storm water drainage plan.

Mayor Hunt asked about compromising by putting in some green space in between existing residents and new development. Highway 5 has to be taken care of. Recognizing that things are changing, they should be done in an orderly, planned fashion. Is the land use layout a breaking point?

The Planner said the park on the south could be extended northward. Housing could be moved further eastward. However, if you go too far east, you end up with wastewater treatment in the center.

Councilmember DeLapp asked what areas will be park, senior, retail, and residential? The City Planner said he never spoke about anything other than residential. A Concept Plan for commercial development that was recently tabled, responded to this plan.

Councilmember Johnston said the commercial area up north appears like a great wall. We should be able to come up with something that works best for everyone.

Mayor Hunt said some of those residents came to the workshops.

~~Commissioner Bunn said there must be maximum flexibility within these zones. All of the development could be done anywhere within the zone. The performance part of it is that you get more of a buffer. With that new direction, it does not require us to talk about densities.~~

Commissioner Ptacek said the Planner did an excellent job of summarizing the plan and identifying the major issues. Why did we move to Lake Elmo? It is spread out, there is low traffic. Why isn't Lake Elmo like Oakdale and Woodbury? Not by accident. Councils and Planning Commissions in the past planned it this way. These are patterns of development, zoning. Not because of high pressure developers. Past Planning Commissions and councils have worked very hard to keep Lake Elmo the way it is now. The message is, "If you move here, you will follow our rules." We need to keep those housing numbers down to no more than 440.

The Planner said we have a net developable area within that mapped area and the standard with the current zoning and the architect's suggestion of incentive for TDR. Most of the Planning Commission is not that wild about it. The basis for 440 has little to do with traffic, school, water, or sewer system impacts. If we had time and resources, that would be the thing to do. We have neither.

Councilmember DeLapp said if we allow forty units and expect developers to build apartments, why would they when they can sell 5-bedroom homes?

The Planner said we could potentially measure those impacts but that is expensive and time-consuming. If we have the quantitative backgrounds we could do one or the other.

Commissioner Williams said we can control housing units but not population.

Commissioner John said he came to Lake Elmo because there happened to be a house for rent on a lake. The main reason they stayed was because their kids were in the school district. He came from a terraced home with a small garden, and did very well with it. If we are too hard-nosed about the numbers, we may lose what we have. The dentist is moving to Oakdale. The reaction from businesses is that Lake Elmo is difficult to deal with. When we set up requirements and restrictions, we may be depriving ourselves of the long-term opportunities afforded by more flexibility.

Commissioner Pelletier moved here and became part of the Planning Commission because of a new, rural development. Newcomers don't want newer comers. There are two sides to it. She heard from residents that the neighborhood plan is the best part. Hold developers to the plan. There is not enough area for business to spread it out to the north of Highway 5. Mix the land use in the Old Village.

Commissioner Bucheck moved here because it was rural and a small town. She felt safe here. We are currently allowed 366 units. She thinks 400 is generous and 440 is too liberal.

Commissioner Sedro does not live in the Old Village, but would like to help with the decision making. In the two groups she heard at two forums, density was not the biggest concern but it was a concern. The biggest concern was providing affordable and senior housing.

Mayor Hunt said at the two public forums one was attended by about 100 people, the second by about 125. There were many new residents at the second forum, about 50% of the total attending. That makes about 140 residents that appeared to live in the Old Village. There are about 330 households in the Old Village. A Concept Plan was drawn up about 10 years ago to get things started. We showed it to business owners and residents. In 1995, The Minnesota Design Team came in, they gave us suggestions for the Old Village, Open Space Preservation, and the freeway. That was successful and pretty widely accepted. They didn't get into specific land use layouts. Then we became the Village Commission. Then we contracted the Calthorpe Study. They thought it was good to have walkable area. In South Minneapolis where he grew up, there were four grocery stores that were walkable. Do we wish to be like every other suburb? No, we don't want to look like everywhere else. If we put hamlets everywhere, we have to drive everywhere. The differences are about scale and the placement of buffers.

Commissioner Bunn said that currently in our Comprehensive Plan, we are shooting for 13,000 population by the year 2020 or 4,200 households total. The majority of Planning Commissioners want a cap on the number of households. They are very sensitive to that. Overall numbers are worth it when we look at the goal for the future. The Old Village is a very special situation because of green space, life

cycle housing, affordability, walkable area, trails, etc. If we have 300 million people, we might get more of our amenities. Yes, we have to have limits. When and how do we do it? Implicit in the numbers is the zoning, there will be a range of units possible. Maybe the zoning consultant could firm that up for us. Maybe there is a table that could be created. Then we know what numbers we are actually dealing with here. There is lack of sufficient knowledge on the cost side, and too little on the zoning process where it is going as far as numbers are concerned. Boundaries are imposed by the zoning. That is the understanding we get from the consultant.

Mayor Hunt said that August 25 is the goal date for the Public Hearing. We would get definitive input at that meeting. At least the Old Village should get notified in his opinion.

Councilmember DeLapp said if there are surprises, we don't have time for another hearing. We have to be sure we have our ears open in the meantime.

Commissioner Bunn said her sense is that there is no dedicated location for city hall, a transit hub, a library, etc. Lead that process and be ready to answer those questions.

Councilmember Siedow said with where his house is located, he wants to know where all this development is going.

Commissioner John said Commissioner Bunn summarized it very well. Historically the old plan caused problems because of the total numbers and the surface water drainage. The passage of time has allowed us to see ways of managing septic and surface water drainage. There is now an opportunity to pull this together to solve the problems we have known about for many years.

Mayor Hunt said we looked at problems like those in 1990. It was overwhelming to that council, the issue was too large. We chose to leave that problem alone.

Commissioner Sessing said that Old Village residents want a buffer zone. Double the size of the Old Village and Lake Elmo changes; it is no longer rural. You have to do some overlay districts, and some plan for storm and wastewater. Give the developers some flexibility. Give some ranges and direction but maintain flexibility. In order to have everything work out, there must also be caps for density. We don't know what that number is going to be yet. Let's wait for the facts to make that decision.

Councilmember Johnston reminded everyone about cluster development, that there was an uproar ten years ago. In that time period, we have learned a lot. It can be an asset to the City if we do this right. Everyone is 90% together. Developers have something to contribute and we should actively include them in the planning process.

Mayor Hunt said nobody says we should not be doing planning.

The Planner said commercial zoning would be shown separately. Show the storm water drainage feature and it would be best if we showed wastewater treatment. You want to officially map the public stuff. There are no rights to the City but right of first refusal. Districting would result from the land use map. The spin is we don't know what our districting will be. Lane Kendig suggested to the Planning Commission that we implement the plan for adoption and wait for our zoning ordinance. The timing won't match. It will be at least two more months.

Mayor Hunt said there will be a Public Hearing, the Comprehensive Plan Amendment, and the Met Council who may not say anything about it until we settle with them. That may buy us the time. Let's say the Met Council passes it but we don't have all the zoning controls. Will there be plats and plans?

The Planner said that zoning will be based on current zoning.

Councilmember DeLapp said that contiguous development is not impacting negatively on others. If we put twenty shops with 20 apartments just east of Lake Elmo Hardwood, it would allow people to walk and

have access to existing businesses. If we create a barbell of two businesses, they have to get in their cars to drive to them.

Councilmember Siedow said the plan makes it more convenient for new homes, and less for the old homes.

Councilmember DeLapp said the existing businesses want it near them.

Councilmember Siedow said Old Village residents should get something out of it. TDR will be all around them, instead of Open Space. Business owners feel exactly the opposite of residents.

Commissioner Berg said there will be more detail than we need to get into. If we bring in more owners we get a better downtown.

Councilmember Bucheck said that developers need to be part of this process. What about the Land Trust being involved? Our last Planning Commission voted for Land Trust to educate us. Could it be part of the process?

Mayor Hunt said, not before the Public Hearing.

Commissioner Sedro said business owners felt threatened by businesses locating north of the highway.

Commissioner John said the mechanics of Public Hearings using broad zoning categories may set us up; we could be approving this plan but the underlying use is something residents don't agree with it.

Mayor Hunt said some of this will have to change. The concept is not identical to what will actually occur. It may be similar but not exact ordinances and specifying exact types of zoning.

Commissioner Williams said he would be willing to go along with clustering if we can keep numbers the same as now. People worry about locations but the key is the number of units. It is not fair to go to Public Hearing without a firm number.

The Planner said the City Attorney is going over Land Trust Easements. He will be meeting with the Land Trust next week about changes in the easements. We'll ask them to come to us with what is good and bad. They don't need to do our planning for us.

Councilmember Siedow would rather know exactly where things will be. 400 homes will be drastic, 500 just slightly more drastic. He would rather know where city hall will be located.

Mayor Hunt said we had a real vision of what we thought it would look like. We ended up with three acre lawns, prairie palaces. We came to appreciate clustering. The Council set the alarm clock for October. We have not dragged our feet. How important is it to tie zoning and an exact number of units and the map? Is it important enough to hold up the zoning, the moratorium?

Commissioner Bucheck said we should be honest with people who live in Lake Elmo. They were given 15 minutes to decide the future after a 1.5 hour presentation. People who live north of 30th Street want to know where is City Hall.

Commissioner Williams said the important things are the zoning and Comprehensive Plan. We can limit numbers and give definitions later. You don't have to have an ordinance in front of you to go to the Public Hearing.

Commissioner Bunn said we could move up the process to limit the numbers. The city is still understaffed. Contracts and money must be adequate to get the job done, we need enough talent, we need to do it quickly.

Councilmember Siedow asked if it could be fixed that zoning for retirement housing might not go into Lions Park? He wants to know the numbers or you will not get his vote. He wants to know locations.

Commissioner Herreid said he also has concerns and how does it affect them? He is a business owner who has septic system concerns, water drainage and sidewalks. Too much focus is on the number of units. We are not highlighting enough of these other features. It is not a dramatic increase to what is there. All the benefits must be underlined.

Co-councilmember Siedow asked what will sewer cost us?

The Planner said that in some respects the City will underwrite it. It would not be a mandatory hook-up. To replace a septic it costs from \$4000 and up.

Councilmember DeLapp said if they cost about \$7000 per unit, we should budget \$10,000 per unit.

The Planner said treatment and wetland bedding will be common to the Old Village and new development. Cutting up a new street is not in the calculation.

Mayor Hunt asked about extending moratorium.

The Planner said the City could but it would be taking a risk. We could postpone and look at more specific details or take what we are doing now and incorporate it immediately and have it as part of the meeting.

Commissioner Berg said that because of the moratorium we have to either vote for it or table it.

The Planner said we could solve some of the issues before then. We can fix the design before the hearing date of August 25, decide on locations for public buildings and the buffering of the Old Village.

Mayor Hunt said he could call the City Council meeting for August 26. The moratorium expires October 24.

The Planner said there are some further details: a park extending like Reid, interfacing as a buffer, but not quite so large; public uses; senior housing; city hall and library relocated. Move it further east. At the north end of the commercial, open it up further so it becomes less of a barrier.

Councilmember DeLapp said office structures offer nothing to the village. If they were above retail, that might be better. They are not destinations in and of themselves.

Commissioner Bunn said Reid Park is way too large. There are other ways of buffering than distance. There must be leadership and design standards.

The Planner said we are getting too detailed. We intend to do architectural standards for new construction but haven't had much success in the past.

Commissioner Williams said if the City is clustering it has to have guts to put in design standards. Bite the bullet.

Councilmember DeLapp said people care about what is next door to them.

The Planner said we should press for August 25, and talk again with the Planning Commission on July 28.

Mayor Hunt felt the workshop was valuable. We needed dialog between Council and Planning Commissioners. We want this plan to enhance the Old Village, and minimize impact on people who are already here.