



**City of Lake Elmo  
Planning Commission Meeting  
Minutes of July 9, 2012**

Secretary Hall called to order the meeting of the Lake Elmo Planning Commission at 7:00pm.

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Hall, Obermueller, Ziertman, Pelletier, and Bloyer;

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:** Williams, Fliflet, and Haggard;

**STAFF PRESENT:** City Planner Johnson.

**Approve Agenda:**

MSP: Ziertman/Bloyer motion to approve the agenda. Vote: 4-0

**Approve Minutes:**

May 30, 2012- M/S/P: Bloyer/Obermueller motion to approve the minutes as presented. Vote: 3-0, with Commissioner Ziertman abstaining.

June 25, 2012-Commissioner Obermueller asked that the minutes reflect that she did not make a statement about the disposable income of seniors when making housing choices.

M/S/P: Bloyer/Obermueller motion to approve as amended. Vote: 3-0, with Commissioner Ziertman abstaining.

**Business Item:** *Housing Density*

Planner Johnson explained the purpose of the density workshop. It is intended to make the Planning Commission and members of the community more familiar with how housing density translates to the built form. This familiarity will be important moving forward when reviewing the upcoming Comprehensive Plan Amendments and zoning code updates.

Planner Johnson then administered a density quiz from a planning presentation in Palo Alto, CA. The purpose of the quiz was to provide an introduction into the density workshop.

Moving on from the density quiz, Planner Johnson went on to describe the densities of housing developments in a local context. The neighborhoods studied in this analysis

include the Lake DeMontreville area, Old Village, Carriage Station, and other housing developments in surrounding Stillwater, Oak Park Heights, and Woodbury. After the presentation, the forum was opened to discussion about density.

Related to the density quiz, Commissioner Pelletier noted that viewing a housing development from a photo of one side angle can be quite deceiving in terms of guessing the density.

Planner Johnson noted that many of the development in the quiz were denser because they were built on small parcels of land with similarly small setbacks. In addition, more recent developments have larger on-site parking requirements as opposed to older developments that utilized on-street parking. Accounting for parking on-site tends to lower the density level.

**Business Item:** *Zoning Code Update*

Planner Johnson explained that the purpose of this update is to prepare the Planning Commission for the upcoming public hearing related to the review of the new zoning districts and code updates for the I-94 Corridor and Old village. Staff is focused on making the zoning code more streamlined and simplistic as opposed to making it more robust. He noted that many of the current zoning districts will remain the same, with others undergoing subtle changes in name only. The new zoning districts, specifically the low, medium, and high density residential districts, will apply to both the I-94 Corridor and Old Village. The densities of the residential districts are 2-4 units/acre (low density), 4-7 units/acre (medium density), and 7-25 units/acre (high density). Any residential project over the 25 units/acre density must be approved through a Planned Unit Development (PUD) process.

Commissioner Bloyer wanted to know how disagreements from residents about the land use and densities are addressed when the Comprehensive Plan amendment comes before the Planning Commission for approval.

Planner Johnson noted that the City has undertaken a planning process that has provided residents with many opportunities to engage and share their feelings on the land use plans. Several public meetings have been held for both the I-94 Corridor and Old Village land use plans. In addition, the meetings of the Work Groups that drafted these plans were always made public and posted on the City's website. It is the goal of any public process to get as much input as possible before these plans come before the Planning Commission and City Council.

Planner Johnson went on to describe the rest of the proposed changes to the zoning code. The update includes some proposed changes to the commercial districts in Lake

Elmo, including the provision of a convenience commercial district, intended to be utilized in areas with a lot of through traffic.

Commissioner Obermueller asked how this code update related to the possibility of implementing a form based code in the Old Village in the future.

Planner Johnson explained that the form based code could be utilized as an overlay district, or could replace the base zoning districts entirely in the future.

Commissioner Pelletier asked about the zoning districts interact with safety near roadways.

Planner Johnson explained that the zoning code does not interact with pedestrian safety. Safety near roadways should be addressed in the land use planning within the Comprehensive Plan process.

Finally, Planner Johnson noted that the existing Business Park district will include light manufacturing as a possible use. This is a change from the existing BP district.

### **City Council Updates**

*Country Sun Farms* – City Council authorized construction of two additional accessory buildings. Authorization was necessary as part of the agreement pertaining to the farm's Interim Use Permit.

### **Staff Updates**

*Planning Commission Meeting, July 23, 2012* – This meeting will include the public hearing pertaining to the submission of the Comprehensive Plan amendment and zoning code update for the I-94 Corridor.

*Public Hearing Schedule* – The schedule for the upcoming public hearings was outlined to prepare the Planning Commission for the next four months of meetings.

### **Commission Concerns**

None

Adjournment at 7:42pm

Respectfully submitted,

Nick Johnson  
City Planner