

**City of Lake Elmo
Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes of February 8, 2010**

Chairman Van Zandt called to order the meeting of the Lake Elmo Planning Commission at 7:00 p.m. COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Bidon, Britz, Fliflet, Hall, McGinnis, Pearson, Van Zandt, Williams, and Ziertman. Absent: Van Erem. STAFF PRESENT: Planning Director Klatt

Agenda

M/S/P to approve the agenda as presented. Vote 8:0.

Minutes – January 25, 2010

Ziertman requested that a sentence describing a suburban farm be changed to a rural farm. M/S/P, Williams/Pearson to approve the minutes with a correction as noted. Vote 8:0.

Business Item: *Exterior Storage/Recreation Vehicle Amendments*

Planning Director Klatt reviewed a staff report recommending that the Planning Commission consider making amendments to the exterior storage and recreation vehicle provisions of the City Code. The proposed code would regulate the exterior storage of personal equipment, including boats, trailers, recreational vehicles, and similar items, in residential zoning districts. The City Council has previously directed the Commission to review this issue and to recommend any potential amendments to the existing ordinance that it deems appropriate to make.

Klatt suggested that the Commission also consider a small revision to the fence ordinance to further address the maximum size of screening fences that are allowed to screen outside storage areas.

Van Zandt asked how an amendment to the regulations concerning screening fences would impact the rest of the fence ordinance. Fliflet noted that all other material and location requirements for other types of fences would still need to be met.

Ziertman expressed concern regarding the definitions for rear and side yards and recommended that the ordinance include diagrams better illustrate the intent of each definition. She also stated that she did not support the larger setback requirement for equipment that is not screened, especially in Rural Residential areas. It was suggested that the setback and screening requirements be limited to certain zones.

Ziertman expressed her support for keeping the setbacks at their current requirements of 10 and 25 feet, and noted that the storage of bigger commercial vehicles on residential properties could become a problem.

There was a general consensus among Planning Commissioners to further revise the definitions and to remove any references to the nearest building point.

Fliflet suggested that the City may need to consider different requirements for different zoning districts, indicating that if no one else can see their neighbor's exterior storage, than it should not matter from a zoning perspective.

Klatt indicated that he would prepare some modified language for the ordinance that would establish different setback and screening requirements based on the underlying zoning district.

Williams added that aesthetics are a primary concern in drafting an ordinance regulating exterior storage, and that the Planning Commission should be especially concerned about views from surrounding properties and public streets. He also made the following observations: distance can be a mitigating factor, screening fences should be limited in scope and size, and that the regulations may be varied depending on distance factors and by zoning district. As an example, Williams proposed that no storage be allowed between the front of the house and the street in an R-1 district, but that such storage may be appropriate in an RR district.

Williams suggested adding a better definition for a commercial trailer.

Ziertman noted that it does not make sense to require screening on larger lots.

Fliflet agreed with the idea that placement of equipment closer to a structure would be better, but also thought that distance could be a mitigating factor.

Pearson questioned whether or not it may be appropriate to store ice houses and boats on lake frontage lots in proximity to the lake which would be the back yard. Fliflet agreed that seasonal recreation equipment may need different standards.

Klatt suggested that the Commission consider forming a subcommittee to further refine the draft ordinance prior to additional review by the Commission as a whole. Ziertman, Pearson, and Fliflet agreed to serve on a subcommittee to further refine the draft ordinance.

Business Item: *Outdoor Wood Burning Furnace Discussion*

Planning Director Klatt explained that the City Council had requested that the Planning Commission consider reviewing issues associated with outdoor wood burning furnaces. Klatt noted that the Council wanted this issue considered by the Commission, but that it was not tied to any specific complaints within the City. He reviewed a model ordinance that was sent to the Commission for review.

Bidon commented that smoke usually is not an issue with outdoor furnaces, but wood storage can be a problem since it is often not feasible to only use wood grown on the property.

Commissioners, by consensus, agreed that it would be beneficial to draft an ordinance that regulated exterior wood-burning furnaces. It was suggested that a ban on outdoor

wood furnaces be considered as an option with any ordinance that is considered by the Commission.

Planning Commission Discussion: *City Council Communications.*

Klatt explained that one of the Commissioners, with the support of the Chairman, requested an opportunity to discuss the Commission's process of communicating with the City Council. Klatt reviewed the current procedures used by the Planning Department when presenting the Commission's recommendations to the City Council.

Klatt stated that he would try to find training materials and other information that might be useful for helping the Commission further consider its roles and responsibilities pertaining to interaction and communication with the City Council.

City Council Updates:

Klatt reported that the City Council had approved the Floodplain Management Ordinance update and had conducted a one-year review of the D and Trucking Interim Use Permit.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kyle Klatt
Planning Director