



**City of Lake Elmo
Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes of October 27, 2014**

Chairman Williams called to order the meeting of the Lake Elmo Planning Commission at 7:00 p.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Williams, Dodson, Kreimer, Larson, Lundgren, Dorschner and Haggard

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Community Development Director Klatt and Planning Intern Casey Riley

Approve Agenda:

The agenda was accepted as presented.

Approve Minutes: October 13, 2014

M/S/P: Haggard/Dorschner move to postpone the minutes; ***Vote: 7-0, motion carried unanimously.***

Business Item: Rural Area Analysis Presentation

Planning Intern Riley presented a summary of a report concerning the City's rural development areas, and noted that the report is divided up into 3 different sections: research related to growth, a rural lot inventory and 4 hypothetical growth scenarios. She highlighted two main points that were supported by the report: 1) new development is always more cost effective when infrastructure is close, and 2) low density development is more land intensive and can change the look and feel of the community. She noted that open land and farm land generates revenues for a City in excess of the costs necessary to service this land according to studies from 1995. For each dollar of revenue collected for agricultural land only \$0.27 is spent. For every dollar in revenue for residential land \$1.07 is spent.

Riley explained the various land use categories used in the report. High density development, which would not be seen in Lake Elmo, large lot, low-density, urbanized and working land. Klatt stated that typically the large expenditures in communities, whether it is in urban or suburban areas, are public safety, roads and schools. Maintaining roads and public safety represent the highest per capita costs on average. He noted that there are storm water impacts and water quality impacts with growth.

There was a discussion regarding the average value of a 2.5 acre lot and what that would be. Williams thought that the value of the homes should be included in the report if we are comparing to expenditures.

Klatt summarized the City's zoning history and Comprehensive Plan history with the Commission. He noted that the City's forecast for growth through 2040 has been lowered, and that this would provide the City with more flexibility for development in the City's rural areas. From a staff perspective, there are more options to choose from. He stated that one of the major issues that will limit development in rural areas is the need for adequate access to new home sites. Larger, undeveloped parcels are generally located on collector roads and development along these roads will likely not be able to comply with City, County, and State access spacing guidelines. Staff is concerned that as the rural areas change and become more developed that the character of these areas will also change.

Klatt pointed out that studies have shown that a residential home is next to or with access to larger open space tends to have a higher market value than similar homes that do not have access to open space.

Klatt presented several questions that the Planning Commission might want to explore, including: What is the City's intent with the rural character? How does open space play into that? Does it need to be commonly owned or can it be owned privately? How does access management play into growth? Should the City be encouraging new well or septic systems? Are higher density uses reasonable in rural areas? How does agriculture factor into Lake Elmo's future? Do we want to preserve that into the future? Does the City want to allow residential estates development in the City? Do we want to allow some kind of hybrid zoning? Should the City move to be more restrictive in zoning in these areas?

Klatt stated that Staff is looking for feedback from the Planning Commission on how to move forward with any suggested changes to the City's rural development areas.

The Commission requested information concerning the point at which growth does not pay for itself. Klatt stated that most Cities have a broader mix of commercial and residential to offset each other. Kreimer wants to better understand the shared septic systems and their future viability. He is wondering if there are problems with other shared septic systems. Dodson stated that in Farms of Lake Elmo, the HOA has to have some level of knowledge in order to maintain the system. He noted that the design of their system was faulty and it caused the system to shut down. Dodson also stated that there is a problem with having HOA's managing these complicated systems. The Planning Commission has concerns with shared septic due to cost, management and maintenance.

The Commission expressed concerns regarding the accuracy of the numbers and age of the report. The Planning Commission requested formulas Dodson does not think we should be doing anything at this point. There is no pressure to do something different out there. With the added cost for roads and such, it does not make sense. Other members of the Commission were interested in seeing the possibility of expanding the use of the Residential Estates land use classification.

Business Item: Design Standards Discussion

Williams stated that he had recently addressed the City Council to ask for clarification concerning the Council's position on residential design standards. Williams requested that the Planning Commission clarify whether or not the City should proceed with any kind of design standards for single family detached housing. Haggard said that in the Comprehensive Plan, it does suggest that we have design standards and expect high standards. She also feels that if it is a PUD, we have the right to put in design standards on a case by case basis. Klatt stated at the Preliminary Plat stage, the developer can submit information concerning design, and that the Planning Commission can accept or reject what they submit. Klatt stated that they will be bringing forward form based codes which will relate more to the mixed use portions of the City. Williams stated that we do currently have two design standards that apply to garages. Kreimer thinks that the Developers should submit examples of what they intend to build. Dodson stated that without a tool to deny something submitted, we could be stuck with them. Most of the Commission does not feel that residential design standards are necessary unless it is a PUD.

Updates and Concerns

Council Updates

None

Staff Updates

1. Upcoming Meetings
 - a. November 10, 2014
 - b. November 24, 2014

Commission Concerns

Dodson asked if there was any economic plan for commercial development. He questioned where are the City was going to promote commercial development and how are the City would entice businesses to come here. Williams stated the Comp Plan does allow for commercial along I-94 and the within the Old Village, and noted that there has not been any cost benefit analysis done regarding this. Klatt stated at the next meeting, the Commission will be presented with an Economic Development Plan for the Village.

Meeting adjourned at 9:40 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Ziertman
Planning Program Assistant