



**City of Lake Elmo
Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes of November 28, 2016**

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

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Fields, Dodson, Williams, Larson, and Lundquist

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Kreimer, Dunn, Griffin & Haggard

STAFF PRESENT: Planning Director Wensman, Finance Director Bendel and City Administrator Handt

Approve Agenda:

Agenda was accepted as presented.

Approve Minutes: November 14, 2016

M/S/P: Dodson/Lundquist, move to approve the November 14, 2016 minutes as amended, ***Vote: 4-0, motion carried with Fields not voting as he was not at meeting.***

Public Hearing – Capital Improvement Plan

Finance Director Bendel presented an overview of the information in the packet. The goal of the CIP is to have a 5 year capital improvement plan to identify major projects needed and desired by the community. Including a project in the CIP does not commit the City to that project. The City Council must specifically authorize each item and identify the funding before any project may proceed. The process for the CIP is that the department heads identify the projects over \$25,000 and these items must have a useful life of over five years. The department heads determine realistic costs for those projects. The department heads prioritize these capital items. The Planning Commission determines if these projects are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and holds the public hearing.

When the 2017-2021 CIP is finalized, it will be used to communicate to residents and property owners when improvements are planned in their neighborhoods. The plan will be annually revisited and revised based upon emerging needs and fiscal realities. Changes in revenue, tax base, and project needs are annually incorporated into the updated plan.

The 2017-2021 five year CIP contains 75 projects totaling \$33,813,266 with all costs being based on estimates based on current dollars.

There are multiple street projects over 5 years, a facilities study is planned, and replacement of vehicles for the fire department and building department. There are plans for trails and a pickup truck dedicated to the parks department.

Williams asked about the downtown phases. He thought the City only had 3 phases, but there are 6 phases in the CIP. Handt stated that back in August there was a presentation to the City Council on the additional phases that were petitioned. It is fairly recent and now are being brought to the Planning Commission. Williams would like to see a map of the areas affected. Williams also asked about the Parks section and is wondering if the Parks Commission has held a public hearing on those. Handt stated that there has been a lot of discussion regarding the improvements with the public and tonight is the official public hearing on those.

Dodson asked why vehicles are assigned to various departments rather than being a general pool of vehicles. Bendel stated that they are assigned to where they are being used as we do not have a global vehicle fleet. There are a number of vehicles and equipment that Public Works would like to replace.

Williams is questioning why the City is paying for any portion of turn lanes and street signals that should be developer paid. Handt stated that the turn lane at Hunter's Crossing is actually a 5th Street turn lane and doesn't solely benefit that Development. Wensman stated that the CSAH 19 and Hudson Blvd turn lane was talked about when Kwik Trip went in and it was decided that it wasn't needed at that time.

Bendel went through the sewer system improvements that are planned for in the CIP. Dodson asked what the sewer pipe oversizing is. Bendel stated that the developer would only require a 12" pipe, but the City needs a 16" pipe to make it work for the larger infrastructure and capacity. The Storm Water system has regional drainage improvements. The water system had a number of water main projects and included elevated storage tank #3 which has no identified site.

Dodson asked what the methodology for the prioritization is for the projects. Handt stated that with limited funding they try to prioritize safety first, replacement and then expansion. Bendel stated that this was the first year that items were prioritized. In the past the amount that could be spent was decided and then they figured out what was really needed. Sometimes things get postponed, but not removed. Lundquist asked if the vehicles are purchased as part of a fleet. Handt mentioned that they are purchased as part of a state contract. Williams asked about the funding sources and why those aren't listed anywhere. Handt stated that they gave them a streamlined version as the role of the Planning Commission tonight is to make sure the CIP is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Williams stated that since this is a public hearing, the information

should be available for the public to give feedback on. Handt stated that projects in the CIP are not approved projects, but they still need to go through the City Council approval process. The CIP is more of a long range planning tool for the City and there is a public hearing when the City bonds for projects.

Williams stated that as a citizen, he doesn't think you should have to look at all the City Council agendas to know what is going on and he feels that this is where the information should be presented. Bendel stated that the funding for 2017 would be the critical year. Beyond that the funding will most likely change over time, so even if it was presented, it would most likely change. 2017 also had the carry over borrowing requirement for the downtown project. It gets a little bit muddy as there is carry over debt needs as well as forward borrowing. Fields would be comfortable just going through 2017 and how it will be funded and how it adds to the City debt. The 2017 CIP projects will add approximately \$8.5 Million dollars of debt. Handt and Bendel went through the funding for the various projects.

The Planning Commission had some general questions about the funding and balances in various funds. Dodson also asked if multi-phase projects should be prioritized differently.

Public Hearing opened at 8:00 pm

No one spoke and there were no written comments

Public Hearing closed at 8:01 pm

Williams would like to see the Railroad Crossing project to be a higher priority. This project will take a long time and is important to the Village Parkway. Wensman stated that the Village Parkway will be constructed with the Easton Village project and as the project phases, the Railroad Crossing project may need to be moved up. Williams is concerned about a lag between when something is put in as a priority and when it actually happens. He would rather be proactive and get it done.

M/S/P: Fields/Lundquist, move to recommend that the 2017-2021 CIP is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, **Vote: 5 0-, motion carried unanimously.**

Williams would like to comment on the Reid Park improvement plans. He objects to having the trails improved to accommodate mountain biking. He feels that there has to be a better area that could accommodate this activity, rather than upset the natural area of Reid Park. Dodson stated that the Park Preserve allows mountain biking and it is adequate for this area for that activity. Larson stated that there could be a safety issue because it is a fairly marshy wet area. Larson stated that in the time he has been going to the Parks Commission, this topic has not come up. Wensman stated that typically mountain bike trails are separate from the pedestrian trails.

Business Item – 2017 Planning Department Work Plan

Wensman presented the Planning Commission with the 2017 Planning Department work plan. There are a number of projects that have been completed, some projects are currently in progress and some will follow the Comprehensive Plan update. There are a number of projects that are ongoing, and there are a number of projects that are unclear that were on the list prior to Wensman coming to Lake Elmo. There are also a few projects that have been added.

The City Council will be setting their work plan the end of January. They will look at the Planning Commission's work plan when they do this. The Planning Commission discussed the items on the work plan. The Commission decided to take some items off and made some items different priorities. Dodson asked if wind generators and solar gardens should be added to the work plan. The Commission decided to add it as a 3. Wensman went through some subdivision ordinance amendments and Comp Plan amendments. Wensman gave background for some of the Planning initiatives including the Village Parkway railroad crossing. Wensman went through some of the Planning projects for the department.

The Commission had a discussion regarding 3rd parties holding conservation easements. Fields suggested if there was no 3rd party willing to take the conservation easement, the developer could pay the City a fee to oversee the conservation easement. Williams feels the item should be put on the work plan for further discussion with a priority 1.

Fields is wondering if there should be a discussion regarding drone use. He is not sure that the discussion belongs at the Planning Commission, but he feels it could become an issue. They are not regulated under 500 feet by the FAA.

M/S/P: Fields/Dodson, move to recommend approval of the 2017 Planning Department Work Plan, ***Vote: 5-0, motion carried unanimously.***

City Council Updates – November 15, 2016 Meeting

- i) Zoning Text Amendment related to nonconforming uses, buildings and structures – passed
 - ii) Zoning Text Amendment related to expiration of variances – passed
 - iii) Rieder Townhome Preliminary Plat Extension – passed
 - iv) Sign Variance 4201 Manning Ave - passed
1. Upcoming Meetings
 - a. November 28, 2016
 - b. December 12, 2016

Commission Concerns

Lundquist wanted to confirm that the Cemetery lost its case in court. Handt confirmed that the City prevailed and that the property owner has 60 days to appeal.

Meeting adjourned at 9:24 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Ziertman
Planning Program Assistant