

**Old Village Special Projects
Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes of July 8, 2002**

Chairman Armstrong called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Bunn, Deziel, Ptacek, Sessing, Sedro, Helwig, John, Pelletier, Herreid, Berg, and Williams. Commissioner Bucheck arrived at 7:35 p.m. ALSO PRESENT: City Planner, Charles Dillerud and Administrative Secretary, Kimberly Schaffel.

AGENDA

M/S Helwig/Armstrong To approve the Agenda as presented. **VOTE: 12:0 PASSED.**

MINUTES OF JUNE 10, 2002

Working from Page 6 forward: Commissioner Williams suggested the following change to Page 7, "We are very unhappy that that the Council has not acted on our request." Delete second sentence, "Aesthetics, safety, and pride." Add, "The Old Village Special Projects Planning Commission's opinion is that it appeared that all Council Members present were in agreement," after Mayor Hunt's comments but not attributed to anyone in particular.

M/S Williams/John To accept the Minutes of June 10, 2002 as amended. **VOTE: 11:0:1 (Abstain: Helwig) PASSED.**

Staff Report, City Planner, Charles Dillerud

Today is the Kickoff to the Old Village Neighborhood Design Study. He introduced our guests, Dewey Thorbeck of Thorbeck Architects, and Bob Sykes who does storm and wastewater.

Dewey Thorbeck, Thorbeck Architects

Mr. Thorbeck displayed an aerial photograph of part of Lake Elmo, and discussed some density calculations. He said Lake Elmo's population is not uniform at all in various areas of the city. New development in several zones adjacent to the Old Village would reflect densities already in existence. He showed areas around the Old Village that might be useful for drainage of stormwater and wastewater collection.

Mr. Thorbeck reported that he spoke with the Schiltgens about the historic farmstead. The character of that entry into town will be important to keep as it exists on both sides of Highway 5. The Planning Commission should consider moving the VFW and/or Lions Ball fields, and replacing them with senior housing close to downtown. Only one street crosses Hwy 5, and that is Laverne Avenue. That is part of the quirkiness of the City. Perhaps the City should consider enhancing some of the commercial area around the bank with more shops; they could even have housing upstairs.

The forested area north of 39th could extend, and create a greenway and drainage/retention area. He did not have a firm, set lot size in mind; there should be flexibility.

City Hall area would fall under a Village Green Plan. The existing building could be opened up for retail. A transit park and ride would be a possibility, perhaps some garden apartments.

There are certain guidelines for how much land area is necessary to collect and distribute wastewater. The City could do underground piping perhaps to a single tank spread among several drainfields. Stormwater holding and infiltration could be extended into the buffer zone.



He wondered how much larger it will be viable to farm adjacent to the Old Village. Crossing Hwy. 5 is becoming exceedingly difficult. How do you treat those large areas in the future? Two acre lots over a large area may destroy the landscape you are trying to maintain.

Open areas are necessary close to housing to hold the stormwater but you can make it an amenity. The trail system could bring people into the commercial area.

One way to engage the community would be a website. The Thorbeck website has the Glentorro Project. www.thorbeck.com. It is effective to get out information. Met Council has an interactive web about their 2030 Plan. We could put ours into our web page. You can design survey questions that will help identify locations of the interested public. Give two weeks' notice before meetings, and try to make it more of a relaxed meeting, less an agenda meeting.

City Planner

Open space brings density to a lower net. That then gets you to a more efficient spot density in an amount similar to the existing Old Village density. The idea is to be sure we are mirroring what already exists.

Commissioner John

Compare what is shown here now to what it would be if developed as currently zoned, and show that to the public.

Commissioner Bunn

What Mr. Thorbeck has suggested appears to be twice the density of what is there now.

We have talked about moving the park and City Hall, and combining the fire station and public works. There could then be housing in that area. A new City Hall is to be built in the next 10 years. There was talk about it being in the Old Village area. Could there be a new complex combining fire and possibly police?

Dewey Thorbeck

Many communities keep their fire departments further away because of traffic. There are also the problems of storm- and wastewater.

Commissioner Bunn

Even the Council has problems with shared systems versus individual systems. She is very concerned for public involvement. How would the meetings be run? What would be the advertising and marketing plan to get the public involved?

Dewey Thorbeck

He was not prepared with recommendations. He can prepare more for the next meeting. He'd like ideas from the commissioners about how to get public involved.

City Planner

Our approach was to draw a line around the area of greenbelt and developed area.

Commissioner Bucheck

We do not like this density housing; two or three story units. This is not the character of Lake Elmo.

City Planner

How do we define old village housing character? There are few 2.5 acre lots in the Old Village.

Commissioner Pelletier

She would like Mr. Thorbeck to consider an overpass over Highway 5. She would like to see how existing farms would be developed. Where is the sense of community? If you do have two acre lots, the character is lost too.

Dewey Thorbeck

This plan may be somewhere around 300 houses, versus 1000 houses. It is better to look at visually than in the form of numbers.

Commissioner Williams

He wanted to know the status of a facilitator. He thought the City Council authorized funds for that purpose. It takes time to get someone on board.

Commissioner Bunn

She said it would be more than facilitating; it would also be advertising and promotion.

M/S John/Helwig To propose a recommendation to staff to immediately recruit a facilitator to develop a public information strategy, organize the publicity, and be present at all public meetings to facilitate them.

VOTE: 13:0 PASSED. The City Planner said he will bring this Motion to the City Council on July 16, 2002.

Discussion

Commissioners Bunn, Bucheck, John, and the City Planner thought the newsletter would be a good way to promote those meetings.

Commissioner Deziel

He asked what we were counting on in our Comp Plan for this area of the City – the undeveloped areas of the Old Village.

City Planner

All undeveloped Old Village lands (except the GB Zoning along 39th Street) were calculated in the 2020 Plan based on Open Space density, which was then at 18 per 40, now at 16 per 40, and Guided RAD.

Commissioner Bunn

The denser we go the more green space can be placed into permanent easement. We are only conserving pieces of open space now.

Commissioner Bucheck

People who own the land don't necessarily have to sell it. Some of it is still Green Acres.

Commissioner Deziel

This is a way to sell our own Comprehensive Plan. He would rather have greater density and preserve open space.

City Planner

We would like that area to reflect the character of the Old Village.

Commissioner Williams

Whatever we plan, we have to move the stormwater out of the Old Village.

Dewey Thorbeck

The attitude of the undeveloped lands' owners he spoke to is to do something that is right by the community as well as for themselves.

Commissioner Herreid

There is a disconnection between good ideas and public opinion. Elderly housing is another carrot everyone is behind.

City Planner

He thanked Dewey Thorbeck for his work and his presentation.

ADJOURN AT 9:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Kimberly Schaffel
Administrative Secretary