



MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

DATE: 5/07/2013

REGULAR

ITEM #: 10

AGENDA ITEM: Lake Elmo Branding and Theming Study – Damon Farber and Associates

SUBMITTED BY: Nick Johnson, City Planner

THROUGH: Dean Zuleger, City Administrator

REVIEWED BY: Kyle Klatt, Planning Director
Alyssa MacLeod, Taxpayer Relations/Communications Coordinator

SUGGESTED ORDER OF BUSINESS:

- Introduction of Item..... Staff
- Report/Presentation..... Staff
- Questions from Council to Staff..... Mayor Facilitates
- Public Input, if Appropriate..... Mayor Facilitates
- Call for Motion..... Mayor & City Council
- Discussion..... Mayor & City Council
- Action on Motion..... Mayor Facilitates

SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUESTED:

The City Council is asked to accept the Lake Elmo Branding and Theming Study, produced by Damon Farber and Associates (DFA). The document includes a “Kit of Parts” intended to create a strong visual identity in public spaces in Lake Elmo, including gateways, streets, sidewalks and open spaces.

Staff recommends the City Council accept the Lake Elmo Branding and Theming Study through the following motion:

“Move to accept the Lake Elmo Branding and Theming Study.”

BACKGROUND AND STAFF REPORT:

On October 16, 2012, Damon Farber and Associates was contracted to lead a theming and branding exercise for the City of Lake Elmo that would result in a “Kit of Parts”. The “Kit of Parts” contains various design elements and amenities that can be utilized in public spaces to establish a community identity. In advance of future development in the years to come, now is the best time to establish these design elements so that they may be carried through in the newly established corridors and neighborhoods of Lake Elmo.

In order to establish the elements that would embody the community identity, DFA led a four month participatory process that allowed officials, residents and business owners to help define the Lake Elmo brand, as well as react to various proposed site and design elements. Over the course of the process, the City held 5 public meetings to help inform the eventual “Kit of Parts”. Overall, the branding and theming meetings were well attended, and the participants were able to provide significant input to the members of DFA.

Regarding the final document, the Lake Elmo Branding and Theming Study addresses many different elements related to the design of streetscapes and open spaces. One area that the document pays particular focus is the streetscape design of Lake Elmo Avenue in downtown Lake Elmo. Utilizing various streetscape elements contained within the manual will be extremely helpful in creating a more pedestrian-friendly district in the downtown area of Lake Elmo. The design of this roadway is particularly important in the context of Washington County's future planned improvement. In addition to downtown, attention is also paid to the other significant gateways in the community. DFA has shown how utilizing certain types of fencing and other elements at important gateways can help establish Lake Elmo's identity and brand.

As future growth and community projects are considered, it will be extremely helpful to have an established document to guide future design considerations. Not only can these elements be utilized in public spaces, but it is the City's goal that private property owners and developers may also be inspired by these site amenities and designs. Ultimately, there is definite value in promoting Lake Elmo's unique identity, and this identity may be enhanced through these design and site elements into the future.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the City Council accept the Lake Elmo Branding and Theming Study through the following motion:

"Move to accept the Lake Elmo Branding and Theming Study."

ATTACHMENT(S):

1. The Lake Elmo Branding and Theming Study – Draft 5/7/13