



**City of Lake Elmo
Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes of October 14, 2013**

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

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Williams, Dorschner, Dodson, Larson, Kreimer and Morreale;

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Haggard and Lundgren; and

STAFF PRESENT: Planning Director Klatt and City Planner Johnson.

Approve Agenda:

The Planning Commission accepted the agenda as presented.

Approve Minutes: September 23, 2013

M/S/P: Williams/Morreale, move to accept the minutes of September 23, 2013 as amended, **Vote: 5-0, Motion Carried**, with Larson not voting.

Presentation: *Manning Ave. Corridor Study – Washington County*

Frank Ticknor, Washington County, started his presentation by explaining that the main goal is to start a dialogue with all the communities along Manning Ave. (CSAH 15). This dialogue will include analysis of existing conditions, future growth along the corridor, and estimated future traffic volumes.

Manning Ave. is the main north-south arterial in Washington County. The County is preparing this study to be proactive to address future needs for the roadway before challenges arise. Ticknor gave an overview of the entire corridor from I-94 to TH-5, showing the status of existing intersections and forecasts of future performance under a no-build scenario. In addition, Ticknor highlighted all the goals of the Manning Ave. Project. Goals include improving safety, managing traffic demand, improving access, and others.

Brian Jensen, SRF, presented the schedule and stakeholders involved on the Manning Ave. Project. Once stakeholders were identified, Washington County has been coordinating monthly meetings with the key stakeholders. In addition, the County is working on an extensive public engagement effort. The desired outcome includes three documents:

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1. Preliminary roadway design – mutually agreed upon by jurisdictions involved
2. Environmental document
3. Implementation plan – allows stakeholders to prioritize and time improvements

Jensen continued his presentation by explaining the Subarea Study.

Leif Garness, SRF, presented the Subarea Study in greater detail. The Subarea Study includes three alternatives, including 1) realigning TH-5 with CSAH 14, 2) expanding Manning Ave. to a 4-lane facility, and 3) alternatives 1 and 2 combined. The consultant explained how all of the various alternatives impacted future traffic volumes along the Manning Ave. Corridor and adjacent streets and corridors. The preliminary findings of the study shows that the greatest benefit from a traffic management perspective includes an expansion of Manning to a four-lane facility and realigning TH-5 with CSAH 14.

Dodson asked if the County has an idea of the source of the traffic along these corridors. What percentage of the traffic is generated by residents of Washington County? Jensen explained that the traffic data was generated by a County model not taking source into account.

Williams asked if the type of intersection control has been studied for the realignment of TH-5. Jensen explained that the traffic control will be studied at the next level of the study. The City would have input on any future control or improvements.

Larson asked about the final goal of the project from a traffic perspective. The County wants to encourage north-south travel movements, and minimize east-west traffic.

Dodson asked if the new HWY-36 Bridge is included in the Manning Ave. Study. Jensen noted that the bridge is incorporated, but has not shown a significant impact as of yet.

Jensen concluded by presenting the project schedule. Construction phase is expected to begin in April of 2015. The main take away is that it is important for Manning to become a 4-lane facility.

Ticknor finished the presentation by providing contact information and the project website.

Williams asked if the County studied directing Manning straight north to TH-36. Ticknor stated that the limits of this project stop at TH-5. Williams also noted that the County was able to secure grant funding to install traffic signals at Lake Elmo Ave. (CSAH 17).

Dodson noted that he would like to see the wide shoulder maintained to serve bicyclists in Washington County. He noted that Manning Ave. is a popular route.

Larson was wondering if the study was connected to the railroad crossings. Is there any talk of over/under pass? Ticknor said that there are railroad protection zones in the airport area, so it can't have a vertical element. The crossing on Manning is eligible to become a quiet zone, but the communities should participate in that aspect of the project.

Public Hearing (cont.): Zoning Text Amendment – Village Mixed-Use Zoning District

Klatt began his presentation by explaining that the Village Mixed Use (VMX) zoning district would be added to the Zoning Code under Article 11. He started by addressing how multiple areas of review by the Planning Commission have been incorporated into the current draft of the ordinance. He discussed permitted and conditional uses, maximum site dimensions for commercial properties, screening for single family homes, design review, and other considerations. Klatt made connections between the proposed draft ordinance and the workshop meeting that was held on October 7th, including the drawbacks and benefits of mixed-use zoning. Moving forward, Klatt highlighted major decision points, including permitted vs. conditional uses, maximum height, single family attached standards (no front-loading garages), automobile-oriented uses, drive-through facilities, design and demolition review, and others. Finally, Klatt discussed next steps, including zoning and Comprehensive Plan work, as well as future work on form-based codes and implementation of design review.

Williams asked if a clean-up amendment will be necessary, as zoning standards are found in multiple locations in the Code. Klatt confirmed that staff will have to proceed with a clean-up amendment of the Zoning Code.

Klatt noted that staff plans on bringing forward a zoning map amendment to implement the new Village Mixed-Use (VMX) zoning district.

Dorschner asked where the 50-year timeframe comes under the demolition review section. Klatt noted that 50-years was the base standard under historic preservation that qualifies a building as historic.

Related to demolition review, Dodson asked about who determines that an applicant cannot obtain a reasonable economic return. Klatt noted that the Planning Commission and Council make that determination.

Public Hearing closed at 8:12pm.

Dorschner asked about the 3 criteria for demolition of structures in the mixed-use district, including structural defects, threat to public safety and economic feasibility of repair. He asked if all 3 were required, or if applicants only have to meet one of these criterion. Klatt stated that applicant must meet one of the three criterion.

Dodson asked for further clarification related to the review process for design review. He thought the title was confusing. The Planning Commission consented to a title change.

Dodson asked about placeholders and if they should have direction with them for the time being so there is a process associated with them. Klatt suggested just removing them for the time being if the ordinance is adopted. They were in the draft as a tool to look at later.

Dodson asked if two-family dwelling should be exempted. Klatt suggested that it should be exempted.

Dorschner noted that he is concerned that the criterion for the demolition review are subjective. Williams noted that he views the demolition review as similar to a PUD situation, where the applicants and City come to an agreement. Dorschner noted that he is concerned that some buildings that were built 50 years ago were of poor construction and should not be preserved. Williams suggested making all buildings built before 1950 eligible for demolition review. Larson noted that some structures have been added upon and there are portions of the buildings that are built post 1950 and other portions that were built pre-1950. Dorschner reiterated his concern that the demolition review is subjective. Klatt suggested using the language "built prior to 1950" and "meeting 1 or more of the following" regarding the required findings. Johnson asked if single family homes should be included or if there should be different standards. Williams felt the older buildings helped with the old town feel that we want. Kreimer suggested applications to demolish any structure built before 1950 should be reviewed according to the following criteria.

Williams noted that there is no reference to a Village Green in the zoning district. He asked if there should be a reference. Klatt noted that the best way to implement a Village Green is to either zone property for public use or partner with a private developer on a mixed use project that includes a green.

Larson is concerned that the City is letting go of control to incorporate a downtown gathering amenity. Klatt highlighted the tools that the city can use to take a more active role in working towards a master planned village green development.

Williams noted one other update related to the definition of development activity.

M/S/P: Larson/Dodson, move to recommend approval of the ordinance as amended in the discussion, ***Vote: 6-0, motion carried unanimously.***

Business Item: *Design Standards Manual*

Johnson presented a final draft of the Lake Elmo Design Standards Manual. Williams noted that there were a few minor modifications to the document that was distributed at the October 7, 2013 workshop. These modifications were only in regards to pictures, and did not change the text in the document.

Johnson reviewed the purpose of the design standards manual, which is for site and building review in the VMX, Commercial, Business Park and High Density Residential zones. He also discussed the performance standards used in current zoning districts, and summarized the process to date. He noted that Staff has presented previous drafts to the Planning Commission and has conducted a stakeholder meeting with members of the business and development community.

Johnson reviewed contents of the design standards manual with the Commission and noted some of the specific standards that were proposed.

Williams questioned why there was no list of preferred building materials for high density residential structures. He also asked about the use of translucent glass in the High Density Residential section and suggested that this be moved back to the general section.

Dodson stated that the review should be completed by the final development approval for compliance purposes.

Johnson noted that the document provides a balance between permissive and mandatory language. Kreimer suggested that the manual include more mandatory language for certain elements, including streetscape design, landscaping, and scale and mass of buildings. Johnson stated that some things might be mandatory based on use.

Williams questioned the wording related to roof materials and the permissive language in one section of the manual.

Dodson asked whether or not the City would prohibit certain types of development from being built in the community. Johnson replied that the standards generally should not keep a business from locating in the community that wants to be located in Lake Elmo. He further reiterated that the manual attempted for a balance between good design and standards that are not overly restrictive.

Dorschner noted some inconsistencies between various sections of the manual. Johnson noted that he would make revisions to improve the consistency between the various sections.

Kreimer questioned why there were no specific recommendations from the theming work that was recently completed. He also suggested that some of the pictures be amended, especially those that depict buildings that do not step the upper floors back

from the street. Johnson replied that the theming work was focused on public areas rather than private development sites. He stated that he would look for opportunities to reference the theming work and that he would also review the pictures for buildings over two stories in height.

Dodson asked for clarification concerning the use of the term complementary and how this would be interpreted. The Commission discussed if earth tone should be used. He noted that the high density residential section was the only one to reference a maximum height for parking lot lights. The Commission generally discussed the need for separate height requirements for different uses.

Kreimer pointed out that the building placement section in the high density residential section appears to be contradictory with regards to setback requirements.

Williams commented that the parking setback requirements should reference the Zoning Ordinance rather than being listed separately in the manual. He suggested that the lighting section reference dark sky/light pollution as one of the objectives. He further noted that the manual does not reference electronic message signs. Williams suggested that the manual reference restricted root zones. He asked that the manual include a reference to historic buildings and reflecting or recalling the historic character of existing buildings in the Village. Williams made additional suggestions for revisions to the document.

The Commission generally suggested that the document incorporate additional language pertaining to the Village planning area.

It was suggested that in general, metal should be allowed as a building material. Johnson stated that he would do some more research on the use of metal building materials.

There was a general discussion concerning landscaping of parking areas and the required setbacks within business park areas.

Johnson reviewed the next steps in the process, and noted that he would be refining the draft design standards manual based on the comments from the Planning Commission. There will be a public hearing at the October 28, 2013 meeting to adopt it into zoning code.

Williams suggested providing notice to the development community once the final draft has been prepared.

Williams wants a motion to encourage the City Council to proceed with developing a master plan for a Village green. Dodson stated that from a practical standpoint, how would it get implemented and would it be economically feasible? Dorschner stated that if restricted by a plan, it would be hard to implement and would be expensive if planned

to be placed in a specific spot. Williams likes the idea of a Village Green. It doesn't have to be large, but he would like to be proactive in regards to it. Larson would like someone who knows about the vision Lake Elmo has to work with developers on the features we would like. Klatt suggested that it might be leaping ahead to be talking about this now. There currently is no approved Comprehensive Plan. We would need to have that before we talk about a Village Green. It would be good to talk to the City Council about it and get it on the 2014 work plan and incorporate this discussion with the Village land use plan.

Updates and Concerns

Council Updates

1. Comprehensive Plan Amendment for Landucci Property approved by City Council contingent on Met Council approval.
2. Landucci Sketch Plan, submitted by Ryland Homes, was reviewed by the City Council.
3. Variance – 09.029.21.22.0025 (Hill Trail North) was postponed to the October 15, 2013 meeting.

Staff Updates

1. Staff will be preparing a worksheet for finding of fact as a tool for the Commission to use for future land use decisions.
2. Planning Commission meetings upcoming on October 28th and November 13th. The meeting on 11/13/13 is on a Wednesday due to the Veterans Day holiday.

Commission Concerns – None

Meeting adjourned at 10:18pm

Respectfully submitted,

Nick Johnson
City Planner