



**City of Lake Elmo  
Planning Commission Meeting  
Minutes of March 12, 2018**

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

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Kreimer, Dodson, Dorschner, Pearce, Weeks, & Hartley

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:** Lundquist, Emerson and Johnson

**STAFF PRESENT:** Planning Director Becker and City Planner Prchal

**Approve Agenda:**

M/S/P: Hartley/Kreimer, move to approve the agenda as amended, ***Vote: 6-0, motion carried unanimously***

**Approve Minutes:** February 26, 2018

M/S/P: Hartley/Dorschner, move to approve the February 26, 2018 minutes as amended, ***Vote: 6-0, motion carried unanimously.***

**Public Hearing – Variance – 8990 Lake Jane Trail - Tabled**

Becker stated that the applicant wished to have this item tabled to a future meeting. As this was a published public hearing, the public hearing should be opened and closed at this time.

Public Hearing opened at 7:09 pm

No one spoke and there were no written comments.

Public Hearing closed at 7:10 pm

**Public Hearing – Variance – 8980 Hudson Blvd Sign Variance**

Prchal started his presentation regarding the wall sign for Park Dental at 8980 Hudson Blvd. This is for a third wall sign for the building, where only one is allowed and it is limited by the lineal feet of the building. This sign along with the existing signs would actually meet the allowed sign area, but a variance is required because of the number of signs allowed is exceeded. This variance application will need to meet the four criteria

for variances. Practical difficulties, unique circumstances, character of locality and no impact to adjacent properties and traffic. Staff feels that these four criteria have been met.

Staff is recommending approval of the variance based on the findings noted in 1, 2, 3 & 4 with the conditions that a comprehensive sign plan be submitted and approved for the building and that a sign permit application be submitted, approved and issued prior to installation.

Pearce is wondering what would stop any other business from going through the same process. Prchal stated that there would be nothing to stop them other than it would be based on recommendation from staff and the Planning Commission.

Hartley stated that if they are required to submit a comprehensive sign plan that would address any issues regarding other tenants.

Dorschner is wondering if the other tenant was contacted and if a variance could be granted for them along with this one. Becker stated that the public hearing was not noticed that way and they are not requesting anything at this time.

Dodson is wondering how much over the code they are with the square footage. Prchal stated that they are not over on square footage, it is the number of signs that they will end up with that requires the variance. Dodson asked about the character of locality and if the light pollution has been taken into consideration. Prchal stated that the sign code does not allow them to go above a certain number of foot candles.

Hartley stated that there is already a ground sign for this business. Hartley is wondering if the code allows them to have both the ground sign and wall sign. Prchal stated that they are allowed to have both.

Dr. Mathew Hendrickson, a dentist with Park Dental, stated that the current signage makes it difficult to see them, especially if someone is driving from the East. By the time the driver sees the ground sign, they are already passed the building and need to do a U-turn.

Public Hearing opened at 7:28 pm

No one spoke and there was no written correspondence.

Public Hearing closed at 7:28 pm

M/S/P: Kreimer/Dorschner, move to recommend approval of the variance request at 8980 Hudson Boulevard N. to allow a third wall sign based on the findings and conditions identified in the staff report, **Vote: 6-0, motion carried unanimously.**

M/S/P: Dodson/Dorschner, move to add to the finding regarding locality that the lighting of the additional signs will not impact light pollution in that location, **Vote: 6-0, motion carried unanimously.**

Weeks feels that the City should be helping the business owners to be more visible so that they can stay in the community.

### **Public Hearing – Final Plat and Planned Unit Development – Wildflower 3<sup>rd</sup> Addition**

Becker started her presentation regarding the Final Plat and PUD Plans for Wildflower 3<sup>rd</sup> addition. There will be 25 single family homes located to the east of the second phase. The parkland dedication was satisfied with 1<sup>st</sup> addition. The landscape plan will need to be revised based on the landscape architects comments. There are 9 recommended conditions of approval for the final plat.

Dorschner would like the required items to say must instead of should to make it more clear.

Weeks is wondering who would make the decision regarding the 2 options of sanitary sewer. Becker stated that it is between the developer and the City Engineer if there is approval on the equipment for the grinder pump. The construction plans regarding this would need to be approved prior to recording of the final plat.

Dorschner is wondering about the theming elements listed in the Preliminary Plat conditions. Becker stated that the theming was encouraged, but not required.

Public Hearing opened at 7:41 pm

Becker stated that there has been a number of requests to see plans and Richard Smith had a question regarding phasing.

Public Hearing closed at 7:42 pm

Dodson is concerned about the grinder pumps. The Farms of Lake Elmo has had issues with the grinder pumps and they can back up. Dodson stated that after speaking to the City Engineer he has less concerns. City Engineer Griffin stated that the lifetime cost of the grinder pump is less than a lift station. However, the grinder pumps have to be replaced about every 7 years and can be costly.

Hartley feels that there should be a central lift station rather than having people maintain individual grinder pumps. Dodson is wondering if the City needs to provide notification of what type of system the home has when the home is purchased. Becker stated that there is not. Weeks stated it is up to the homeowner to understand the

mechanics and what they are purchasing. Kreimer feels that this item should be left as it is written and be left to the developer and the City Engineer.

Dorschner is concerned that a lot of this is in the FEMA flood zone. Is this something that new homeowners are made aware of when they purchase these homes? Becker stated that it has been modified to be taken out of the FEMA district.

M/S/P: Kreimer/Dodson, move to recommend approval of the final plat and PUD development plans for the Wildflower at Lake Elmo 3<sup>rd</sup> Addition with 9 conditions based on the findings listed in the staff report, ***Vote: 6-0, motion carried unanimously***

### **Business Item – Comprehensive Plan Draft Review**

Jennifer Haskamp, SHC Consulting, has been working on the Comprehensive Plan for approximately a year. There have been 9 meetings with the advisory panel, which met almost once a month. The advisory group has been working on each of the components of the comprehensive plan. There have been a few stakeholder meetings with areas that are slated to change and areas that are not planned to change. Members of SHC have attended several City events to try to get feedback from the general community.

The draft Land Use chapter contains goal statements, checklist items that are required by the Metropolitan Council, some new land use designations and document highlights. There are “call outs” called Land Use Goals that will be seen within the document. The Checklist items are the high level items that need to be in the document. These include Community designations, existing land use, future land use, density calculations and staged development and growth.

Existing Land Use is important because it helps to establish patterns, gaps and deficiencies. The Existing land use is not zoning. It is an actual documentation of what the land is being used for today. Existing land use does not establish entitlement.

Future Land Use Plan keeps the MUSA the same as 2030 plan with the exception of Royal Golf and Olson Lake. The objective is to achieve a minimum of 3.0 dwelling units per acre in the MUSA area. There is an increased diversity in land uses in all staging/phasing areas to establish a balanced pattern.

Dodson is wondering if the Royal Golf numbers are counted towards the average. Becker stated that it is counted towards the average numbers, but does not decrease the average to less than 3. The big contributing factors to the future land use plan were market considerations and what is supportable. The South Planning Area in the previous Comprehensive Plan had the commercial and business park overstated from a land use acreage perspective, and now is shown as mixed use designation. Since Woodbury has already developed a regional retail center just on the Southside of I-94 therefore, the likelihood Lake Elmo will create a second regional retail or commercial

center just North of I-94 is slim. If Lake Elmo left the commercial and business district in the quantities and acreage as in the existing Comprehensive Plan, it would drive down the values, and quality Lake Elmo is looking for. Dodson stated from a tax base standpoint, there should be more diversity. Ms. Haskamp offered mixed use designations reduce Comprehensive Plan Amendments. Ms. Haskamp also added an important point is the mixed use category is across the full land use designation and is how Lake Elmo is going to achieve bringing required average density up. Another factor is that there is enough land in the designated MUSA to accommodate current projections. No more needs to be added unless we want to. The last factor is that the Met Council has stated that we can't reduce the MUSA.

It is also important to plan for the rural areas as well. This means that in this area, on average, there needs to be one dwelling unit per 10 acres.

Hartley asked about the statement in the future land use section on page 12 that states "discourage future development of rural residential patterns (unsewered lots of 2.5 acres or less) and where opportunities exist, plan for rural development at densities that are not greater than 1 unit per 10 acres". Hartley would like to know if this is a hard and fast rule. Haskamp stated that on page 11, the policies are outlined in the Metropolitan Council's Thrive 2040 Land Use Policy. Dodson asked where the density stands outside the MUSA. Haskamp stated that it is irrelevant right now and is actually tracking forward to discourage development of less than 2.5 acres. Haskamp stated that the way Lake Elmo has developed in the rural areas will make it difficult to sewer those areas. The Met Council has been using the density of 1 unit per 10 acres in the rural areas for the last 20 years.

Dodson asked about trails and bike paths. Haskamp stated that there is a separate chapter that deals with Parks, trails and open space and a separate chapter that deals with transportation. The parks, trails and open space chapter looks at bike paths from a recreation standpoint. The transportation chapter looks at biking trails from a transportation standpoint, and they might cross over.

Kreimer is confused why there are different density ranges between the Village and 94 areas. Ms. Haskamp stated that this was how it was reflected in the 2030 comp plan. Comments received during this process supported having lower densities for the same zoning types in the Old Village, so she did not recommend a change. Ms. Haskamp noted that her market research showed that in order to sustain commerce in the Old Village, more households are necessary, so they converted a Village Mixed Use area to a higher density Village High Density area to attempt to compensate for this.

Weeks stated that it is important to take into consideration the capacity of the water supply and how many units can be supported. It is also important to consider that the sewer pipe wasn't really sized for extreme density in the Old Village and is not willing to change the size of those pipes. Hartley stated that the main pipe that runs along Lake

Elmo Avenue to 94 only has a specific capacity. Weeks stated that the City Engineer might need to be consulted before more units are being planned for this area.

Weeks stated that it is important to keep in mind that the downtown is only 2/10 of a mile. It is very small and there are parking issues and residences mixed in. The City needs to be careful about where to put more density. Weeks stated that the Comprehensive Plan talks about keeping the character of the downtown. There currently are 60 businesses downtown.

Dorschner stated that if there is more density, it needs to be designed well. There is a lot more traffic downtown on Lake Elmo Avenue and County 14 with the additional development.

Dodson asked about the section regarding solar access. Haskamp stated that it is a required component of the checklist. Lake Elmo has a lot of access to sunlight if people wanted to have solar energy sources they would be viable.

Weeks is wondering what the 2015 system statement is. Haskamp stated that there is a system statement that is issued for every city and is the guide on how to comply with the four regional systems.

#### **City Council Updates – March 6, 2018 Meeting**

- i) Lighting Ordinance – passed

#### **Staff Updates**

1. Upcoming Meetings
  - a. March 26, 2018
  - b. April 9, 2018
2. MAC CEP Report Open House April 4 at 6pm at Oakland Middle School
3. Comprehensive Plan Update – Open House April 11 7-9 pm

Meeting adjourned at 9:47 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Ziertman  
Planning Program Assistant