



**CITY OF LONG LAKE
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
November 10, 2009**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m. by Chair Crump.

Present: Committee Members Hultmann, Crump, Hoen and Loosen; City Councilmember Olson; City Administrator Post.

Absent: Committee Member Skjaret.

APPROVE AGENDA

Commissioner Hoen moved to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner Hultmann seconded. Ayes: all.

CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes of the October 13, 2009 Planning Commission Meeting

Commissioner Loosen moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Commissioner Hoen seconded. Ayes: all.

OPEN CORRESPONDENCE

Chair Crump invited residents to come forward at this time and address the Planning Commission on items that are not on the regular agenda.

Jim Gulbranson, 1575 West Wayzata Boulevard, stated that the City business community has gone through uncertainty this year due to road construction and closures and advised that, although the Wayzata Boulevard mill and overlay project is near completion, the current economy and the completed bypass have both contributed to this uncertainty. He advised that homes and businesses in the City that were vacant remain vacant and others continue to be added to that list, including the recent addition of Burger King. He reported that a small number of business and property owners gathered to discuss the future of the City in terms of rebranding and a possible zoning moratorium. He stated that no one knows how to get people traffic back into the City or which type of businesses would be interested in opening in Long Lake, but advised that the issue had been researched and the group did have some ideas. He stated that in order to bring new business and people to the City, Long Lake could consider offering a zoning amnesty for a

period of one year in which zoning regulations could be relaxed and business owners could come to the City with their ideas to determine if a collaboration could be made. He advised that there is a lot of extra space in the industrial park and more available every day. He explained that the City is without high-speed internet access, which is necessary for most businesses. He stated that there may be a potential for wireless or fiber-optic internet service and thought that was an issue the Planning Commission could further explore.

Chair Crump clarified that the idea was for a zoning amnesty rather than a moratorium.

Mr. Gulbranson stated that idea would be to publicly advertise that Long Lake is looking for business owners to come to the City and bring their ideas, whether or not the ideas actually met existing zoning regulations. He questioned how the City could be rebranded with all the current regulations and zoning stipulations.

Chair Crump questioned if more information could be provided in regard to the aspect of rebranding.

Mr. Gulbranson stated that the rebranding was the great unknown and advised that maybe the downtown village concept was no longer going to work.

Chair Crump questioned if a survey of local businesses would be appropriate to gather additional information.

April Wysocki, a local business owner, stated that she would like for people to be able to come into the City to shop, have lunch, other activities. She explained that the City should be a destination, where someone could spend the day, rather than a missed local community because of the bypass. She stated that in talking with customers she has learned that the City does not have sufficient shopping for residents and to draw in passersby. She also suggested the possible rezoning of Willow Drive area from industrial to business. She advised that, in regard to the high-speed internet issue, some business owners have chosen to go to nearby communities that have access to that service.

Commissioner Loosen stated that he was a part of the original discussion with this group of business and property owners, and therefore was aware that the item would be brought to the attention of the Commission tonight. He clarified that with the uncertainty that is in the community, between the road construction, bypass, and economy and in order to gain additional perspective, a one year amnesty could be offered to openly allow businesses, that may not be typical to the City, to come forward with their ideas and desires in regard to opening a business within the city.

Ms. Wysocki stated that one advantage that the City has is that it is only a 20-minute drive from downtown Minneapolis.

Chair Crump stated that Commissioner Loosen is the appointed business liaison for the Commission and offered for Mr. Gulbranson and Ms. Wysocki to meet with

Commissioner Loosen and City Administrator Post to further discuss this item. He advised that the issue would then be brought forward as an item on the agenda for the December meeting of the Planning Commission.

Mr. Gulbranson confirmed that he and Ms. Wysocki would definitely be willing to work with City staff in regard to this issue. He advised that he and Ms. Wysocki would be attending the City Council meeting the following week to discuss these issues during their agenda open correspondence as well. He hoped that a member of the City Council might also join in the discussion with City staff prior to the next Planning Commission meeting.

Andre Thomas, Co-Owner of E-Ways Recyclers and Cinergy LLC explained the different types of high speed internet connections available. He advised that while certain internet services are available in the City of Long Lake, true high-speed DSL internet is not available for homeowners and business owners.

City Administrator Post stated that the issue of high-speed internet is not new to this area and explained that LMCC is considering applying for Federal Grant funds to lay fiber optic cable around the Lake Minnetonka area. He explained that the project would be quite expensive. He also stated that Mediacom is the main broadband supplier in this area and does not have the financial resources provide higher levels of internet infrastructure than their competitors offer.

Commissioner Loosen stated that while the slower internet can be frustrating for homeowners it is very frustrating for business owners that use that type of service to support their business. He advised that he had actually lost a tenant because high-speed internet is not available in the area.

Commissioner Hoen questioned how the word would be spread if in fact an agreement can be reached in terms of a zoning amnesty.

Mr. Gulbranson reported that the media would be alerted that Long Lake would be one of the first cities in the nation, second to Dallas, to offer a zoning amnesty.

Commissioner Loosen stated that it could be advertised as a zoning invitation.

Ms. Wysocki stated that the group of business and property owners had contacts in the news media and thought that this situation would be a bright spot in the sea of financial difficulties currently being reported.

Mr. Gulbranson stated that he believed the bypass offered the City a golden opportunity to review the priorities and to think of the community as consumer friendly.

Ms. Wysocki stated that she did not think that the bypass had to be a negative aspect and could instead rebrand the City as a local town by a lake with nice shops and activities.

She stated that she believed that everything should be solid and everyone should be on the same page prior to the media being alerted.

Chair Crump stated that he heard two issues tonight that should be addressed, the first being the desire for Long Lake, both for the present and in the future, being developer and development friendly. He confirmed that Mr. Gulbranson, Ms. Wysocki, Commissioner Loosen, and City Administrator Post would meet to further discuss the issue. He advised that City Administrator Post should also review the comprehensive plan to determine what flexibility or amnesty could be given in regard to the zoning regulations and ordinances. He stated that the issue of high-speed internet could also be reviewed to determine what steps are being made with Mediacom and LMCC and whether or not another company should be allowed to come into the City.

City Administrator Post confirmed that Long Lake is a member of the LMCC, which franchises the video services and advised that the franchise agreement does allow competitive high speed internet providers. He advised that when a company is determining whether or not it would be financially beneficial to provide high-speed internet service to a City, infrastructure investment costs versus future revenues would be evaluated.

Mr. Gulbranson suggested that the City partner with a neighboring city such as Orono to attempt to gain high-speed internet services.

Commissioner Hultmann stated that he wanted to ensure that business owners did not think that TIF funding would be offered or any other financial subsidy during the proposed amnesty period.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Continuing Discussion Regarding City Sign Ordinance

City Administrator Post stated that during the previous meeting of the Planning Commission the recommendation was made to the City Council in regard to the creation of a separate sign district, which would run along Highway 12. He stated that the idea was introduced to the City Council at a worksession. He reported that the consensus of the Council was not to create a separate signage district and that the current sign ordinance was sufficient, with the exception of a few clarifying language changes.

Chair Crump stated he was present at the council worksession and that he understood that the thought of the City Council was that development of the City should remain consistent with the "village" feeling. He explained that the Council felt that, if anything, signage should not be allowed along the Highway 12 corridor at all, and should instead be focused within the City. He stated that the Council was open to cleaning up some of the technicalities within the ordinance but explained that it was highly unlikely the City Council would pass anything in regard to signage along Highway 12. He stated that it is not often that the thoughts of the Planning Commission and those of the City Council are

not in agreement but apparently, this is one of those situations, and advised that the Commission should instead focus on items that would be in agreement with the direction of the City Council. He stated that in regard to the sign ordinance, the technicalities could be cleaned-up within the ordinance and after that point, the Commission should continue on in other areas.

City Administrator Post stated that he believed that the City Council was open to discussion regarding changing the square footage maximum of monument signs.

OTHER BUSINESS

Council Liaison Report

Nothing to report.

Commission Member Business

Chair Crump stated that at the east end of Highway 12, only the westbound turn lane has been striped and the eastbound turn lane had not yet been corrected. He stated that should the defunct daycare on the southside become operational it would cause problems. He stated that the east and westbound turn lanes do not align at this time and explained that the turn lanes just need to be realigned.

Staff Business

City Administrator Post advised that two vacancies would be available on the Planning Commission and stated that while Chair Crump would be reapplying, Commissioner Hoen would not and the openings would be advertised in November to the general public. He stated that the Park Commission will also have a vacancy needing to be filled for 2010. He stated that the Planning Commission has had a volunteer appreciation dinner in December in previous years and asked if the Commission would be in favor of having that event again this year. Hearing support, City Administrator Post advised that the dinner would most likely be held prior to the start of the December 8th meeting in the conference room at City Hall.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Hultmann moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 p.m. Commissioner Hoen seconded. Ayes: all.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Post
City Administrator