

**APPROVED MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF WYOMING, MINNESOTA
APRIL 27, 2021
7:00PM**

CALL TO ORDER:

Planning Commission Chairman Lobermeier called the Regular Meeting of the Wyoming Planning Commission for April 27, 2021 to order at 7:00 PM

CALL OF ROLL:

On a Call of the Roll the following members of the Wyoming Planning Commission were present: Mark Lobermeier, Kevin Teel, Bryan Murdock, and Roger Carr

ABSENT: Katie West

Also Present: Fred Weck Zoning Administrator, Council Liaison Brett Ohnstad, Mayor Lisa Iverson, and Eddie Prigge, EDA, Steve Sicheneder, EDA

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

OPEN FORUM: NONE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. Consider approving the minutes of the “Regular Meeting” of the Wyoming, Minnesota Planning Commission for April 13, 2021

Commissioner Murdock noted one thing in the minutes that should be changed on page 2, fifth paragraph; the last sentence should read, “He asked how the City can approve building in those particular lots without the structure getting smaller.”

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER CARR, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER TEEL, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE “REGULAR MEETING” OF THE WYOMING, MINNESOTA PLANNING COMMISSION FOR APRIL 13, 2021 AS AMENDED.

Roll Call Vote:

Voting Aye: Murdock, Teel, Carr, and Lobermeier

Voting Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: West

SCHEDULED PUBLIC HEARINGS: NONE

NEW BUSINESS: NONE

OLD BUSINESS:

2. Comprehensive Plan Update with the Wyoming Economic Development Authority – Chapter 14

Chair Lobermeier noted that at the last meeting he had mentioned that WSB would be getting back to

the City with updated water and sewer models for Chapter 10 as well as a review of the roads section, but explained that he had not yet received that feedback so he would follow up with them tomorrow. He noted that the Park Advisory Commission had reviewed their section and had asked for one minor change. He stated that he would like the group to work through Chapter 14, the Economic Development chapter. He explained how the Planning Commission has been reviewing the Comprehensive Plan page by page, taking notes on changes as they go. He explained that the previous version of the Comprehensive Plan did not have an economic development section which they felt was important to be included and noted that they had used some of the information from the EDA's strategic plan document so it may look familiar. He stated that one thing he would like to get input from the EDA on tonight are their thoughts surrounding the 'city center'.

Steve Sicheneder, EDA, stated that he is a strong proponent of having a strong city center.

EDA Chair Iverson stated that the thing that the EDA goes back and forth on is the definition of "City Center" as in where is it and what does that mean. She stated that what was once considered office space may not still be office space because things are changing and more people are working from home. She stated that it may be a good idea to have a conversation with the Planning Commission around the question of what the city center is and whether that means it is the center of the City, or one particular location. She asked the Planning Commission what they saw when they thought of city center.

Chair Lobermeier stated that from his perspective, he doesn't think it was about a geographic place, although it tended to be the intersection of Highway 61 and Viking Boulevard that felt the most like the city center.

Commissioner Teel agreed that he always saw that same intersection as the city center because there used to be a Tom Thumb and the former video rental place located there. He stated that if you look at the way things are developing on Highway 8, there is no way that there can be pedestrians walking around that area which he feels as needed for a city center.

Commissioner Carr stated that he agreed that the intersection of Highway 61 and Viking Boulevard are what he thinks of when he thinks of city center and noted that there used to be some chiropractors, the restaurant, there are sidewalks where people can walk around and explained that he has always considered that "downtown."

Chair Lobermeier stated that he also feels the pedestrian piece is very important and what else the City may try to attract. He stated that EDA Chair Iverson brought up a good point that there may need to be a better definition within the Comprehensive Plan regarding the city center.

EDA Chair Iverson stated that most cities have a downtown and thinks perhaps the terminology that uses the word "center" may be what she is kind of picking on.

Council Liaison Ohnstad stated that he feels there needs to be something in there that focuses travelers' attention to say this is our city center, whether it is more buildings, or more defined buildings because right now it is kind of a hodge-podge that does not have a strong center.

Chair Lobermeier stated that some cities set an architectural standard, such as light fixtures that are the same or a built-in color theme, so when you are there, you know it.

Council Liaison Ohnstad stated that it could really be something as simple as a sidewalk and lights which also are not terribly expensive.

Eddie Prigge, EDA, stated that looking at the City Center starting at the intersection of 61 and Viking, if you take a look at going west bound there is the restaurant, the daycare, the bank and then the chiropractor and office center. He stated that he thinks this is a huge obstacle with regard to growing out the city center because on the southwestern corner and seems as though it has already met its capacity.

Steve Sicheneder, EDA, stated that if the City is going to be looked at, they need to look at County Road

22, 61 and County Road 30 and look a number of blocks in each direction. He stated that they need to take a look at the buildings that are going in, and gave the example of the dental building, which while it is very nice, is not something he would consider conducive to a building in a city center. He stated this building has drainage ditches and to him, a city center should have curb, gutter, and storm sewer so it is conducive to sidewalks and walking.

Chair Lobermeier moved the discussion onto the next section and noted that this is where the EDA's strategic document was where much of this information came from.

EDA Chair Iverson stated that she does not think any of this information has changed, so it should still be accurate.

Commissioner Teel asked what #2, the third bullet point, meant when it talks about 'refine process, develop new projects in the community'. He stated that the term 'projects' seems very vague and noted that he doesn't understand what is being referenced in this point.

EDA Chair Iverson stated that when a development was looking at something, it was a very cumbersome process and they worked out those kinks to redefine the process. She asked if City Administrator Linwood had a copy of the document that makes it easier for developers to see how the City does the process.

Zoning Administrator Weck noted that these are flow charts and they are posted on the website.

Commissioner Teel reiterated that he feels the term 'projects' feels very vague and doesn't really tell him much.

Chair Lobermeier asked if it was referring to attracting new development and streamlining the process.

EDA Chair Iverson stated that this was correct and what they need to do step by step which is shown on the flow chart.

Commissioner Carr asked if the processes had already been refined.

EDA Chair Iverson stated that they have and asked if staff could show the flow chart.

City Administrator Linwood noted that he was on his personal laptop and not his City computer so he didn't have access to it, but noted that it has been refined through the strategic process and reiterated that all of these documents are available in the EDA section of the City website.

Commissioner Carr stated that if the processes had already been defined perhaps that statement could be removed because it has already been achieved.

Commissioner Murdock noted that there was a problem with the link to the information on the City website.

Mr. Prigge asked if the City had anything with regard to partnership and communication with developers that the City has met with that decided not to develop in the City. He stated that this information would be helpful to get an understanding of what is holding them back.

Zoning Administrator Weck stated that part of the reasons some of them have gone away are more to do with economics nationally and a bit about Chisago County taxes and not necessarily the City.

City Administrator Linwood noted that for multi-family, there have been a few apartments that have inquired that wanted significant reductions in WAC/SAC but also lengthy TIFs, so the economics did not make sense.

Chair Lobermeier stated that sounds like it would be more due to things on the incentive side of the equation.

Mr. Prigge asked if there had been any research done regarding the different incentives that the City provides versus other cities, especially the ones that are heavily developing their communities.

City Administrator Linwood stated that he does have that information and updated the City's tax abatement and TIF in 2018 or 2019, so they have done that and took a look at multiple communities

when they prepared that information.

Commissioner Teel asked about item #3, the second bullet point, and noted that it sounds like it is almost saying the same thing.

City Administrator Linwood stated that he believes the intent was to review and update the development costs to ensure that the City is competitive with surrounding communities.

Commissioner Murdock asked what costs he was referring to.

City Administrator Linwood answered that he was referring to development costs, such as permitting or WAC/SAC fees.

EDA Chair Iverson stated that for #4, first bullet point, they did complete that housing study within Chisago County in 2018-2019. She suggested that the wording be changed to "completed" and that it is available on the website.

Chair Lobermeier moved the discussion to the next page and noted that these were the things he put together about the relationship of the Comprehensive Plan and economic development and then a few items that will ultimately connect to the implementation plan. He asked the group to go paragraph by paragraph and look into this information.

Commissioner Teel stated that in the first sentence of the first paragraph, there is a comma after the word 'public' and he questioned what 'public' was referring to.

Chair Lobermeier reiterated that he had taken this information from various sources so he will have to look back and see what it should say. He asked if City Administrator Linwood had heard of the tool that this portion refers to with Cost of Community Service studies. He stated that he had found an intriguing article about how some communities will look at their economic development as well as their Comprehensive Plans to decide if they can afford to have land use developed.

City Administrator Linwood stated that he is not familiar with it, but noted that it does sound interesting.

EDA Chair Iverson asked Chair Lobermeier to send her his source documents for this section.

Chair Lobermeier stated that similar small area plans is an idea of trying to take a piece of property and making sure things fit. He explained that at the last meeting, they discussed I-35 North of Viking Boulevard, the former Greenwood Golf Course. A few years ago, the development plan that was put together that presented about a 12-page small area plan. He noted that the plan presented may not have been realistic, but it showed how the development would look with the different types of properties and was promotional for the developer. Overall, it did a good job of explaining what would happen and how everything would work together. He stated the developer ultimately did not move forward, but having a concept of what the City wants to see occur in those areas may be better than waiting for someone to come in and present something that isn't necessarily what the City wants, but then doesn't really have a way of saying no. He stated that a small area plan might allow the City to be able to guide things in more detail than the Comprehensive Plan for areas such as city center and will tell the developer that this is what the City is hoping to see in this location. He stated that the flip side of that would be that they have invested in a plan and bring it to the City and then the Planning Commission tells them it isn't really what they are hoping to see.

Commissioner Carr stated that he likes that concept because the one thing that keeps coming back to him for the City is how big should it be and how much is too much. He stated that the open house feedback all talked about the 'small town feel' and he would like to know how big is too big for Wyoming and at what point the small-town feel is lost.

EDA Chair Iverson asked how much it would cost a developer to put together a small area plan.

Chair Lobermeier stated that the City would put a plan together for how an area will develop and what its standards may be as a way to control how big something gets.

EDA Chair Iverson confirmed that this would be something the City would provide rather than the

developer. She stated that what she does not want to see is for a developer to see it and not come to the City to get a better understanding. She stated that she would like them to be able to look at it with context and not just go somewhere else because they didn't understand it. She stated that she is a little bit fearful of having the small area plans because she thinks face to face communication is better, so it can be explained.

Council Liaison Ohnstad stated that basically that is sounds like EDA Chair Iverson is saying that she doesn't want to kill the sale before the sale even happens.

Chair Lobermeier stated that therein lies the challenge of land use, Comprehensive Plans, and being a developing community. The balance is to and find a way to do it in a way that doesn't scare off a developer and yet develop in a way that is harmonious with other land uses and fits together. He stated that perhaps there could be more detail added in words rather than drawings and noted that this is not an attempt to layout where all the streets will go but would like to describe the types of things the City might want to see there in that particular property. He stated that to give the example of the discussion at the last meeting regarding the Greenwood Golf Course property, wetland bank was not on the list of things the City was looking for, however it may be the most practical.

City Administrator Linwood asked what size of cities Chair Lobermeier had seen use the small area plans.

Chair Lobermeier stated that they were more metro area communities, and noted that one of the ones he remembers is from Vadnais Heights. He shared the example of when his company built there and completed the small area plan for the city and it had details like the colors of the light poles and buildings and certain sized brick. He stated that it was a basic plan that laid out a concept of what could happen there and what types of development would be complementary uses.

Commissioner Murdock noted that when he was working in Duluth, their city did a really nice job of putting together small area plans and shared the things that they had looked at and assessed as part of the analysis and noted that he thinks it is paying off for them now.

EDA Chair Iverson stated that eventually they will be looking at the whole City overall which she thinks will be eye opening because they will really get an idea of how big they can develop. To Commissioner Carr's point, it asks the questions, how big is too big. She stated that she thinks everyone, including the Park Advisory Commission needs to take a look at the big picture of Wyoming. She stated that unless the entire City is considered, a small area plan may not make sense.

Chair Lobermeier moved on to Land Assembly which is putting properties together that could be purchased by a developer. He shared various examples of how and why this could be accomplished.

City Administrator Linwood noted that land assembly is neat when it works but it is complex and can be challenging because there are a lot of moving pieces.

Chair Lobermeier noted that the development that came to the City in 2019 near I-35 and Viking Boulevard, exposed a pretty significant transportation issue at the intersection of Kettle River and Viking Boulevard that he thinks, in large part, stood in the way of the development. He stated that it is a tough area because there is a lot going on right there and thinks many times economic development can be driven by transportation improvements. He stated that coming up with a long-term solution for solving some of the transportation issues that could occur, if greater development is seen. He stated that the City would want to try to get those things done. He noted that this is a great example of the questions Mr. Prigge had asked earlier about barriers to development. He asked the EDA if there was more that they would like to see included in the Comprehensive Plan to tie to what they are doing.

Mr. Sicheneder, EDA, asked about the map on page 42, and noted that the EDA owns the Bingham property and over the past two years have been trying to get housing in there with an apartment building, however the parcel is currently zoned industrial. He asked if the City should take a look at the zoning in this area and see whether industrial is appropriate for this area or not. He stated that his biggest concern with industrial is the outdoor storage component.

Mr. Prigge, EDA, stated that he would agree given the huge residential density across Forest Boulevard from the Bingham property and the desire to keep the small-town feel. He stated that having this area designated as industrial would pose a significant issue as opposed to a development for new residences.

Mr. Sicheneder, EDA, stated that he understands that is not scheduled for discussion tonight but wanted to throw it out there for the Planning Commission to review. He stated that overall the Comprehensive Plan looks good to him.

Chair Lobermeier stated that he appreciated Mr. Sicheneder bringing this point up and noted that it is part of the problem because a property is guided towards industrial when clearly, it appears that the City is actually looking for something else in that location.

City Administrator Linwood stated that the City has been marketing that property as both industrial and multi-family/commercial/residential, but one caution he would give is that manufacturing is one of the staples of the City and that is the last zoned industrial piece of property that is served with City water and sewer in the whole City. He stated that the entire corridor in the Comprehensive Plan is zoned industrial.

Mr. Sicheneder, EDA, stated that his main objection is the outdoor storage aspect which gives a real 'junky' look. He stated that if there could be a different classification that would ban outdoor storage that may be the solution and should be considered.

Zoning Administrator Weck stated that he and City Administrator Linwood had discussed the possibility of having an I-1 zone for things like the Hallberg site and an I-2 zone for the one of these types of sites where the City would fine tune what would be allowed there, such as not allowing outdoor storage. He stated that this will require creating a new zoning district.

Chair Lobermeier thanked the EDA members for attending and giving their input tonight. He suggested moving onto Chapter 11, Housing. He stated that he has liked what he has seen recently with different developers coming in and looking for flexibility and a variety of housing options.

Mayor Iverson noted that when people talk about 'small town feel', the word 'feel' is subjective. She gave the example of Hastings who has a population of around 20,000 people but many people still consider it is a small town.

Commissioner Murdock noted that he felt this section reads pretty well.

Chair Lobermeier noted that again this is borrowed text that came from the last draft put together by WSB. He stated that he would like to make sure that the growth rate number is accurate because it also factors into infrastructure.

City Administrator Linwood stated that is an issue that the City has continued to grapple with because the housing study has a much more aggressive rate and they are questioning if, for example, it should be 25, 35, or 45 but agrees that it is very important for the Comprehensive Plan as well as the infrastructure.

Chair Lobermeier stated that he noticed that Commissioner Murdock was hovering over the word 'tsunami' and explained that was from the presentation by Maxfield in their housing study and the senior housing.

Mayor Iverson stated that in her senior housing experience, the City may want to look at the quantity of senior housing that has been built and noted that those buildings are having a difficulty getting filled, although COVID may have played a part in that. She stated that there are not a lot of people that want to get into senior housing right now. She stated that she would like the City to take a closer look at senior housing because she thinks it is not what it was expected to be.

Chair Lobermeier stated that he thinks this section could just be removed.

Commissioner Carr stated that he agreed that it didn't need to be included, but asked what was meant

by senior housing. He asked if the detached single level townhomes were considered senior housing. Chair Lobermeier noted that the Planning Commission had just recommended approval of some at the last meeting.

Mayor Iverson stated that she supports removing the tsunami portion.

Commissioner Murdock asked about the reference to multi-housing.

Commissioner Teel noted that when he thinks of this, he thinks of it as having separate entrances and gave the example of a home that is attached to the house, but has an in-law suite where they have their own entrance. He stated that he doesn't believe any of that has been planned for the City.

Chair Lobermeier stated that he cannot recall where he got this information, so he will have to check his sources. He stated that the next section is Community Design Policies which was taken from the last Comprehensive Plan from 2009. He stated that he made a note here questioning whether it belongs in the newest plan. He stated that he thinks life-cycle housing is very important, but thinks the rest of this language from Community Design Policies down through the second to the last paragraph could be removed.

Commissioner Murdock questioned whether Community Design Policies would be where the City could outline some of the connectivity issues as some of these developments are fit into the City and gave the Summerfields development as an example.

Chair Lobermeier reiterated that this is leftover text and the question of whether it goes under housing. He stated that he liked the thought about how to connect different neighborhoods and suggested that somehow the dots between density and lots sizes need to be connected.

Commissioner Teel stated that he agreed with Commissioner Murdock regarding the Summerfields development because he was disappointed that they were not going to put in a neighborhood park. He stated that there are many developments in other cities where if they are not within walking distance of a City park that the developer puts in a neighborhood park and then the maintenance of it becomes part of their association dues.

Chair Lobermeier stated that there is a process that the City goes through to decide whether it wants them to put in a park or pay a fee. He stated that in the Summerfields example the Joint Park Planning Commission had asked for funds in lieu of land.

Commissioner Murdock stated that he has often heard that but is not sure it is the right priority.

Chair Lobermeier suggested finding a way in the next draft to rework the Community Design Policies a bit to add something about parks.

Commissioner Murdock asked if there was anything that could still be done with Heims Lake and gave the example of Comfort Lake that has no access for the public, except for the boat ramp. He stated that means the only way a community member can enjoy the lake is by standing on the dock.

Chair Lobermeier agreed that the City does not have a water-based park area.

Commissioner Murdock stated that he did not think the City would, but when looking at these proposed developments, but would like to see a way to create some sort of ambience between stamped out smaller lot home and stamped out smaller lot home.

Chair Lobermeier reiterated that this section will need a closer look and referenced a tabled that talked about characteristics of future streets. He noted that he didn't understand why that was part of this section. He stated that, to him, this feels like it would be a better fit for the transportation or road section of the Comprehensive Plan.

Council Liaison Ohnstad stated that in addition to parks, he would like to see trails be included as and access to parks. He gave the example of Fireside Park because there is no convenient way to get there except for a long walk or a drive.

Chair Lobermeier stated that the next section is the Parks, Trails, and Recreation section which the Park Advisory Commission has already gone through and given it their stamp of approval. He asked if the Commission would like to go through this section tonight. He stated that the City already has a lot of parks but whether there are good linkages between them depends on your perspective. He stated that Council Liaison Ohnstad's comments are good because it brings up both a strength and a weakness for the City in the long-term, because there are two regional trails intersecting in the City which should be promoted. During the community survey, there was good feedback on what the residents thought the City should have in terms of outdoor park facilities.

Commissioner Murdock noted that the map included is nice but asked if there was anything that goes into greater detail about each of the parks and their amenities.

Chair Lobermeier stated that the table included can be found on the City website and it has clickable links for each of the parks.

City Administrator Linwood noted that they are also starting to do links for videos of each park as well.

Commissioner Murdock asked about Blue Spruce Park and whether there were any plans for the open green space.

Commissioner Teel stated that at one point there was a lot of talk about a dog park, but it is one of those things that a lot of people want to see in the City and a lot of people are against it.

City Administrator Linwood stated that the challenge is that more or less everyone thinks a dog park is a fantastic idea until it is proposed right next to their house. He stated that he knows that the Park Advisory Commission have discussed it, but isn't sure where it falls on their priority list.

Mayor Iverson stated that it has been frequently discussed but their current focus is on upgrading the parks. She stated that she feels the City is very fortunate to have 17 parks especially considering the size of the City. There are also two major trails along with other smaller trails within the City.

Chair Lobermeier noted that he had included a concept plan of a park that is being updated in the City.

Mayor Iverson noted that by the time this document is printed, she believes that the update to Swenson Park should be completed.

City Administrator Linwood explained that there was a hold up with some of the grant funds due to the pandemic, but they are anticipating that money will be released and will be able to start work on the park within the next few weeks.

Mayor Iverson stated that Swenson Park will be the only City park that is fully ADA accessible and that is something that they will work towards with the other parks.

Chair Lobermeier stated that this concept plan can be removed if it will be completed by the time the Comprehensive Plan is done. He noted the next section on Park Acquisition which is the place that the Park Advisory Commission commented on. The Park Advisory Commission stated that they did not want to state that the City was not seeking to develop any new park property and asked for that statement to be changed. He noted that the next section is Park Classifications and drew the Commissions attention to the item that he added regarding public water access which is something, as mentioned by Commissioner Murdock, that the Commission should think about. He noted that the Park Design Guidelines came from the prior Comprehensive Plan. He noted that there is a chapter in the section that talks about the trails.

Commissioner Murdock asked if the Swedish Immigrant Trail was the highway.

Chair Lobermeier explained that some of the trail is developed and some of it is not yet developed.

Zoning Administrator Weck explained that most of it is the old rail bed, so as those properties are developed the City will get some of the trail areas developed.

Commissioner Murdock asked why it was included on the map if it is not yet constructed and cannot be

used.

Chair Lobermeier stated that one of the maps shows it as a future trail connection.

Commissioner Murdock stated that he has seen the Swedish Immigrant Trail referenced many times.

Commissioner Carr clarified that the map has it marked two different ways, including one where it already exists and one for the future trail.

Mayor Iverson stated that this is a County thing and thinks they added a few miles to it in 2020 and it just keeps creeping along. She stated that she believes that it is supposed to meet up with the Sunrise Trail but it will take a while before it is completed.

Commissioner Murdock noted that he thought it already existed because of the way everyone talks about it.

City Administrator Linwood stated that the County has updates on this trail on their website.

Chair Lobermeier stated that Commissioner Murdock's concerns are duly noted and the references should refer to the proposed trail so it doesn't give the impression that is already completed.

Mayor Iverson mentioned the Comfort Lake trail and stated that she believes with the development that has happened that one may be difficult to construct.

Commissioner Murdock stated that he doesn't want to deceive people with the information included in the Comprehensive Plan.

Chair Lobermeier suggested that the Commission wrap up discussion at this point in the Comprehensive Plan, and continue at the next meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS: NONE

UPDATES:

3. Hunter Hill – Final Plat was approved; Heims Lake Villas North – Rezoned, Planned Unit Development, and Preliminary Plat were approved.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER CARR, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER TEEL, TO ADJOURN THE APRIL 27, 2021 "REGULAR MEETING" OF THE WYOMING, MINNESOTA PLANNING COMMISSION AT 8:53 PM.

Roll Call Vote:

Voting Aye: Murdock, Teel, Carr, and Lobermeier

Voting Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: West