

**APPROVED MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF WYOMING, MINNESOTA
FEBRUARY 22, 2022
7:00PM**

CALL TO ORDER:

Planning Commission Chairman Lobermeier called the Regular Meeting of the Wyoming Planning Commission for February 22, 2022 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, Katie West, and Roger Carr

ABSENT: None

Also Present: Fred Weck Zoning Administrator

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 February 8, 2022

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER MURDOCK, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER TEEL, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE “REGULAR MEETING” OF THE WYOMING, MINNESOTA PLANNING COMMISSION FOR FEBRUARY 8, 2022, AS SUBMITTED.

Voting Aye: Murdock, West, Teel, Carr, and Lobermeier

Voting Nay: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

SCHEDULED PUBLIC HEARINGS:

2. **Rezone: Z-22-001 Rural Residential II (R-2) to Commercial ©**
Location: Lake Boulevard/Highway 8 and Hazel Avenue
Applicant: Richard Gregory, Jr.
Owner: Westkey Enterprises, LLC
Property ID Number: 21.10721.10

Zoning Administrator Weck explained that staff has reviewed the application for rezoning and is recommending approval of both the map amendment and the rezoning.

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER WEST, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER TEEL, TO OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING.

Voting Aye: Murdock, West, Teel, Carr, and Lobermeier
Voting Nay: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None

Zoning Administrator Weck explained that he had received a phone from Mr. Hall, who owns the property just to the north of this parcel who was unable to attend the meeting. He indicated that he does not have a problem with the rezoning, but would like, when there is the site plan review, that they screen the north face near the residential side. He explained that he had communicated to Mr. Hall that the City's ordinance does require screening. He stated also, a Mr. Neil Rever contacted him a number of times and had expected him to attend tonight's meeting. He explained that Mr. Rever is opposed to the rezoning, but he was not certain of his reasons.

Commissioner West asked if Mr. Rever had an abutting property.

Zoning Administrator Weck stated that his property abutted this parcel directly to the west with Bonnie Christensen.

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER TEEL, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER CARR, TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING.

Voting Aye: Murdock, West, Teel, Carr, and Lobermeier
Voting Nay: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None

Commissioner Murdock noted that he was not in attendance the last time this was discussed and asked if there was any prospective future use.

Richard Gregory stated that he owns Gregory Contracting which is a residential remodeling company. He stated that they are growing to the point where they are busting at the seams of their current facility, so he has been looking for a few years and felt this property would work well for them. He stated that they would like to put in an office building that is a bit over 5,000 square feet with an area up front for a showroom as their Phase I. He explained that Phase II would be a larger storage building where he could put his trucks and trailers towards the back of the property.

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER CARR, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER MURDOCK, TO RECOMMEND REZONING THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT LAKE BOULEVARD/HIGHWAY 8 AND HAZEL AVENUE FROM RURAL RESIDENTIAL II (R-2) TO COMMERCIAL (C) AND TO AMEND THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MAP TO REFLECT THIS CHANGE FOR PROPERTY ID NUMBER: 21.10721.10

Voting Aye: Murdock, West, Teel, Carr, and Lobermeier
Voting Nay: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None

NEW BUSINESS: NONE

OLD BUSINESS:

3. Comprehensive Plan Update – Housing Chapter

Chair Lobermeier noted that the Commission had left the conversation at the previous meeting about the Commission coming back with some goals and give them a chance to read through the documents that had been submitted just prior to the meeting.

Commissioner Murdock stated that the Chisago County information stated that there was a 1% availability of housing in the City a few years ago. He stated that the City is kind of known as a bedroom community and does not have high crime, which sounds pretty good to him. He wondered how much the City wants to chase different types of housing after reading all of that information. He asked if the City just wanted to be a 'better' bedroom community with amenities for the residents. He stated that he has an understanding of how higher density would be necessary with some of the areas left to develop, but also was less eager to think that a very aggressive affordable housing/high density plan is something that everyone would want or appreciate. He stated that the Met Council really does push for that and gave the example of East Bethel. He stated that he thinks the City can just summarize some of the existing housing and identify and lay out in the maps where they think some of these housing projects will occur and provide some developer tools and advertising about the areas that are available for that type of development. He stated that something that would be good for this section would be better communication with developers. He stated that he also thinks stating the 'why' for the higher densities is an important improvement to this section. He asked if the information they were given held the most current data on housing.

Zoning Administrator Weck confirmed that the Chisago County Housing Study held the most current information available.

Commissioner Teel noted that the study was completed in 2018.

Chair Lobermeier suggested that there may be some census data from 2020 that may have additional housing data.

Commissioner Murdock stated that from what he had read, the population may be peaking and Minnesota's had barely increased in the last year. He stated that the discussion about senior housing having to be reusable for other types of housing as soon as the curve starts coming back down was very interesting. He stated that he came away with almost a 'status quo' mentality with some additional housing options feeling like a pretty good fit for the City versus an aggressive high density housing program.

Commissioner West stated that when she was reading it, the question came to mind of what kind of community does Wyoming want to be. She stated that she thinks a lot of people have moved here specifically for this type of community and noted that just because something is high density housing does not mean it will be affordable, nor does affordable housing necessarily mean it is high density. She noted that other communities have a certain percentage such as 15% needs to be low income housing. She reiterated that people move out to Wyoming for the space and explained that she agreed with Commissioner Murdock about the status quo.

Commissioner Teel stated that when he read the current housing conditions of Chisago County, he thought the whole two paragraphs seemed to be negative like they were slapping the City's hand. He stated that he is happy that he lives in a neighborhood where 4 of his neighbors have been there since the first day. He asked why it was bad that the City only had 1% vacancy because, in his opinion, that is a good thing. He stated that he also agreed with Commissioners Murdock and West.

Commissioner Carr stated that he also agreed and as Commissioner West said, just because you put in apartments does not mean it will be affordable. He stated that as discussed at their last

meeting, the question becomes where the City would put an apartment building because most people in that living situation want walkability and public transit to get to different things and Wyoming is more of a bedroom community.

The Commissioner stressed the differences between what was available in the City versus Forest Lake.

Chair Lobermeier stated that something put at a distance or near an Industrial Area it is harder for him to see high density. He noted that in the current Comprehensive Plan, there is not even a high density designation for land use and only has medium and 'higher' density. He stated that there was a proposal for an apartment complex on the Bingham property and he can only think of that one and the possible one on Greenwood behind the Village Inn. He stated that he thinks the 'affordable' piece is not solvable by a Housing Chapter. He stated that one of the things in the North Branch chapter that he liked was in their description of the life cycle housing. He stated that they did not touch on affordability but talked about entry level housing, first time home buyers, move up buyers, empty nesters, young seniors, and older seniors. He stated that this got him to wondering about which domino would need to fall in order for those things to happen in the City. He stated that the one thing the City doesn't have is the senior housing and wonders if the life cycle piece resonates with people. He stated that what he sees being built in the City is not entry level housing. He stated that he agrees with the sentiment shared earlier that the residents all came to the City for a reason and it was because they like how it is, but does think the life cycle housing would be something for them to think about.

Commissioner Murdock stated that they have talked about finding what is unique about the City. He stated that there is a hospital, a sizeable clinic, and there is a need for more senior housing. He noted that seniors like to live close to their healthcare so he sees an opportunity to have a bedroom and senior community near the hospital.

Chair Lobermeier stated that there had been thought that there would be senior housing, not a care facility, but senior housing on the same campus as well as other types of development such as a restaurant, but not much of that has happened. He stated that it would make some sense in this location or near the core downtown with less looking out beyond those areas.

Zoning Administrator Weck explained that they are looking at rooftops, so when the City gets more houses, they will start putting more stuff there. He noted that he had done a final inspection at one of the Summerfields homes, and noted that the lots are very small. He stated that it is basically a split entry 'starter home', which when he started in the City would have been around \$150,000 and is now \$446,000 with an unfinished basement. He stated that despite that, they are selling like hotcakes.

Commissioner West stated that perhaps the medium to higher density is okay for the City and suggested that high density is not needed in the City because she did not see too many places in the City for an apartment complex or even a senior center. She noted that one place that may be possible could be by Splitrocks.

Commissioner Murdock noted that the City already had a senior area with the 55+ trailer park near his home. He noted that it is a bit higher density and a wonderful little spot and community.

Zoning Administrator Weck noted that he believes there are 50 or 60 trailer homes in the park and noted that there is also the R.V. portion for people who are not there all year round.

Commissioner Murdock noted that it is very quiet and has not seen the police need to go into the park for anything. He reiterated that it is well kept and very nice.

Commissioner West stated that she thinks that would fit in the category of medium to higher density rather than having it say, definitively, 'high density'.

Chair Lobermeier noted that the medium and higher density residential allows for apartments, but asked if that designation was too wide open.

Zoning Administrator Weck agreed that it was too wide open.

Chair Lobermeier explained that he had started thinking that they should put in a fourth category that is high density or multi-family, but has no idea where they could be put other than a few spots on the map.

Commissioner Murdock asked if the Fairview area was already likely to be higher density.

The Commission discussed various areas throughout the City where multi-family housing may make sense and where medium to higher density neighborhoods would make more sense rather than an apartment complex and discussed the differences.

Zoning Administrator Weck explained that the R-6 zoning is high density, where apartments could go. He explained that the City also allows townhomes and single family dwellings in that same R-6 Zoning though. He stated that if the Commission wants to prohibit those smaller projects, they will need to spell it out in the Comprehensive Plan that the multi-family area is what it is to be used for and not for something else with a different density. He explained that this is where he struggles when talking to people because it turns into, "Well, you can do a lot of things....what do you want to do?" He stated that in this scenario it is not really the City's plan anymore and becomes the developer's plan.

Chair Lobermeier stated that another choice would be to remove apartments from something that they want to see in medium to higher density neighborhoods.

Commissioner Murdock noted that they would also have a separate category for apartments.

Commissioner West asked if that would end up being too specific and could deter people who want to put in row houses, townhomes, or a multiplex.

Chair Lobermeier explained that was why he was thinking instead of calling if high density residential it could be called multi-family.

Zoning Administrator Weck noted that the City could also define what they consider 'multi-family'.

Commissioner Murdock stated that he thinks that would be helpful.

Chair Lobermeier stated that some communities take the area that is called the 'core downtown' and would say at some point there will be a redevelopment instead of a boat storage warehouse there may be apartments and a coffee shop.

The Commission reviewed the map and discussed areas that could be used for high density housing.

Commissioner Teel asked what the purpose was, in the long run, or putting multi-family anywhere in the City. He asked if it was because they want that allowed to be built or is it because they are trying to meet some standard, like affordability. He stated that he did not think that just labeling something multi-family would equate to it being affordable and asked if the point was to get more density in those areas, or to try to make things more affordable. He gave the example of the Lennar townhomes in Hugo which are not affordable for a first time home buyer.

Chair Lobermeier stated that, for him, it is less about affordable and more about trying to have diversity in the housing stock and providing a lot of options for people to choose from. He stated that the City does not have very many apartments.

Commissioner Murdock stated that he thinks it is the best use for their limited municipal service areas because there are only so many places available before a lot of money would need to be

spent to be able to hook up sewer and water to other areas.

Commissioner West stated that she has a hard time with multi-family because, for her, it is geared towards making sure that people who work in the community can live in the community. She stated that for her, affordability is the key factor but is not sure how the City can make a developer create a space that can be rented for \$500 because the City cannot dictate that. She stated that she is not sure that Wyoming is the place for apartment buildings.

Commissioner Murdock stated that perhaps the only thing the City can do is to say that they would like certain types of housing in certain areas and beyond that it will be the market forces that dictate development.

Commissioner West noted that there are some communities that have standards such as 15% of the housing needs to be able to accommodate low income housing.

Zoning Administrator Weck explained some details about the Bingham property that had been mentioned. He stated the developer, in order to make affordable housing, needed a bunch of subsidies from the State and the Federal government and also still needed some market rate units to balance the lower rate units. He noted that he had applied two years in a row was turned down both times and thinks it is probably more because of its location in Wyoming rather than down in the Twin Cities that hurt him.

Commissioner Murdock stated that it would need to be heavily subsidized in order to make it work.

Commissioner Teel stated that he does not picture himself moving to Wyoming in order to live in an apartment. He explained that he would move though to be part of a bedroom community. He stated that just to say that the City needs to put apartments in makes no sense to him.

Zoning Administrator Weck noted that the developer for the Bingham property was even looking for free WAC/SAC from the City, which would basically be getting \$1 million.

A woman from the audience stated that Forest Lake has brought in a lot of apartments which has pushed many people out of Forest Lake because it is bringing more riff-raff from the Twin Cities. She stated that she does not feel the area needs any more apartments.

Commissioner Murdock noted that if you get outside of the boundaries of the City and look at it a bit more broadly, there is quite a housing mix available within just a few miles, for example from Wyoming to the other end of Forest Lake. He stated that you could say that this two city geographic area has a substantial amount of multi-family housing.

Chair Lobermeier stated that there were a few things in the Cambridge example that he really liked. He stated that they had 2 housing goals, 'support variety of housing types' and 'support quality of life through development of diverse, well designed, and well connected residential neighborhoods'. He stated that it does not state that a certain percentage of affordable or subsidized housing nor does it try to change the way the city feels or the 'sense of place' and yet it allows for some variety. He stated that they could wait until they do a small area plan for the core downtown, which could include senior housing and apartments. He stated that he thinks there is consensus that they want to maintain who the City is and the quality of life that is available here rather than to just have high density housing for the purpose of saying that the City has it, because that is not a good reason.

Commissioner Teel stated that if the City decides it wants to have 2-3 apartment complexes, there needs to be facilities and infrastructure available to accommodate them. He stated that it is important to remember that you cannot just say 'we want this' because there is a lot that needs to come along with it.

Chair Lobermeier stated that it is also important not to let property develop into 2 acres lots if the

City is hoping that it will be something else. He stated that the City needs to guide it and zone it in a way that it turns out to be something the community wants to see.

Commissioner Teel stated that if you increase the population that means that the City will need to also increase staffing in police and fire, for example, and noted that he wants the City to be prepared for the domino effect.

Chair Lobermeier outlined what he sees as the next steps in completed the Housing Chapter. He noted that the Commission will have to revisit zoning after the Comprehensive Plan is completed to discuss whether the City allows apartment buildings in medium to higher density residential neighborhoods or should there be a separate category for it.

Commissioner Murdock noted that he believes he can pull something together based on everyone's feedback, including the things that they highlighted from the examples shared at the last meeting. He stated that one goal he identified was from something he found out of Greenfield, TX that was in the spirit of becoming a better bedroom community. He explained that they had a goal of 'protecting the integrity of the existing neighborhoods by ensuring the existing neighborhoods are maintained to a high standard and ensuring that new neighborhoods are developed to a high standard'. He stated that this goal resonated with him because he thinks Wyoming has a good thing going. He stated that he envisions things that can be done inside the community in order to improve it, as is.

Chair Lobermeier stated that he liked that the residential categories in that goal ended with the word 'neighborhood'.

Commissioner Murdock agreed and noted that there is a reason that the City only has 1% vacancy. He noted that some of the graphics are taking up too much room and he feels they could be consolidated and so it looks a bit neater. He stated that he would like to see a simple housing section with some important, more current, figures and not something that gives great detail and drones on. He encouraged the Commission to give him their highlights or feedback before they leave tonight or e-mail it to him so he can pull the information together for the next meeting.

Commissioner Teel stated that the City has been lucky that there have been some pretty good developers that don't come in and put up 10 of the same elevations and facades. He stated that the developments in the City are pretty nice because they are not just the same home one after the other with the only difference being their color.

Commissioner Murdock referenced the activity happening on the corner of 35E in Centerville.

Commissioner West stated that area is huge and, to her, does not seem like Wyoming.

Chair Lobermeier stated that he believes the example from Chisago City said something about, 'due to the amount of natural resources we have...' the neighborhoods are different and interesting because of the natural resources like wetlands.

Commissioner West explained that the biggest reasons they moved to the City was because of lot sizes, mature trees, and established neighborhoods.

Commissioner Murdock noted that security and low crime is an important one for him, which he thinks everyone would agree with.

Commissioner West stated that she thinks that the community and neighborly feel is also important.

A woman from the audience explained that she had been late to the meeting so she was not able to speak during the public hearing and asked if she could give her feedback at this time.

Chair Lobermeier stated that she can give her feedback but explained that the Commission had already voted to recommend approval of the request to rezone the property to Commercial.

Ashley David, 24745 Hazel Avenue, explained that her home is directly across the street from this property. She stated that they have lived there for 7 years and when they first moved in they asked to be able to put up a privacy fence because they have young children and was told by the City that they could not do that because they could not build within 150 feet of the highway and would need a variance which would cost \$250 and would not be refundable. She stated that they chose not to go that route. She stated that with Highway 8 in their front yard, they already struggle with semi-trucks, dump trucks, vehicles crashing down into their ditch and literally going length-wise down into the ditch. She is thankful that her children have not been outside playing at those times. She stated that there is a lot of traffic along Hazel Avenue and vehicles frequently speed down the roadway. She stated that they have put up a sign asking people to drive slowly because there are children present and it has not made a difference. She stated that if the City rezones this property, not only are her children's lives going to be even more in danger, but it will also lower the value of their home. She stated that even though they do not want to stay in this house, which was supposed to be their starter home, they are not in a position financially to be able to sell and afford something else right now because of inflation and everything else going on in the market.

Chair Lobermeier asked how large her lot is.

Ms. David stated that it is .9 acres right on the corner of Hazel Avenue and Highway 8. She stated that she believes there are plans for an expansion of Highway 8 to four lanes, but she has been unable to get a straight answer about the actual plans with regard to their home. She reiterated that there are already vehicles crashing down into their ditches and if they build the highway any closer to them those cars will be coming through the house instead. She stated that she would like to ensure the safety of her family. She asked if the Commission had any definitive answers about the plans for the Highway 8 project.

Chair Lobermeier thanked her for coming to talk to the Commission. He stated that the City also does not know specifics about the Highway 8 plans.

Zoning Administrator Weck noted that the City knows about the same amount of information as Ms. David. He stated that last year the County provided some preliminary drawings, but not constructions drawings that showed any detail. He stated that it was basically blocking off Hazel Avenue and doing a backage road.

Ms. David shared examples of close calls she has had trying to turn onto Hazel Avenue from Highway 8.

Chair Lobermeier stated that the future plan for Highway 8 is to try to address the safety issues along the highway, but he is unsure of what that means for any of the properties, or when it may happen.

Ms. David reiterated her question to the Commission that if the parcel across the street is rezoned, what will the City do to ensure the safety of her family.

Chair Lobermeier stated that they are not in the position to answer that question tonight. He stated that they were asked to make a recommendation on rezoning that property to Commercial. He stated that as part of the Commission discussion tonight regarding the Comprehensive Plan and future plans for the City, they see much of the area she is referring to as commercial in the future, including her property, because of many of the reasons that Ms. David had already stated.

Ms. David asked if the City was basically telling there was nothing they could do and they will just have to live with it.

Chair Lobermeier suggested that Ms. David come to the City Council meeting on March 1, 2022 and address the Council with her concerns. He reiterated that the Commission's recommendation to the Council was to rezone this property to Commercial.

Zoning Administrator Weck explained that the City Council has an Open Forum section at the beginning of the meeting close to 7:00 p.m. if she would like to address them.

Commissioner Murdock noted that the Commission understands Ms. David's concerns and is glad that she came to share them.

Chair Lobermeier asked if the Commission felt that there was enough information for Commissioner Murdock to compile the goals and highlights from tonight's discussion.

Commissioner Murdock asked if the City had any incentives for developers if they do things a certain way.

Zoning Administrator Weck noted that developers can ask for TIF financing or tax abatement.

Commissioner Murdock clarified that he was referring to things like street lighting, permitting, and the overall process. He gave the example of a developer doing multiple units so some fees are dropped.

Zoning Administrator Weck stated that for similar plans within the same year, there is a reduction in the review fee.

COMMUNICATIONS:

UPDATES:

Zoning Administrator Weck noted that for the next meeting there will be discussion of the Sunrise River Bank for the final plat and a sketch plan for the two outlots. He noted that the EAW comment period ended last Friday but noted that there were comments from MnDot submitted a week late. He reminded the Commission that the Joint Park Planning Board meeting will be on March 22, 2022 to discuss those plans.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER WEST, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER TEEL, TO ADJOURN THE FEBRUARY 22, 2022 "REGULAR MEETING" OF THE WYOMING, MINNESOTA PLANNING COMMISSION AT 8:17 PM.

<i>Voting Aye:</i>	<i>Murdock, West, Teel, Carr, and Lobermeier</i>
<i>Voting Nay:</i>	<i>None</i>
<i>Abstain:</i>	<i>None</i>
<i>Absent:</i>	<i>None</i>