

**APPROVED MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF WYOMING, MINNESOTA
APRIL 25, 2023
7:00PM**

CALL TO ORDER:

Planning Commission Chairman Lobermeier called the Regular Meeting of the Wyoming Planning Commission for April 25, 2023 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, Michael Naumann, Katie West, and Dan Iverson

ABSENT: None

Also Present: Fred Weck Zoning Administrator and Council Liaison Lisa Iverson

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 March 28, 2023**

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER NAUMANN, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER IVERSON, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE “REGULAR MEETING” OF THE WYOMING, MINNESOTA PLANNING COMMISSION FOR MARCH 28, 2023 AS SUBMITTED.

<i>Voting Aye:</i>	<i>Iverson, Naumann, West, and Lobermeier</i>
<i>Voting Nay:</i>	<i>None</i>
<i>Abstain:</i>	<i>None</i>
<i>Absent:</i>	<i>None</i>

SCHEDULED PUBLIC HEARINGS: NONE

NEW BUSINESS: NONE

OLD BUSINESS:

2. **Architectural Standards: Architect Comments, Community Ordinances, and Material Examples**

Zoning Administrator Weck noted that in the packet he had included his e-mail communication with Widseth as well as information regarding ordinances from the cities of Brainerd and Baxter.

Chair Lobermeier stated that one of the things that came to mind as he was reviewing this material was the notion of a pre-design meeting as opposed to having a builder or architect come in and show their plans. He asked for Zoning Administrator Weck’s thoughts beyond just simply sending them the ordinance. He stated that he suspects that this is where the ‘dance’ begins and reiterated his questions about whether that type of meeting would help.

Zoning Administrator Weck stated that it would help, but many times he gets the phone call after they have already done half of the work. He stated that it why he tells them the City has architectural standards and encourages them to take a look at them.

Commissioner West stated that she had spoken with a few other architects that she works with about different standards and how they like to see them. She stated that she had shared the standards from the City, Chisago, and Forest Lake and they really like the example from Chisago because it was clear and comprehensive. She explained that they liked the idea of a tiered classification of the materials, but they like charts that stay consistent. She stated that they did not like the idea of having a supplemental or secondary manual because it would be hard to navigate. She stated that they also liked the idea of 'bolding' out the various sections so they are easier to follow and find the information they were searching for.

Commissioner Iverson stated that it sounds like the feedback was more on the format of the information and not necessarily about the content.

Commissioner West agreed and stated that one other comment they made was that it was important for the City to figure out what their 'feel' is for example more White Bear or more Lindstrom. She stated that the thought was that if you were going to set a 'standard' it should not really be negotiable because then the community will end up being more of a hodge podge. She stated that she thinks it may make sense to have a different list of materials for the downtown area and some of the structures near Hallberg. She reiterated that the architects she spoke with really liked Chisago's information.

Chair Lobermeier stated that in comparing the City's with others he noticed that the language starts out with what the City does 'not want' rather than what they 'want'. He stated that he thinks it may be a good idea to take a step back and have the Commission try to figure out what problem the City is trying to solve and the intent of the ordinance. He noted that he was surprised that the feedback Zoning Administrator Weck and Commissioner West got was not really related to the actual materials.

Commissioner West noted that it looks like the issue may not really be the materials. She noted that her input also touched on percentages and if they are going to say 50% of Class 1, they want to know what the means for the whole building. She reiterated that the input was related to the readability and that it be clear and concise and not so much related to the actual materials. She stated that she thinks it is important for them to know who is in the community and what their price point is for those that can afford to bring their businesses to the City.

Chair Lobermeier stated that he had highlighted some things included in the minutes from the last meeting and read aloud the statement about cities the size of Wyoming not getting into design details. He stated that usually smaller towns are happy to get development and try not to get in the way too much. He stated that he feels they end up walking the fine line between the intent and not over-specifying. He stated that the Commission was given some 'homework' at the last meeting to take a look around town at some of the buildings they may or may not like. He shared examples of facilities that he really liked such as Ebenezer, Wyoming Dental, and Lakes Gas. He stated that he also feels the Pfeiffer Chiropractic office has character.

Commissioner West stated that she is happy that they switched the entrance to the drug store, but noted that it is still not one of her favorite buildings.

Chair Lobermeier asked if the Commission could paint a picture that is not too restrictive of what they would like the City to look like that still allows development to come.

The Commission discussed some of the difficulty in situations where they are not a chain so they do not have the same financing available. The Commission shared examples of buildings and details that they would not necessarily want to see more of in the City.

Zoning Administrator Weck shared examples of various development projects that have happened in the City.

Commissioner West stated that one of the reasons that she thinks this conversation is important is because there is currently kind of a mismatch of things going on in the downtown area. She stated that she thinks windows are huge and things like light pollution because people move out here so they don't have that. She referenced the liquor store and noted that while it may meet the standards, it looks very 'unique' in how it was actually put together.

Commissioner Iverson stated that you see the word uniformity and the direction to make it look like it belongs and he thinks that is important. He stated that he feels it should look like that was the way it was intended to look and with remodeling they sometimes lose that.

Chair Lobermeier reiterated that he thinks it is important to focus on the intent and that it is concise. He stated that he was part of the group who put together these architectural standards, but acknowledged that the very first sentence is 4 lines long, which is not concise. He noted that another section he feels needs work is the section where 'other' materials can be allowed but questioned how they could state it without allowing things to go forward that don't really meet the ordinance but they decided to let it go through as kind of a loop hole. He asked if the right place for things to come when developers have a proposal is the Planning Commission or whether a staff member should make a recommendation.

Zoning Administrator Weck stated that as a Building Official, the building code allows him to make interpretations of the code, but it does give him standards on how to do that. He stated that when it comes to building materials, or an aesthetic detail, it is subjective. He explained that he could think something looks great, but the Commission could disagree and wonder what he was thinking. He explained that without a standard in the ordinance to clarify where the City is going, he thinks it is hard for one person to say what it is or is not.

Commissioner West asked if when there is a questionable or new material if that could be part of what is presented before the Commission so it can be addressed at the time of approval. She stated that way it would not just be left up to one person.

Zoning Administrator Weck shared examples of the process and materials discussion for recent projects, such as the one for Hallberg.

Commissioner West noted that views on materials can change over time and noted that communities like Lindstrom and White Bear have an aesthetic that really has not changed and with time, has become even more beautiful which is what she hopes for the City. She stated that she would like to be able to find materials that age gracefully. She reiterated that she loves the ideas of windows for the wellbeing of the people who have to work in these buildings and if the City does not already have something that speaks to that she would like to see that added.

Chair Lobermeier referenced the industrial park in Stacy that seems to be growing like gangbusters, but noted that there is a real mix of things they have going in there and does not appear to be a theme to what is being approved. He stated that if he goes back to the original statement, he would like to attempt to eliminate the negative statements. He gave the example of it saying that the City wants visual harmony, complement surrounding properties, and contribute to the character and the appearance of the district.

The Commission discussed other buildings around the town.

Commissioner West stated that she has nothing against pole barns but she really does not want to see that in the downtown area.

Chair Lobermeier noted that he feels the church that is just south of the liquor store did a good job when they redid their façade. He stated that it was just a warehouse type building, but when they redid it they added some brick and color that really made it work well. He stated that he thinks that

if the Commission can figure out what problem they are trying to address and get the intent statement so it is clear and address some of the formatting, which will help.

Zoning Administrator Weck stated that he can try to work on the opening statement so it is positive rather than negative. He stated that he can also look at keeping the text that is there, but perhaps moving the information into some tables and charts as recommended by Commissioner West.

Chair Lobermeier noted that Kim Lindquist, WSB, stated that she thought the list of materials was good and did not think this needed a big overhaul. He stated that he would agree, but would suggest that it really be read for intent to make a determination if it is too open or if there are areas that need clarification.

The Commission discussed roofing and window additions.

Chair Lobermeier noted that Mayor Iverson had mentioned that she would like to hook the EDA into this process and asked if she felt they would have input in the area of 'fit'.

Mayor Iverson stated that she brought that up because they want to have a certain aesthetic on Highway 61. She stated that there has been discussion about certain franchise businesses coming to town, such as Caribou, that have set standards that they have to meet. She referenced the difference if you travel to someplace like Hilton Head where everything is all the same, no matter what. She stated that the goal is to have some character and have some standards, but for it to be more updated. She stated that their hope is to get some apartment buildings that will attract or keep the younger people in town, which means it will have to have more of a 'hip' vibe. She noted that the problem becomes that a 'hip' vibe can look different to everyone.

Commissioner West stated that she has long thought that the City needed another restaurant or something like a bar/pub or brewery.

Mayor Iverson stated that from the EDA side she and City Administrator Linwood work very closely in inviting businesses and restaurants to come to the City. She stated that they are also part of MnCAR and invite people to consider the City and what they have to offer as well. She stated that they are working with some possible 3D images of certain pieces of land so they can draw images of what they would like to see there. She reiterated that this was why she felt it was important to work alongside the EDA in these efforts.

Zoning Administrator Weck stated that he thinks the Commission has made a good start in this discussion and recommended that they take a look at how they want to define or tweak the comparable materials so it is clear to everyone.

Chair Lobermeier stated that he thought the information included in the packet was very helpful. He stated that having something that is just 2-3 pages that has some of the nicer looking buildings that fit a bit more closely to what the City is looking for. He stated that it can serve as a bit of a 'hint-hint', 'nudge-nudge' for developers.

Commissioner Iverson stated that it may help them design something that fits into the area rather than just designing it the way they usually do without consideration for what may be nearby.

Chair Lobermeier stated that there are some really nice buildings in town, but they are scattered around and not just in one spot. He stated that if those could be represented to people coming in, it will set up the idea for them without having to write it down.

Commissioner Iverson noted that the example of the code from Baxter highlighted the positive language rather than the negative. He stated that he found it interesting to see how often they used terms like 'community image' and 'visual environment' in their first points. He noted that he also liked the feedback shared by Commissioner West about changing some of the formatting to the tables/charts so it makes the information stand out and be understood more easily.

Commissioner Naumann suggested utilizing some of the information from the Comprehensive Plan

that talks about rural character, small-town feel, balance rural setting, and urbanization. He stated that he feels that this may give a developer and idea of what they should be shooting for.

Mayor Iverson reminded the Commission to keep Highway 8 in mind because eventually there will also be more businesses along that corridor. She stated that they know what the area looks like now but questioned whether that was really the image that the City wanted to have as people travel the highway heading towards Wisconsin.

COMMUNICATIONS:

UPDATES:

Zoning Administrator Weck noted that for the next meeting there is a possible public hearing for a Home Occupation for a slaughter house at a farm that is not zoned Agricultural. He explained that this family purchased the property without calling to find out if they could do what they wanted to do on the property. He stated that he expecting there to be a fairly large turnout from the neighbors.

Chair Lobermeier stated that he visited with City Administrator Linwood about the recent public hearing. He stated that they had a conversation that people come to a public hearing thinking that what they tell the Commission will make a difference. He stated that it can be challenging because the Commission is really there to take their testimony, but at the end of the day, their decision has to be based on what the ordinance says they can and cannot allow. He stated that their conversation was about how that information can be communicated to residents because people tend to walk away discouraged and thinking that the Commission just did whatever it wanted to and did not listen to them. He stated that he has been trying to think of a way to word a statement that will clearly communicate this to residents.

Commissioner Iverson stated that he thinks making it clear that the Commission is a recommending body and not the decision maker would be helpful.

Mayor Iverson stated that she feels that there are some things that are not clearly written and understands that there needs to be some interpretation, but feels that there are some things that are not clear for the lay person. She referenced the example of Katie's Glen and noted that is why sometimes she thinks the public comes in with the idea that the City does not have any rules or regulations. She stated that she is hoping that by making things more clearly understood that there will be less situations where it is just brought to the Council so they can say no.

Commissioner Iverson stated that you cannot write code so everything is black and white for every situation so there will need to be a certain amount of interpretation.

Chair Lobermeier stated that he will try to work on a statement to help people understand the role of the Commission. He asked that when the notices are sent out that it be made clear that the Commission is a recommending body and that it will be based on how well the proposal meets with the existing Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinances.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER WEST, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER IVERSON, TO ADJOURN THE APRIL 25, 2023 "REGULAR MEETING" OF THE WYOMING, MINNESOTA PLANNING COMMISSION AT 8:07 PM.

<i>Voting Aye:</i>	<i>Iverson, Naumann, West, and Lobermeier</i>
<i>Voting Nay:</i>	<i>None</i>
<i>Abstain:</i>	<i>None</i>
<i>Absent:</i>	<i>None</i>