

Community Development Department

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MINUTES
PLAN COMMISSION
April 7, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.
Virtual and City Council Chambers

Members Present: Dan Toland, Lisa Moody, Patricia LaRue, Hal Watson, Craig Hofland, Chris Holtkamp
Members Absent: Rebecca Prendergast (excused)
Staff Present: Amy Peterson, Crystal Raleigh, Brandy Howe
Others Present: Larry Kirch, Prologue Planning Group
Jenny Polacek, Wendell Companies
Trent Schmidt, AEC Engineering

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting convened at 6:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

M/Watson, S/Holtkamp to approve minutes. Motion carried 6-0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mayor Toland thanked Commissioner Watson for his years of service. Watson thanked everyone for working with him during his time on Plan Commission.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

Resolution approving Specific Implementation Plan for Dawes Place - Phase 1

Howe presented the SIP for Dawes Place Phase 1, which includes 42 units on the south side of Dawes Place. It is part of Highview Meadows 1st addition which started in the mid-2000s. The site was originally planned for multifamily which stalled because of the housing market crash. This proposal has a total of 112 units in 13 buildings resulting in 13 dwelling units per acre, and its General Development Plan was recently approved. Phase 1 has five 6-unit buildings and one 12-unit building on 3.2 acres with attached 2-car garages to be constructed in 2021. Phase 2 will need a separate SIP. When complete, Meadows Drive will be a collector and remove some of the traffic from Dawes Place, a local road, which has enough capacity for the project. Staff recommends approval contingent on meeting all engineering, architectural, and stormwater requirements, and the next step is council approval.

Moody asked about the timeframe of construction of Williams and Meadows to alleviate traffic. Howe said Highview Meadows 6th addition and these streets will likely be constructed later this year while Dawes Place is being constructed. Hofland said it's a great development but wants to make sure it's safe for kids. Howe mentioned that there will be no parking on Dawes Place. Raleigh said the road was originally designed for the same amount of traffic that is being proposed when it was first built, comparable to traffic patterns that exist elsewhere in the City. Moody said another 100 cars will be a

dramatic increase in traffic, and Raleigh mentioned trip generation hasn't changed since 15 years ago and the road will likely meet capacity for at least another 15 years. LaRue asked about children crossing the street to get to the park. Raleigh mentioned it would be their backyard and Phase 1 residents do not have to cross Dawes Place to get to the park. LaRue also asked if it is possible for a future tenant to frame in a deck and add a glass sliding door if the units are sold individually someday. Architect Jennifer Polacek mentioned that patios are big enough for a grill and some patio furniture but not a whole table, and they were chosen over decks because the units are slab-on-grade. There is potential to expand patios slightly someday if desired and windows are the same frame size if a sliding door is desired.

M/Watson, S/Hofland to recommend approval of the SIP for Dawes Place Phase 1. Motion carried 6-0.

Ordinance to amend Titles 16 and 17 of the Municipal Code pursuant to the terms of the Cooperative Agreement between the City of River Falls and the Town of Kinnickinnic.

Peterson presented the history of the proposed ordinance amendments, which started with the 2019 adoption of the Cooperative Boundary Agreement between the City and the Town of Kinnickinnic. She explained how the sewer service area, extraterritorial zoning and subdivision boundaries, and urban area boundaries were consolidated into one new boundary that separates areas where the City desires to grow, called the Urban Reserve Area (URA), from land under Township management that had been subject to various City boundaries. While trying to implement the boundary agreement, conflicting information within it regarding whether City or St. Croix County shoreland, floodplain, sanitary sewer, nonmetallic mining, and land division ordinances apply to the URA. After working with the County, it was decided that these County ordinances hold if they are more restrictive than the City's ordinances in the URA. Therefore, the City's 35-acre minimum lot size applies to the URA since the County's lot size is less restrictive, meeting the goal of the plan to reserve large tracts of open land for future development. The Town will continue to issue building permits in the URA upon City zoning approval until the land is annexed someday. The proposed ordinance changes reflect the City's obligations under the Cooperative Boundary Agreement. A new sewer service area plan is also required under the agreement which will be addressed in the upcoming comprehensive plan project.

Hofland asked if the ordinances will affect anyone in the urban reserve area. Peterson explained that staff has already been using the Cooperative Boundary Plan to administer zoning in the URA, and amending the code just formalizes decisions that have already been made between the City and Town. Watson asked if future land use categories will be assigned to the area during the comprehensive plan process. Peterson and Howe mentioned that it will be a conversation to have during the comprehensive plan and state statute already gives the City the ability to plan in this area, so we will want to consider the long term vision for this area. LaRue thanked City staff for the graphics that helped her understand what is happening where on the map.

M/S Holtkamp/Watson to recommend the proposed ordinance and map amendments. Motion carried 6-0.

REPORTS/DIALOGUE

Director's Report

Peterson said the Joint Review Board gave the final approval for TID #17 for Tattersall Distillery (former Shopko) and Project Engineer Jason Raverty resigned. The City plans to hire another Community Development staff member.

Annual Report

Peterson mentioned that development is still high, but a shift since 2019 from commercial and industrial to residential has occurred, with 2020 being the highest building permit value year for the City.

ADJOURNMENT

Hofland made a motion to adjourn at 7:12 p.m. M/Hofland, S/Moody; motion carried 6-0

WORKSHOP

Special use permit ordinance amendment and discussion

Howe recapped Plan Commission's progress on special use permits since 2017 Wisconsin Act 67 affected how they are administered. Plan Commission had considered an approach to eliminate uncommon/inappropriate SUPs and modify desirable ones to have measurable standards in February. During the Plan Commission workshop in March, Plan Commission reviewed the R-1 Single Family Residential Zoning District and removed SUPs such as hospitals and radio towers which are not desired in residential areas. Plan Commission mentioned some small-scale commercial or other non-residential uses may be appropriate in R-1 if certain standards are met. Since the R-1 district varies throughout the community, adding these uses would be a substantial zoning ordinance overhaul, and the comprehensive planning project hasn't occurred yet, staff has proposed to table those changes until after the comprehensive plan is complete. Therefore, staff is proposing to focus on amending the administrative standards for SUPs to meet state statute. The proposed amendments in the packet clarify the role of Plan Commission when reviewing an SUP and what standards may be appropriate to apply to an SUP. Staff will bring the amendments back to Plan Commission at the May 2021 meeting for recommendation for approval.

LaRue was concerned that Plan Commission approval removes review by elected officials (City Council). She also likes the ideas of small businesses in neighborhoods. Howe mentioned the administrative changes are in response to state statute and SUP decisions are now quasi-judicial, which makes it complicated for Council to review, since Plan Commission is more up to speed on planning and zoning. Special uses will remain in each zoning district for now until the Comprehensive Plan is completed but proposed special uses will now meet the new criteria proposed under these amendments. This approach eliminates the existing standards which are not all evidence-based and measurable. LaRue also likes the revocation provisions in case a special use doesn't work as expected. Peterson explained that allowing Plan Commission approval makes appeals go to the City's Board of Appeals, rather than Council approval which requires appeals to go to Circuit Court, keeping appeals in-house. Mayor Toland and Watson agreed this new approach is better because drastically changing the zoning ordinance needs more public input.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Samuel Wessel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "S".

Sam Wessel, AICP, Planner