

**BIG LAKE PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY MAY 20, 2020**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Heidemann called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIENCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. ROLL CALL

Commissioners present: Alan Heidemann, Lisa Odens, Ketti Green, and Scott Zettervall. Commissioners absent: Larry Sundberg and Dustin Vickerman. Also present: City Planner Amy Barthel, Community Development Director Hanna Klimmek, and Recreation and Communication Coordinator Corrie Scott.

Scott Marotz entered the meeting at 6:13 p.m.

4. ADOPT AGENDA

Commissioner Odens moved to adopt the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Zettervall, unanimous ayes, agenda adopted.

5. OPEN FORUM

Chair Heidemann opened the Open Forum at 6:03 p.m. No one came forward for comment. Chair Heidemann closed the Open Forum at 6:03 p.m.

6. APPROVE MEETING MINUTES

6A. APPROVE REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 6, 2020

Commissioner Zettervall motioned to approve the May 6, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Green, unanimous ayes, Minutes approved.

7. BUSINESS

7A. CONCEPT PLAN FOR COMMONBOND HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

City Planner Barthel reviewed a Concept Plan submitted by Commonbond Communities. The Development will consist of two (2) 60-unit apartment buildings and is proposed to be constructed in two (2) phases. The parcel is 7.49-acres on the northwest corner of Marketplace Drive and 168th Street, PID: 65-543-0040 (Subject Property). The next step in the applicant process would be to apply for a Planned Unit Development (PUD), Preliminary Plat, Rezone, and Site Plan. The Applicant communicated with Staff that the Concept Plan is preliminary in terms of timing of the Development. This project is applying for subsidized tax credits through the Minnesota Housing Tax Credit program (Credits) due to the mixed-income aspect of the Development. If awarded, the Applicant would plan to submit development applications to the City in December, 2020.

On February 28, 2020 the Applicant submitted a Concept Plan for a parcel located south of Marketplace Drive and East of 168th Street. PID: 65-555-0010. The concept was presented to the Planning Commission on April 1, 2020 and feedback was provided. The Commission did not support the location of the project due to the guided use of Commercial. The request was planned to be reviewed by the City Council on April 22, 2020 but the Applicant withdrew their application. The Applicant has proposed to locate their project on the Subject Property, and resubmitted an application on May 1, 2020. The Concept Plan will be reviewed by City Council on May 27, 2020.

Staff is requesting that the Planning Commission provide comment on a Concept Plan for a proposed two-phased mixed income apartment complex on the northwest corner of Marketplace Drive and 168th Ave.

Odens asked about whether there is a total for 120 units and 240 parking spots. Green confirmed that they are required to have 300 parking spots with 100 covered. Zettervall states that the Comprehensive Plan states to give developers flexibility where possible. Heidemann stated that there will be two portions of the parking requirements would be flexible where there are 60 less parking spaces proposed with none of the 300 covered.

Green asked how many of the units are three bedrooms. Hughes with CommonBond stated that 25% are 1 bedroom, 50% are 2 bedrooms, and 25% are 3 bedrooms. This works out to be one parking stall per bedroom. Hughes stated that offering covered parking is considered a cost issue of over \$1Million which is why they are asking for flexibility. Hughes also stated that with past experience, they have noted that the 1 stall per bedroom does work.

Green stated that it would be beneficial to have a loading area. Zettervall stated it would make sense to have a loading area for each building. Hughes stated that it is not a theme to have loading areas because they don't see it as a need for their proposed project. Barthel asked the Commission if there are any impervious surface or recreational area comments. Odens asked if the waterbody is a manmade pond and if it

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could be used for recreation. Barthel stated that it is likely an existing wetland. Barthel also stated they have a storm water pond and that she has asked the applicant to potentially include trails near the storm water pond that wouldn't be considered a liability like a swimming pond or dog park would. Green asked the applicant about the upgraded amenities. Hughes stated this includes tile flooring and plywood cabinet boxes.

Heidemann asked about the impervious surface. Barthel stated they have too much impervious surface in their proposal. Marotz asked if this is something that could be flexible in the PUD. Barthel confirmed that it could be addressed in the PUD. Marotz stated that the proposal doesn't seem outlandish and that the Commission might want to consider raising the maximum impervious surface amount for future development applications.

Heidemann stated that he considers one parking space per bedroom a reasonable request and that since they will be managing the complex, they have an incentive to make sure they propose enough parking. Green asked where dumpsters will be located. Hughes stated that there will be an enclosed trash room in each building.

7B. VACATED PLANNING COMMISSION SEAT

Barthel reported that on May 12, 2020 she received notice that Lawrence Sundberg has vacated his seat on the Big Lake Planning Commission as a Commissioner. All Planning Commission seats terms are for four (4) years. Mr. Sundberg was re-appointed to his seat in January, 2019. His term is set to expire on 12/31/2022.

Staff is asking for approval to provide public notice of the vacated seat and to collect letters of interest along with resumes from interested candidates.

Heidemann asked the Commission how the application and interview process will be conducted. Green stated it would continue as they have in the past.

Commissioner Green motioned to direct staff to provide public notice of the vacated seat and to collect letters of interest along with resumes from interested candidates. Seconded by Commissioner Odens, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

7C. PLANNING COMMISSION GOALS DISCUSSION

The Planning Commissioners, along with staff will open up a broad conversation to discuss desired developments, commissioner roles and other relevant topics.

Things to consider:

- Goals and Visions – Comprehensive Plan
- Zoning Code Regulations
- Accountability- Routine
- Questions

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The intent of the Goals discussion is for the Commissioners to share general ideas and visions of the City with the group and to generate, as a group, a common goal and establish any benchmarking efforts.

Zettervall stated that the Commission should track the number of PUDs that are passed so that if a theme comes forward for parking, impervious surfaces, etc... they can be addressed. Marotz commented that the PUD process is generally driven by the developer and that the Commission might not be able to slow the amount of PUDs that are submitted. Zettervall asked Barthel what her thoughts are on PUDS. Barthel agreed that tracking PUDs that are coming in could be a good idea for streamlining processes going forward.

Heidemann stated that tracking the PUDs might not decrease the number of PUDs but the complexity of each PUD. Marotz stated that it is unlikely the Commission will be able to fully adapt before the market does. Marotz stated that more flexibility with the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning level could help with overall issues rather than one specific issue i.e. parking restrictions. Barthel stated that developers don't like PUDs, so if there is a way to issue a variance rather than a PUD, it would be beneficial for developers. Marotz stated that the Commission has considered 'getting out of the business's way' and that granting more flexibility will offer this to developers. Green stated that to some degree she does believe the developer knows best, but that there is a reason there are restrictions on things like parking to avoid issues with street parking, so having huge differences in the parking requirements and parking proposal from a developer tends to raise a red flag that there could be future issues if too much flexibility is granted.

Marotz stated that developers tend to gravitate towards a certain area due to multiple factors, but a major factor is interest from community members. Marotz stated that if the City isn't investing in the things the community is interested in i.e. landscaping, it will entice less developers to build in Big Lake. Zettervall commented that the Commission should make a list of things that need to be looked at more closely. Marotz commented that there are certain qualities in more suburban/urban communities that are often considered 'frivolous' that potential residents seek out when moving from a suburban area. Green stated that generally when residents move from a more suburban area to a smaller community like Big Lake they are doing it based off of cost and are likely understanding why extra amenities aren't offered. Marotz confirmed that he agrees with Green, but that many families start out in Big Lake because of cost, and as they grow they move out of the community. Marotz asked the Commission if there are ways they can entice residents to stay and grow in the Big Lake community.

Marotz stated that things like street trees and other landscaping were not considered feasible in past years, but that with Public Works' recent restructuring it is more likely to be considered. Klimmek stated that the Comprehensive Plan should be a living document that is revisited and things like changes in staffing should spark changes.

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Klimmek recommended that the Commission could revisit the Comprehensive Plan quarterly. Zettervall confirmed that the Comprehensive Plan is two years old. Odens stated that at the Comprehensive Plan meetings they would consider priority projects for future development/redevelopment. Marotz stated that he doesn't believe sidewalks should be a part of an assessment. He commented that the City of Big Lake is behind on road projects and that current policies will significantly impact residents.

Marotz commented that the City has in the past gone with the cheapest options which aren't always appealing. He asked the Commission how the City can encourage more amenities come into the community. Heidemann stated that he agrees more amenities are beneficial to residents, but that requiring more amenities will potentially deter developers from coming to Big Lake.

Zettervall asked what the next steps are to include these suggestions in the Comprehensive Plan. Barthel stated that having requirements in the Comprehensive Plan make it more likely that a developer will negotiate with the City on their proposals. Marotz asked the Commission what kind of a timeline is reasonable for a Comprehensive Plan review. Odens asked about execution of review changes and if the Commission reviews too frequently it could be difficult to execute the new changes. Barthel stated that using a benchmarking system should help with execution. Marotz stated that it would be helpful if the Commission reviews the Comprehensive Plan more frequently so that it remains fresh in their minds. Green stated that rather than printing a full Comprehensive Plan for each member, it would be more reasonable for a smaller portion to be included in a packet for review. Marotz stated that it is also beneficial to bring portions of the Comprehensive Plan forward for conversation with the entire Commission so that other points of view are brought up rather than when an individual Commissioner is reading the document on their own.

Marotz stated that there is a section for Plan Action that includes transportation, natural resources, parks and trails, etc... He stated this would be a good section to review over a two-year period and then revisit once finished. Klimmek stated that the City has not completely implemented the Comprehensive Plan into the City Code and that it should be made a priority with the Code Revision Task Force.

Barthel stated that when she is writing memos for Council she includes comments from the Planning Commission and that if there are any formal comments that should be included to submit them to her. Odens stated that there can easily be a variety of ways to get to the same outcome and they should all be considered.

Klimmek suggested that creating a Task Force should be a goal as it is a new project. Odens asked about the timeline of reviewing the Comprehensive Plan. Marotz stated that using the second monthly meeting between May-August could be used as a time to review the Comprehensive Plan if there aren't many other agenda items.

8. **PLANNER'S REPORT** – None.

9. **COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS**

Zettervall stated that Lakeside Park will have metered parking starting the end of May. Zettervall also commented that street projects are currently at a stand-still. Green stated it would be better to move forward on street projects before the cost of fuel increases. Marotz asked how much higher the bids are compared to the budgeted amount. Zettervall stated that the project bids are 10% over budget.

Marotz brought up that homeowners don't generally budget for large payments to reconstruct roads. He stated it might be more efficient and less detrimental to homeowners if the cost for road construction is spread out throughout the entire community rather than certain neighborhoods.

Heidemann stated that at the last BLEDA meeting there was a discussion on goals moving forward. Klimmek stated that the discussion was for creating a strategic plan for the BLEDA. Green asked if it was possible to have a mid-year meeting with all of the City's Commissions. Heidemann and Zettervall agreed a mid-year review meeting would be a good idea. Klimmek stated that she would ask the City Administrator if a mid-year review meeting could be put together for all of the City's Commissions and staff departments.

10. **OTHER** – None.

11. **ADJOURN**

Commissioner Green motioned to adjourn at 7:40 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Odens, unanimous ayes, motion carried.