

**CITY OF ISANTI
PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 13, 2012**

1. Meeting Opening.

A. Call to Order.

Stevens called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

B. Pledge of Allegiance.

Everyone rose for the pledge of allegiance.

C. Roll Call.

Members Present: David Englund, Sue Larson, Cindy Lind-Livingston, Ross Lorinser, Christopher McDonald, and Sean Stevens.

Members Absent: Michael Streiff III (unexcused).

Staff Present: Lisa Wilson, Planning and Parks Director.

D. Agenda Modifications.

Wilson stated there were no modifications to the Agenda.

2. Approval of Minutes from February 14, 2012 Planning Commission Meeting.

Stevens requested a motion regarding the minutes.

Motion by Larson, second by Lorinser to approve the February 14, 2012 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes. Motion was unanimously approved.

3. Public Hearings.

A. Request from the City of Isanti to Amend Ordinance No. 445, Section 8 Industrial Districts, Article 1 "I-1" Industrial Parks District, Subdivision 4 Interim Uses to remove residential living quarters as an Interim Use.

Wilson presented the information provided within the staff memo.

Stevens questioned if there were any affected properties that we were aware of at this point.

Wilson stated that there were none that staff was aware of at this point.

Stevens stated that there was no public present, but he would open and close the public hearing at 7:03 p.m. Stevens questioned what the Commission members thought about the proposed ordinance amendment.

Stevens stated that in his opinion it seemed pretty straight forward. Stevens questioned if Mrs. Wilson can recollect why this use would have been in this district in the first place. Stevens questioned if it was just oversight.

Wilson stated that there was a request many years ago, in which a property owner was looking to establish a residential living unit above his woodworking shop. Wilson stated that at that time,

the Council had much discussion regarding the item and added the use as a CUP to the Industrial District. Wilson stated that Mr. Joslin had reviewed the approval that was provided at that time; and it was his opinion given the conditions and discussion upon granting that approval, that CUP has lapsed. Wilson stated that any new use would need to go through the process to obtain the Interim Use Permit. Wilson stated that is the only established residential unit that she has been able to find in the Industrial District.

Lorinser stated that others were denied previously to be allowed to do so.

Stevens questioned if the petitioner motioning to use and define this area as living quarters, had done so in order to justify Council position.

Wilson stated that she did not know the particulars surrounding that particular case, but she did not believe so. Wilson outlined the process that appears to have been followed for that request based upon meeting minutes and notes provided within the development file.

Englund questioned if above the Subway, if that area was zoned commercial. Englund stated that he thought there were residential units above.

Wilson stated that it was zoned general business.

Stevens questioned above where.

Englund stated that he thought there were a few units above the strip mall along County Rd 5.

Lorinser stated that we do have some business areas that allow for residential above commercial.

Larson stated that there is a big difference between safety issues above a commercial use versus above an industrial use.

Motion by Lorinser, second by Larson to recommend approval of the Amendment to Ordinance No. 445, Section 8 Industrial Districts, Article 1 "I-1" Industrial Parks District, Subdivision 4 Interim Uses to remove residential living quarters as an Interim Use based upon the Findings as presented. Motion was unanimously approved.

4. Other Business.

A. Review of Zoning Ordinance – District Uses and Provisions.

Wilson outlined the two discussion points noted within the staff memo. Wilson stated that staff was looking for guidance or direction from the Planning Commission.

Lorinser questioned if aesthetic things would be considered.

Wilson stated that the City could consider having a certain percentage of the building being brick. Wilson stated that it could be limiting the building material options.

Lorinser questioned what kind of building materials are allowed now.

Wilson read the through the building material requirements in the Zoning Ordinance. Wilson stated that City staff had also been looking at some of the uses that are currently listed within the district; and have begun to question whether some of those uses fit along the Hwy 65 corridor.

Lorinser questioned if we could do an overlay district.

Wilson stated that the City could consider such a district. Wilson stated that in initial discussions between staff members, the questioned was raised as to whether those properties immediately abutting the corridor should be classified differently. Wilson stated that this is Isanti's front door; and continued discussions focus on the type of development the City wants to see along its gateway.

Lorinser questioned if this would include uses or aesthetics.

Wilson stated at this point, this is just discussion. Wilson stated that staff wanted to get a feel from the Planning Commission regarding the items outlined in the staff memo.

Lorinser stated that we cannot have too many regulations out there, but he does not want to see too little regulations. Lorinser stated that he wants to see that Isanti is aesthetically pleasing. Lorinser stated that Isanti has always been more visually appealing, as we have had higher standards. Lorinser stated that he does want to foster a business friendly environment; and have businesses come here versus Blaine that may have more stringent standards. Lorinser stated that he did not want to see more aesthetic standards, as our current buildings along the corridor look pretty good.

Larson stated that we have always wanted standards, but we do not want them locked in so tight that if new technology comes along, we cannot consider it.

Lorinser stated that when Mr. Sullivan was hired, he was given a tour of the City. Lorinser stated that Mr. Sullivan had pointed out things that would never have been allowed in Ramsey. Lorinser stated that we need some of that stuff here because it drives the costs down and helps business to locate here. Lorinser stated that on the other hand, we do not want to see a big asphalt plant in the middle of the City just because we can get them to locate here.

Larson agreed. Larson stated that we want entrepreneurs to be able to make that step from the garage to a property in an industrial or commercial district. Larson stated that we do not want to make it so cost prohibitive that they are unable to do so.

Stevens stated that in terms of building standards with modern construction techniques, buildings can be made to look polished using a wide variety of materials. Stevens stated Evercat as an example, represents itself well within the community, despite the fact that it is not a traditional brick and lumber construction. Stevens stated that in terms of aesthetics, he would like to see us be more flexible. Stevens stated that in terms of use, it seems as though the comprehensive plan does give us some guidance. Stevens stated that it does need to be determined, what truly the City wants targeted along Hwy 65. Stevens stated that when doing the Comprehensive Plan, we had targeted that area for retail and to have a big box location. Stevens stated that in the past few years, we have had a mini medical focus, with child care facilities and churches. Stevens stated that he wants us to maintain flexibility, but regulations should be considered to help put things where they belong in the community. Stevens stated that the concrete plant on Cajima, that is a

great location with direct access to the highway for that particular business. Stevens stated that for the City, it is terrible because of traffic, congestion, etc. Stevens stated that he would like City staff to look at some of those concerns and bring that back to the Planning Commission for further discussion.

Wilson stated that staff was looking for guidance from the Planning Commission only.

Lorinser stated that we would want the higher tax value properties out there along the Highway. Lorinser stated that we want something that is visually appealing and has activity. Lorinser stated that we do not want prime business land that is not going to develop into something that will bring much value to be located along the highway corridor.

Wilson stated that staff is working to balance both good planning with economic development concerns. Wilson stated that there will continue to be interesting conversations between both staff members moving forward.

Lorinser stated that the City had two of the best people on the job.

Larson stated that there has been conversation on frontage roads versus secondary roads. Larson stated that she wanted to make sure we favor the frontage roads, as in the past we have favored the secondary roads.

Stevens stated that he would like to focus on what we can do to the B-2 along Hwy 65, to aid in the development of the central business district and help us to meet our objectives for downtown. Stevens stated that communities along highways are doing things to pull people into the community. Stevens stated that placement and services along the corridor would help to get people into the City and downtown.

Lorinser stated that the downtown committee has done a good job within the community, not so much along the highway, but they have gotten attention from the gateway at CSAH 5 and TH 65 with the Christmas village project. Lorinser stated that with the new directional sign that will be placed at PD, this may also help.

Larson stated that the biggest struggle is keeping businesses downtown.

McDonald stated that it used to be much easier to get into downtown. McDonald stated that you now have to turn on County Road 5.

Larson stated that the closing of Main Street from Highway 65 was disastrous.

Lorinser stated that the downtown has gone in waves. Lorinser stated that it is still better than in 2003-2004. Lorinser stated that business continues to circulate through the area. Lorinser stated that there are some good anchors in the area.

Larson questioned the lot that the City owned behind UPS.

Wilson stated that there is a half platted ROW that goes around the UPS property.

Larson stated that eventually there is going to need to be some access, so that someone can build on that lot. Larson stated that the City may need to wait for Larry Johnson to do something.

Lorinser stated that part of Mr. Johnson's property is part of a potential future roadway project for an overpass. Lorinser stated that there is ROW taken out of there that will remain open until such time as construction takes place.

Discussion continued regarding other commercial areas throughout the community.

B. Subdivision Ordinance.

Wilson outlined some of the larger amendments within the Subdivision Ordinance. Wilson stated that she had been notified by some members that they would like more time to review the proposed amendments.

Stevens questioned if this is done for clarity purposes.

Wilson stated it will help with clarity issues. Wilson stated that there are some process amendments. Wilson outlined some of those changes to process.

Stevens questioned the number of lots that could be reviewed for a minor subdivision.

Wilson stated that it would be for four (4) or fewer lots.

Stevens questioned if he owned a 30 acre parcel and wanted to create 4 lots; could he go through the expedited process.

Wilson stated that was correct.

Stevens questioned if it was a commercial subdivision would that apply.

Wilson stated that the subdivision process does not look at the zoning of the property, unless specifically addressed. Wilson stated that the process tends to remain for all properties throughout the City. Wilson stated that the zoning helps guide lot size, setbacks, etc.

Wilson outlined the standards that had been proposed for lot consolidations in residential areas.

Stevens questioned if the ordinance could be chopped up into sections and brought back for further review by the Commission at a future meeting. Stevens stated that would allow them to get into the details and have a valuable discussion. Stevens stated that he thought that would make sense.

Wilson stated that if that would be easier for the Commission, we could do so.

Stevens stated that he was flexible. Stevens questioned if other members had thoughts.

Lorinser stated that splitting the ordinance for discussion over future meetings would be the best. Lorinser stated the group could really dig into the details; and it would be better for discussion purposes.

Englund stated that the group could just set aside a specific amount of time and see where they get each meeting.

Wilson stated that Mr. Joslin still has to review; and has a number of items on his plate that have more looming deadlines. Wilson stated that she does not want this to stretch out for months. Wilson stated that they could discuss Articles 1 through 6 next month; and 7 through 11 the following month.

McDonald questioned if Mr. Joslin could have comments and changes before the meeting.

Wilson said that he may, but staff would make sure those are provided at the meeting.

McDonald stated that they could do half and if they have time, they could do more. McDonald stated that Mr. Joslin could be invited to participate.

Stevens questioned if there were any items for the upcoming agenda that she was aware of.

Wilson stated no.

5. Discussion Items.

A. None.

6. Other Communications.

A. None.

Stevens questioned the 10k Wakes project. Stevens questioned if everyone was comfortable with the vagueness surrounding the project.

Lorinser stated that there would be no vagueness, as everything would be laid out within a lease agreement. Lorinser stated that Mr. Joslin will draft the document; and all will be covered. Lorinser stated that there is a great deal of items that had been discussed already. Lorinser stated that the agreement will be between the City and the developer.

Lind-Livingston questioned if it was temporary.

Lorinser stated that it is not temporary. Lorinser stated that it is planned to be permanent, but the City is covered if the business would go under.

Lind-Livingston questioned the trailer that will be parked.

Wilson stated that the plan is to have a temporary structure placed, until they are up and running.

Lorinser stated that they will have a pro shop. Lorinser stated that they indicated it would be more aesthetically pleasing. Lorinser stated that it would be temporary for the first year or two until they have the funding established.

Stevens stated that he would lobby for the Planning Commission's expertise to review the site plan.

Lorinser questioned the Park Board review.

Wilson stated that the Park Board has their own comp plan and controls what happens in the parks.

Lind-Livingston questioned the location and the zoning.

Lorinser stated that it would be behind the BMX track.

Wilson stated that it is the Parks/Open Space designation.

Lorinser stated that there were photos of the equipment that will be used at the facility.

Larson questioned if they would be required to do what the school did when they brought in the modular buildings. Larson stated that they were required to fill in the foundation and provide landscaping.

Wilson stated that she was not familiar with what the City had requested in that instance. Wilson stated that would be reviewed during the hearing.

Larson stated that would have been one thing that the Planning Commission would have looked at.

Lorinser stated that there is a temporary structure for the ice rink.

Wilson stated that one of the banks had used a trailer as a temporary business office for some time in the past as well.

Stevens stated that he just wanted to argue for the Planning Commission's expertise in reviewing this item. Stevens stated that he also questions parking for the facility.

7. Adjournment

Motion by Englund, second by Larson to adjourn the March 13th, 2012 meeting of the Planning Commission. Motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

Dated at Isanti, Minnesota this 10th day of April 2012.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa M. Wilson, AICP
Planning and Parks Director