

**CITY OF ISANTI  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
AUGUST 15, 2012**

**1. Meeting Opening.**

**A. Call to Order.**

Stevens called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

**B. Pledge of Allegiance.**

Everyone rose for the pledge of allegiance.

**C. Roll Call.**

**Members Present:** Sue Larson, Cindy Lind-Livingston, Steve Lundeen, Christopher McDonald and Sean Stevens.

**Members Absent:** Dave Englund (gave prior notice).

**Staff Present:** Lisa Wilson, Planning and Parks Director.

**D. Agenda Modifications.**

Stevens questioned if there were any modifications to the agenda.

Wilson stated that there were none.

**2. Approval of Minutes from July 10, 2012 Planning Commission Meeting.**

Stevens requested a motion regarding the minutes from the June 12<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Motion by Lundeen, second by Larson to approve the July 10, 2012 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes. Motion was unanimously approved.

**3. Public Hearings.**

**A. None.**

Stevens stated that he would like the record to reflect that there were no public hearings scheduled for this evening.

**4. Other Business.**

**A. Review of Chapter 227 Parking and Storage of the Isanti City Code.**

Wilson stated that at the previous Planning Commission meeting, the group had requested that some draft language be put together that shows how the City planned to address some of the issues that were being seen in the field. Wilson stated that staff had been working with the Community Service Officer to begin to draft some amendments for Planning Commission review and provide comment on this evening.

Wilson started to outline the proposed amendments beginning with Article I. Wilson stated that the no parking areas within the community have now been identified and placed within the ordinance.

Lundeen stated that he had issues with the no parking situation that has occurred within the new road construction project area along Elizabeth. Lundeen stated that he remembers being told that there would be parking allowed on one side of the street through this area. Lundeen stated that suddenly, as the second lift was going on, they were informed that there would be no parking.

Wilson stated that it was her understanding that the reasoning for this came from the fact that MSA funds were used and the City needed to follow their rules.

Larson stated that because MSA funds were used and the roadway did not meet certain widths standards, it was required to have no parking.

Lundeen stated that he did not feel this was fair to the residents in the area. Lundeen stated that if these residents need to host an event or something, they need to obtain a permit to allow for that parking. Lundeen stated that you can only make people get so many permits before they are permitted out. Lundeen stated that he thought something should be done to remedy this problem for these residents. Lundeen stated that in the future placing parking spaces in areas for visitors should be considered.

Wilson stated that in Article II, item D under 227-8 needs to be reworded. Wilson stated that intent of this item was to provide purpose/rationale for prohibiting semi-tractors and other large vehicles. Wilson stated that if the City is going to allow semi-tractors, this will need to be removed or reworded to reflect the intent of the ordinance.

Wilson provided some background on the amendments to the definitions. Wilson stated that the definition of commercial vehicle had changed, so as to allow for semi-tractors and recreational vehicles as exceptions to the rule. Wilson stated that City staff tried to use the weights that had been provided by Mr. Anderson at the previous meeting when drafting the definition.

Mr. Doug Anderson, 30 Buckskin Blvd SE, stated that he thought staff was heading in the right direction. Anderson stated that in using the plate decal, these correspond to the gross weight of the vehicle.

Stevens questioned if Anderson had seen the draft.

Anderson stated that he had. Anderson stated that he had provided a few comments to Mrs. Wilson regarding the draft.

McDonald stated that under the definition for seasonal, there may need to be a change to "jetskis". McDonald stated that this is a brand name and the City should probably use "personal watercraft" instead. McDonald stated that we all know what we are referring to, but the generic term should be used.

Wilson stated that she would make the change throughout the document. Wilson outlined some of the amendments within 227-10. Wilson stated that there were points that were redundant, so those have been merged into one item. Wilson stated that some questions had been raised by residents as to whether or not a planting screen could be used instead of a fence. Wilson stated that staff had added that as an option and was looking for feedback from the Commission.

Stevens stated that he was not against the planting screen, but the residents would need to be made aware that they would need to maintain the trees.

Larson stated that she was open to the idea, but questioned what type of trees would be allowed to be planted. Larson stated that the side yard can be narrow; and you would not want something large that would extend into the neighboring property. Larson stated that the City may want to offer a listing of trees that would be considered acceptable as a screen.

Lundeen stated that there may need to be a setback requirement if they use plantings. Lundeen stated that they may need to be planted two feet off the property, so they are not hanging in the neighbor's yard. Lundeen stated that otherwise, the neighbor ends up trimming on their side.

Wilson provided information regarding the two new sections for prohibited vehicles and commercial vehicles that would be permitted. Wilson stated that the section would provide specific requirements for the parking of semi-tractors only.

Stevens questioned if there should be some reference to noise within the document.

Larson stated that she was not sure if that was necessary, as there is a noise ordinance as part of the City Code.

Anderson stated that his diesel truck is loader than his semi-tractor. Anderson stated that if the neighbors would complain about a noise it would not be from his semi-tractor.

McDonald stated that his neighbor's motorcycle is probably louder.

Lundeen stated that he knows his motorcycle is louder than Mr. Anderson's semi-tractor. Lundeen stated that if a neighbor wants to complain about noise, they are going to make a call to the police and they would check on it. Lundeen stated that he does not mind giving a police officer discretion, but you could have an officer that goes above and beyond.

McDonald stated that if there is a section of the code related to noise, then it could be left alone.

Larson agreed that the ordinance is a separate chapter but does address noise issues, so the police can enforce the ordinance accordingly.

Lundeen stated that his only comment on the semi-tractor parking requirements would be to make sure that the definition is changed to allow for vehicles over 15,000 pounds. Lundeen stated that some of these tractors are a bit bigger than other, but all will exceed this weight limit.

Lind-Livingston stated that she questioned the unlicensed vehicle section under 227-11. Lind-Livingston stated that if a bobcat is sitting on a trailer, it does not seem all that different than a semi-tractor or a boat on a trailer. Lind-Livingston questioned whether or not that should be included in the ordinance. Lind-Livingston stated that bobcat is probably a brand name too and should be changed.

Lundeen questioned if construction equipment over a certain weight could be prohibited.

Anderson stated that it would be a skid-loader. Anderson stated that most of the equipment would be under 10,000 pounds. Anderson stated that adding them to a trailer, it could get quite heavy as the weights would add up.

Lundeen stated that as long as the resident can keep that stuff in their driveway and looking nice, he would not be against it being there. Lundeen stated that no one wants to see a yard full of vehicles and equipment.

Anderson questioned whether there were rules stating that you could only have a certain number of vehicles on your property.

Lundeen stated that the City did have that in ordinance.

Stevens stated that staff needed to make sure that was incorporated into this draft. Stevens stated that he remembered working on language in the past that limited the number of vehicles.

Wilson stated that is provided within the matrix that is part of Chapter 227. Wilson stated that the amendments needed to be “pinned down” first, as the matrix reflects what is in the text portion of the chapter. Wilson stated that staff will review the unlicensed commercial vehicle section and the grandfather clause prior to the next meeting.

Stevens questioned if a hearing would need to be called at the next meeting.

Wilson stated that because this is City Code, a hearing is not necessary. Wilson stated that once the Planning Commission is comfortable with the amendments; and the City Attorney and other staff members have reviewed, the item can head to City Council for adoption.

#### B. Privacy Fencing along Street Right-of-Ways.

Wilson presented the information that was contained within the staff memo. Wilson stated that City staff was looking for comments and/or direction from the Planning Commission on this item.

Stevens stated that he felt it was a better policy to leave the ordinance as is, due to potential sight-line issues that can occur with a privacy fence.

Lundeen stated that he agreed. Lundeen stated that he would rather review the variance request, then to change the ordinance and have issues with motorist trying to see around a privacy fence at an intersection. Lundeen also questioned snow removal. Lundeen stated that when public works has to clear the streets, the snow is pushed along the street. Lundeen stated that the City would suddenly be liable for breaking someone’s privacy fence with snow. Lundeen stated that snow can go through a chain-link fence, but not a privacy fence.

Larson stated that the sight-line needs to be adhered to. Larson stated that there are issues with seeing around these fences. Larson agreed that the setback from the property line along a right-of-way should stay in ordinance for privacy fences.

Discussions centered on a few known properties where landscaping or fencing is an issue. Commission members agreed that the regulation should stand.

**C. Home Occupations – Ordinance Amendments.**

Wilson presented the staff memo. Wilson stated that the Commission seemed to struggle at the last meeting with the two drafts. Wilson stated that to aid in the process, City staff would like the Planning Commission to make a recommendation to move forward with a more formal review of one draft or the other.

Lind-Livingston questioned what the differences were between the two drafts.

Wilson provided an update on each of the drafts. Wilson stated that City staff was looking for direction from the Commission.

Lundeen stated that there were certain types of home occupations that blended with the residential neighborhood. Lundeen stated offices, daycares, etc. are all okay. Lundeen stated that when you start having auto work being done in a garage, he is completely against that type of operation. Lundeen stated that the home occupation shall have minimal impacts on the streets. Lundeen stated that there are also tax disparities between those businesses that have invested in business and industrial districts. Lundeen stated that he did not think it was fair to the business that is paying higher taxes to be in these districts.

Larson stated that on the flip-side, home occupations can start a business that eventually moves into a business or industrial district.

McDonald stated that there is the likelihood that certain types of home occupations will have noise, run-off; or potential nuisances and those need to be accounted for in the ordinance.

Lundeen stated that hazardous materials and conditions need to be avoided and addressed. Lundeen stated that there are certain types of uses that should not be considered. Lundeen stated that no matter which is chosen, someone is going to have an issue with it.

Stevens questioned if staff was getting an idea of where the commission was going.

Wilson stated that it appeared they were leaning towards the DAC recommended ordinance.

Larson stated that within the ordinance, language should be added that states the City supports small business and wants them to succeed.

Motion by Lundeen, second by McDonald to recommend staff move forward with a review of the DAC recommended language for home occupations. Motion was approved (5 – 1 with Lind-Livingston voting nay).

**5. Discussion Items.**

**A. None.**

Stevens stated that there were no discussion items for the evening's meeting.

**6. Other Communications.**

**A. Zoning Ordinance Amendments.**

Wilson stated that the City Council had approved the new Subdivision Ordinance. Wilson stated that each PC member can discard the current subdivision ordinance that they had been given upon being assigned to the Commission.

**7. Adjournment**

Motion by Lundeen, second by McDonald to adjourn the August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012 meeting of the Planning Commission. Motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Dated at Isanti, Minnesota this 11<sup>th</sup> day of September 2012.

Respectfully submitted,

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Lisa M. Wilson, AICP  
Planning and Parks Director