

TO: Planning Commission Members  
Honorable Mayor and City Council Members  
FROM: Shawn Wetterlin, Building/ Zoning Official  
DATE: July 24th, 2017  
RE: Meeting Minutes,  
Tuesday, July 11th, 2017

The Planning Commission met at 5:30 p.m., on Tuesday, July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017 in the City Council Chambers at City Hall. The Following members were present: Donald Smith, Dave Hanifl, Patti Dockendorff, Linda Larson, and Richard Wieser. City Council Member, Brian Krenz, Building/ Zoning Official, Shawn Wetterlin, Terry Erickson, Economic Development, Eileen Krenz, Chamber of Commerce and Steve Bissen, Economic Development Committee were also in attendance. Planning Commission Members, Mani Edpuganti, and Jerry Steffes were not in attendance.

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman, Smith. The meeting minutes of June 6th, 2017 were approved as distributed by consensus of all present Planning Commission Members.
2. The Planning Commission held a public meeting at the La Crescent City Hall, 315 Main Street, on Tuesday, July 11th, 2017 at 5:30 o'clock P.M. to consider an application for the following Variances. The variance request concerns certain premises described as follows; parcel # 25.1225.000 better known as 539 South 5th street.
  - a. Allow for a home to be built with the attached garage 5 feet in front of the principal dwelling when, section 12.14, Subd. 6.4 of the Zoning Ordinance (page 52) states, attached garages shall have the same or greater set back from the street as the principal structure.
  - b. Allow for a garage to be 56 percent of the ground floor street-facing linear building frontage when, 12.14, Subd. 6.3 of the Zoning Ordinance (page 52) states, garages shall not comprise more than 55 percent of the ground floor street-facing linear building frontage.

The Public Hearing opened with the applicant presenting their request.

The Public Hearing was then closed as no member of the public wished to be heard.

Motion was made by Hanifl, seconded by Dockendorff to approve the variance request with the following findings of fact:

- a. The request will not alter the essential character of the locality.

- b. The property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by the zoning ordinance.
- c. No concerns have been registered from neighbors.
- d. The City has allowed this Variance in the past when the garage does not appear visually to be the primary structure on the lot.
- e. The request is in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the ordinance and consistent with the comprehensive plan.
- f. The lot is narrow in width and constricting for even of home of modest size.
- g. This is the minimum required to achieve the need to allow a home and garage on the lot.

Upon a roll call vote, all members present voted in favor of the motion as proposed. And the applicant was welcomed to the community.

3. The Planning Commission held a joint meeting and Public Hearing with the Economic Development Commission and Chamber leadership at the La Crescent City Hall, 315 Main Street, in said City on Tuesday, July 11th at 5:35 o'clock P.M. to consider public input on the draft Downtown Planning document. The current draft of 'Planning for the future of downtown La Crescent' can be found on the City's website.

Planning Commission Chair, Don Smith gave an overview of the draft plan and process. The plan is on the city website. There will be one more meeting with the Economic Development Committee. There were about 30 residents in attendance.

Public Hearing opened with the following residents speaking:

Janet Mootz: When will Bike Bridge be installed,  
Need a reason to stay in community after kids are gone,  
When will projects start,  
Concerned about looks of buildings in plans.

Tom Fuchsel: (Representing the Knights of Columbus),  
against a Grocery store being built north 4<sup>th</sup> St.  
Would like existing businesses cleaned up  
Remove wording from grocery store plan

Ressano DeSouva: (Representing the Knights of Columbus),  
Would like grocery store on North 4<sup>th</sup> removed from plan.

Larry Graf: We need space for new houses/ buildings.

Cherryl Jostad: Questions on Downtown Parking, and North 4<sup>th</sup> signal light.

Ellen Mades: Questions regarding raising of homes on the corner of Main and Oak, St. will it be there be grass planted after houses are removed.

- Steve Mau: Would like items of discussion projected on a screen, and had questions on existing Elementary School site.
- Pauline Byom: Likes the Downtown plan, being a resident of 22 years with 5 kids. Noted that it seemed to her that the younger members of the audience are even more enthusiastic than the older members of the audience. A plan such as this will be required to keep her and her spouse in town after the family is grown.
- Steve Bissen: The Economic Development Commission has not acted on the draft plan. If the EDA doesn't adopt the Plan, the Planning Commission can still recommend the plan to the Council and the EDC will support the plan. Mr. Smith noted that the plan would not be ready for their review until after this public input session and that the draft adoption resolution references 'support' of the plan. The Council is the adopting authority.
- Marti Holub: Likes the overall plan, it's important to come up with consensus. Don't throw out the whole plan because of one thing that isn't liked.
- Megan: Likes and supports plan, would like to see more support for community and school. The city should consider doing something about the train whistles.
- Jerry Burns: Likes the vision of the plan, and hopes all entities can work with plan.
- Jeremy Chipps: Why are trains blowing there whistle so much, is it because of what they are hauling?
- Sara Hurley: Questions future parking areas, and how does city notify residents they are in a proposed development area.
- Dave Hanifl: We have covered all the ideas, and would like to get the plan moving with investors.
- Linda Larson: Would like to thank residents for their participation. Likes having a plan and ideas to move us forward.
- Brian Krenz: Hopes all committees Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Committee, and planning Commission can work together to come up with a downtown plan.
- Dick Wieser: Has concerns over reverse angle parking. Likes the plan but has concerns if the plan is too large for La Crescent, and maybe we should have smaller scale, but agrees with the vision.
- Patti Dockendorff: Likes the overall plan with a few adjustments, would like to review parking, and one other area that's not listed as a catalytic project.

Eileen Krenz: Chamber has not supported plan as of yet. One concern the Chamber is concerned about, is that we don't give up on existing businesses in the community, and be supportive of them.

Terry Erickson: as staff having a plan and vision is very helpful when meeting with developers.

Emails that were sent in by residents that couldn't attend the meeting were reviewed as follows below:

Jim Nissen: The Plan looks great, anxious to try the reverse angle parking, likes the amenities for walker and bicyclists.

Bob Hurt: See's many wonderful things in the plan, but thinks we may want to consider a smaller scale. Impressed with much of the planning.

Kathie Rozovics: Would like to see the Library location, space, meeting rooms, community room, computer area considered in the planning of the new city hall building.

The next draft Downtown Planning discussion will be at the September Planning commission meeting. Houston County News article is attached to the minutes for information purposes.

4. The Planning Commission discussed future work plan items, our next meeting in August will look at comp plan for operating budget for next year. Members are requested to review the comprehensive plan in advance of the meeting for their input into the operating and capital plans for 2018.
5. The Planning Commission discussed future workshops coming up. Patti Dockendorff will be attending a workshop in July.
6. The Planning Commission discussed that the next Planning Commission packet will be digital (no hard copies) as part of the Green team program.
7. The Building Official reviewed 2017 building permit activity to date with Springbrook, eight new homes currently under construction, and potentially seven more this fall it's been a very busy year for building. 15 new homes were noted, there are very limited supply of available lots.
8. The Planning Commission reviewed the 2017 Minnesota Small Cities Development program the City of La Crescent was awarded in the total amount of \$ 372,900.00. Thank you to Terry Erickson, Don Smith and Alison Bettin for their hard work. The City received a similar grant a

few years ago in the amount of \$440,000. These grants help improve the 'housing stock' within the City and are part of the Comprehensive Plan.

The next Planning Commission meeting will be on August 1st, 2017.

Tentative Upcoming meetings and dates:

August 1        Comprehensive Plan/ Operating Budget review

September 5    Recommend Adoption of Downtown Plan

October 3        Shoreland/ Flood Plain Public Hearing, Bike Ped, and Bluffland Public Hearing

November 7     Zoning Ordinance text amendments. Public. Hearing. Recommend adoption of updated Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Recommendation of The Bluffland Plan for the City of La Crescent.

November 21    Recommend adoption of Shoreland and Floodplain Ordinances. Recommend adoption of text amendments to Zoning Ordinance.

December 5<sup>th</sup>

Meeting Adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully, Shawn Wetterlin