

To: Planning Commission Members
Honorable Mayor and City Council Members
From: Shawn Wetterlin, Building/ Zoning Official
Date: December 10, 2014
Re: Meeting Minutes for Tuesday, December 2, 2014

The Planning Commission met at 5:15 p.m., on Tuesday, December 2nd, 2014, in the City Council Chambers at City Hall. The following members were present Jerry Steffes, Don Smith, Dave Hanifl, Linda Larson, Richard Wieser, Patty Dockendorff, Mani Edpuganti, Ex-officio member Brian Krenz and Shawn Wetterlin.

1. The Minutes of the November 5th, 2014 Planning Commission were approved as written by consensus of the members present.
2. The Planning Commission of the City Zoning Authority held a public meeting at the La Crescent City Hall, 315 Main Street, in said City of La Crescent on Tuesday, December 2nd at 5:15 p.m. to consider the application for a variance to allow for an attached garage to be built 5'-6" in front of the house instead of even with the house. The variance request concerns certain premises situate in said City of La Crescent described as follows, to wit: Lot 7, Block 1, 1412 Ambrosia Ct. Winona County, parcel # 33.003.0070.
- 2A. Motion made by Steffes, seconded by Dockendorff to approve the variance to allow the home to be built with a garage in front of the principal dwelling when the zoning ordinance states, "attached garages shall have the same or greater set back from the street as the principal structure.

Upon a roll call vote, all members present voted in favor of the motion as proposed.

In recommending that the motion be approved, the Planning Commission referenced the following findings of fact.

1. The variance will not alter the essential character of the locality.
2. The lot is located adjacent to a cul-du-sac and it after the main part of the home minimizing the appearance of 'garage with home attached'.
3. The lot is such if the home was pushed back on the lot it would infringe on the 'buffer zone' in the conservation zoning district.

4. The driveway was of sufficient length that a vehicle parked in the drive will not create an unsafe or unsightly look of a car being parked onto the right-of-way.

2B. The approval was conditioned on the owner's willingness to add a window to the garage wall and thus further integrating the structures. The home owner indicated that this would be an esthetic improvement and they were comfortable with the condition.

3. Senior Housing Sketch Reviews were presented by 2 developers. Of note neither project conforms to current zoning. Both projects represent the vision of the developer and in both cases we thank the developer for their diligence and interest in our community. Clearly no project should be represented as the project that will be constructed. Noteworthy is that one project has issues of gaining control over property and financing challenges while no specific zoning classification exists for the other project. A PUD might be the most applicable zoning. The City should discuss how 'its vision' will be represented. Many choices exist including accepting the vision of a developer. Land use density in the urban core; extension of 6th Street; phasing of the project; what services will be included in the project and developing dedicated 55+ twin-housing are among the choices the city has to consider. The rule of thumb is that current citizens will likely comprise up to a third of the occupants of the proposed facilities.
4. There has been an inquiry about an on premise electronic sign in a commercial district on the Pike between La Crosse and La Crescent. Such signs are often referred to as LED dynamic signage. The current sign ordinance does not specially permit such a sign but there is room for some interpretation as the ordinance speaks to 'animated' signs. These dynamic signs are much more advanced than the mostly digital message boards that now exist in the City and are capable of 'full motion' video. Off premise Digital billboards are not permitted.

The direction of the Planning Commission is to develop language permitting on premise Dynamic Signs, of a limited size, and in conformance with industry standards for nighttime dimming, dwell times and not permitting full motion video. Such inclination will be reported to the Council with a request for their sense of appropriateness. The Commission will explore changes and clarifications to the Sign Ordinance and hold appropriate public hearings before making a final recommendation to the Council. Such language will be prepared for the next planning commission meeting in January and a public meeting held in February—unless the Council has direction to the contrary.

5. Discussion continues on annexation of larger tracks of land and a recommendation to the Council is anticipated in February.
6. Comprehensive Planning. Consistent with previous approvals orientation meetings are being held with three consulting firms to assist in developing a new comprehensive plan for the City of La Crescent. On the 10th of December at City Hall the City Administrator, Building Official and Planning Commission Chair will be meeting with 3 consulting firms to discuss the intended format for developing the new City Comprehensive Plan. The proposed approach to a new Comp Plan, which has been adopted by the Council and Planning Commission, is different than the traditional approach by creating smaller topical 'focus groups' where citizens that care about a certain topic can participate without necessarily committing to substantial involvement over many months. It is intended to be an energizing process, engaging citizens in their areas of

interest and more completely identifying actions necessary to implement a long-term vision that guides short-term decision making.

The firms will be able, after the meeting, to prepare proposals to assist the City in developing its comprehensive plan. These proposals will be available by January 5th and presented by the firms at the January 7th planning commission meeting. It is anticipated that one firm will be selected for recommendation to the Council for a contract for services and that we will begin the process of Developing a new Comprehensive Plan for the City of La Crescent.

Members of the Planning Commission are invited and Council members welcomed. Meetings on Wednesday December 10th are scheduled as follows: 10:00 Stantec Consulting, 12:30 HKGi -- Hoisington Koegler Group, 2:00 MSA Professional Services.

7. Discussion on potential Rental Registration/ Inspection programs was begun. The Commission will continue the discussion at next meeting.
8. Question was raised regarding the potential vacating portion of Twilight Street. Is it a fair trade, does it follow the Comprehensive Plan? The request was made to have the Zoning Official invite Jim Nissen with the Fish and Wildlife to the future public hearing being conducted by the City Council.
9. Meeting adjourned at 7:45 P.M.