

TO: Planning Commission Members
Honorable Mayor and City Council members
FROM: Angie Boettcher, Administrative Assistant
DATE: February 5, 2020
RE: Meeting Minutes from February 4, 2020

The Planning Commission met at 5:30 p.m., on Tuesday, February 4, 2020 in the City Council Chambers at City Hall. The following members were present: Jerry Steffes, Dave Hanifl, Anna Stoecklein, Patti Dockendorff, Mike Welch, Linda Larson and Jason Ludwigson. City Council Member Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner, City Engineer Tim Hruska, Building/Zoning Official Shawn Wetterlin, and City Administrative Assistant Angie Boettcher were also in attendance.

1. The meeting was called to order by Chair Steffes. The first agenda item was to elect the Chair and Vice-Chairperson. Attorney Wieser reviewed the process. Member Larson nominated current Chair Steffes. Steffes declined. Other members present also declined.

Following discussion, Member Dockendorff made a motion, seconded by Stoecklein as follows:
Table Agenda item 1 until after the public hearings and Member Steffes would act as temporary Chair until that time.

Upon a roll call vote, taken and tallied by the Building Official, all members present voted in favor.

Dockendorff – Yes
Stoecklein – Yes
Hanifl – Yes
Larson - Yes
Welch – Yes
Steffes – Yes
Ludwigson – absent at time of vote

2. Chair Steffes asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the December 3, 2019 meeting.

Following discussion Member Welch made a motion, seconded by Hanifl to approve the minutes.

Upon a roll call vote, taken and tallied by the Building Official, all members present voted in favor.

Welch – Yes

Hanifl – Yes
Dockendorff – Yes
Stoecklein – Yes
Steffes – Yes
Larson – Yes
Ludwigson – absent at time of vote

3. Agenda item 3 (Review Rules and Bylaws of the Planning Commission), item 4 (Review of City Code of Conduct), and item 5 (Review of Social Media/Communication Policy) were reviewed by City Attorney Wieser. No action was necessary, informational only.
4. At 5:45 the Planning Commission held a public hearing for a Conditional Use Permit and Variance Request for the La Crescent Hokah Elementary School.

The Chair opened the meeting. Tim Ruppert architect from HSR Associates presented the plans. Members of the public, Raymond Natoni and School Superintendent Kevin Cardille spoke.

Following discussion Member Welch made a motion seconded by Hanifl to recommend approval of the Conditional Use permit with the following conditions:

1. The applicant provide screening on the west and east side of the property located at 420 South 6th Street, La Crescent, Minnesota.
2. The Applicant enter into a Stormwater Maintenance Agreement with the City of La Crescent.
3. The Applicant will abide by all representations made by the Applicant or their agents made during the permitting process, to the extent those representations were not negated by the Planning Commission or City Council and to the extent they are not inconsistent with the spirit of the letter and conditions of the conditional use permit.
4. The Applicant complies with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations.

Upon a roll call vote, taken and tallied by the Building Official, all members present voted in favor. Member Ludwigson Abstained.

Welch- Yes
Hanifl – Yes
Dockendorff – Yes
Stoecklein – Yes
Steffes – Yes
Larson – Yes
Ludwigson - Abstained

In recommending that the Conditional Use Permit be approved, the Planning Commission referenced

the following findings of fact:

- A. That the conditional use will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted, nor substantially diminish and impair property values within the immediate vicinity.

Response (Findings): The conditional use will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of the other property in the immediate vicinity, nor diminish and impair property values within the immediate vicinity. The existing school will be renovated to meet current district and community needs. The overall scope was approved by the community in a building bond referendum on April 9, 2019. The scope was also reviewed prior to referendum by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) via their Review and Comment process.

- B. That the establishment of the conditional use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of surrounding vacant property for uses predominant in the area.

Response (Findings): The conditional use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of surrounding vacant property of uses predominant in the area. The school district has acquired many of the adjoining properties to the south.

- C. That adequate utilities, access roads, drainage and other necessary facilities have been or are being provided.

Response (Findings): Adequate utilities, access roads, drainage and other necessary facilities are being provided. A series of review planning meetings with the city planning officials and city engineer were completed to discuss and plan for adequate utilities, access roads, drainage and other necessary facilities.

The School is designed to limit the amount of impervious surface area for better stormwater management and runoff at the site. The School has worked to keep as much green space as possible.

- D. That adequate measures have been or will be taken to provide sufficient off-street parking and loading space to serve the proposed use.

Response (Findings): Adequate measures have been taken to provide sufficient off-street parking and loading space to serve the proposed use of an Elementary School. A separate variance application is being submitted related to the parking. This has been a primary discussion of the ongoing site planning. The district has purchased adjacent properties (outside of referendum funds) to improve this while balancing the needs for green play space for the Elementary School students. We are building new staff and visitor parking lots with drop off lanes for greater off-street parking opportunities. Further a separate loading space is being provided with adequate turning radius for deliveries.

A total of 124 parking spaces will be available.

- E. That adequate measures have been or will be taken to prevent or control offensive odor, fumes, dust, noise and vibration, so that none of these will constitute a nuisance, and to control lighted signs and other lights in such a manner that no disturbance to neighboring properties will result.

The use is consistent with the purposes of the zoning code and the purposes of the zoning district in which the applicant intends to locate the proposed use.

Response (Findings): Adequate measures have been taken to prevent or control offensive odor, fumes, dust, noise, and vibration, so that none of these will constitute a nuisance, and to control lighted signs and other lights in such a manner that no disturbance to neighboring properties will result. The building will be used in the similar manner as it has been used since the original building was built in the 1950s.

- F. The use is not in conflict with the policies of the City of La Crescent.

Response (Findings): The use is not in conflict with the policies of the City of La Crescent. A series of review planning meetings with the city planning officials and city engineer were completed prior to this application to review this.

An essential theme of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan was collaboration with other City stakeholders.

- G. The use will not cause traffic hazards or congestion.

Response (Findings): To the best of the site limitations and purchased adjacent properties the use will not cause traffic hazards or congestion. As shown on the site plan drawings great lengths are being undertaken in our planning to reduce the impact of any traffic hazards or congestions.

- H. Existing uses will not be adversely affected because of curtailment of customer trade brought about by intrusion of noise, glare or general unsightliness.

Response (Findings): Existing uses will not be adversely affected because of curtailment of customer trade brought about by intrusion of noise, glare or general unsightliness. All of these areas will be improved with the building addition and renovation.

Following discussion Member Dockendorff made a motion, seconded by Larson to accept the Variance request with the following conditions:

1. The Applicant will abide by all representations made by the Applicant or their agents during the permitting process, to the extent those representations were not negated by the Planning Commission or City Council and to the extent they are not inconsistent with the spirit of the letter and conditions of the variances.
2. The Applicant complies with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations.

Upon a roll call vote, taken and tallied by the Building Official, all members present voted in favor.

Dockendorff – Yes
Larson – Yes
Hanifl – Yes
Stoecklein – Yes
Welch – Yes
Steffes - Yes
Ludwigson - Abstain

In recommending that the motion be approved, the Planning Commission referenced the following Findings of Fact:

The parking plan has been reviewed by the Chief of Police, Fire Chief, and Fire Marshal who have identified no concerns with public safety.

Shawn Wetterlin read the following statement regarding variances:

Pursuant to 12.07 Subd. 11 of the La Crescent Zoning Ordinance, upon approval or denial of a variance request by the Board of Adjustment, an applicant or other aggrieved party may file an appeal in writing to the City Council within ten (10) days of the decision, otherwise the decision by the Board of Adjustment becomes final.

5. At 6:15 a Public Hearing was held for a Preliminary Plat and District Zoning Change application for Horse Track Meadows.

Chair Steffes opened the meeting. Mike Sexauer from Bluff Country LLC/MSM development, reviewed the plans.

The following members of the public spoke:

Dave Baumgartner, Neil Kennebeck, Curt Murray, Jeremy Chipps, Sheri Noble, Cherryl Jostad, Dewey Severson, Shirley Rosendahl, Susan Laska, and Janice Hill.

Following discussion Member Dockendorff made a motion, seconded by Ludwigson to recommend approval of the Preliminary Plat with the following conditions:

1. Amendment to sewer service area map of the La Crosse Area Planning Commission (LAPC).
2. That the developer completes a cultural resources review/archeological survey of the property and that no additional work is required.
3. Outlot to be conveyed/dedicated to the City.
4. The location and width of the utility and drainage easements need to be approved by the City Engineer. Existing easements of record need to be confined to the location identified on plat.
5. Grading, Drainage, and Erosion Control Plan approved by the City Engineer.

6. Construction plans and specifications for public improvements approved by the City Engineer.
7. Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan approved by the City Engineer. Drainage calculations need to be submitted to meet city and state requirements.
8. Utility Plan approved by the City Engineer.
9. Applicant/developer comply with the recommendations contained in the Engineering Report of Braun Intertec dated February 13, 2018.
10. All building setbacks and building footprint shall be shown and provided to the City. No permanent structures will be built outside of the building pad.
11. No site work shall commence until after approval of the final plat.
12. Developer enter into a Development Agreement with the City to be approved by the City Attorney and City Council prior to the final plat. Development Agreement will address the following:
 - a. Assessing the cost of public improvements back to the development. Development Agreement will include a waiver of the developer's right to challenge or otherwise appeal the special assessments.
 - b. Lots numbered 30 – 49 petitioned to be zoned R2 will be utilized for side-by-side horizontally stacked townhomes with the common wall constructed on the lot line separating lots. Developer agrees to not sell lots individually and further agrees that the Development Agreement will contain this restrictive provision.
 - c. Developer pay for installation of street lighting as approved by City Engineer. The final plat contains the approximate location of the street lighting.
 - d. Developer construct and install sidewalk as present on the preliminary plat.
13. Applicant obtaining all wetland mitigation permits from applicable federal, state, and local agencies.
14. The applicant/developer construct a walking trail through the outlot dedicated to the City at applicant/developer cost. The trail to be constructed within eighteen (18) months of approval of final plat.
15. That lots be identified with their intended use (R1-A low density residential, R2-single family, R3 medium high density residential).
16. The applicant/developer provide information required by the following sections of the Subdivision Ordinance: 13.09(2)(B)(1-6); 13.09(2)(C)(1-17); 13.09(2)(D)(1-22); 13.09(2)(E)(1-10); 13.09(2)(G)(1-8); 13.09(2)(G)(2)(i-iv), if applicable.
17. The applicant/developer will abide by all representations made by the applicant/developer or their agents made during the permitting process, to the extent those representations were not negated by the Planning Commission or City Council and to the extent they are not inconsistent with the spirit or explicit conditions of the conditional use permit.
18. That the applicant/developer comply with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations.
19. The applicant must secure all necessary permits before construction begins including a sanitary sewer extension permit (MPCA), water main extension permit (MDH) and NPDES storm water

permit if required. The Owner, or their representative, will be responsible for permit compliance.

20. Provide gross and buildable lot acreages.
21. The final grading plan should be submitted with the final plat and plan submittal. Grading plan provisions should ensure that drainage crosses no more than one adjacent lot. If drainage crosses more than one lot, a drainage easement should be required. The grading plan should show proposed building locations, styles, and floor elevations.
22. Additional easements required by private utility companies, if any, should be platted. All proposed utility conduit crossings must be shown on the final plans. All related private utility fees shall be paid by the Developer.
23. Developer correct the identification of the number of lots on the top left corner of the plat. Submit a Certificate of Survey for the parcel.
24. Show existing building structures within 350 feet of the boundary.
25. Show width of lots at setbacks for those lots on a curve.

Upon a roll call vote, taken and tallied by the Building Official, all members present voted in favor.

Dockendorff – Yes

Ludwigson – Yes

Steffes – Yes

Larson – Yes

Hanifl – Yes

Stoecklein – Yes

Welch - Yes

In recommending that the preliminary plat be approved, the Planning Commission referenced the following Findings of Fact:

1. The property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner permitted by the Zoning Ordinance
2. The request is in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the ordinance and consistent with the comprehensive plan.
3. The basic layout of streets and lots are acceptable.
4. The property commonly referred to as the “Horse Track Meadows” was annexed by the City in September 2016 in order to make sure future development was done in the City.
5. In July 2019 the City of La Crescent approved an amendment to its Sewer Conveyance Agreement with the City of La Crosse to provide municipal sewer to the Horse Track Meadows property.
6. The proposed development provides a mix of single family, twin home, and high density/multi-family buildings.
7. The proposed development is consistent with the general vision for the City.

Following discussion Member Hanifl made a motion, seconded by Ludwigson to recommend approval of the District Zoning change application with the following Findings of Facts:

1. The request to rezone is a reasonable request and is permitted by the zoning ordinance.
2. The request to rezone is in harmony with the general provisions and intent of the zoning ordinance and consistent with the goals of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan and general policies of the City of La Crescent.
3. The property commonly referred to as the “Horse Track Meadows” or “Racetrack” was annexed by the City in September 2016 in order to make sure future development was done in the City.
4. In July 2019 the City of La Crescent approved an amendment to its Sewer Conveyance Agreement with the City of La Crosse to provide municipal sewer to the Horse Track Meadows property.
5. The proposed development provides a mix of single family, townhome, and high density/multi-family buildings.
6. The 2016 Comprehensive Plan identified few lots available for construction within the City. Granting the rezoning will meet an identified need for additional lots within the City for continued growth of the City.
7. The adjacent surrounding land uses are compatible with the rezoning request.

Upon a roll call vote, taken and tallied by the Building Official, all members present voted in favor.

Hanifl – Yes

Ludwigson – Yes

Steffes – Yes

Larson – Yes

Stoecklein – Yes

Welch – Yes

Dockendorff – Yes

7. Tabled agenda item 1 resumed. Following discussion, Member Stoecklein made a motion to nominate Member Ludwigson for Chair, seconded by Welch.

Upon a roll call vote, taken and tallied by the Building Official, all members present voted in favor.

Stoecklein – Yes

Welch – Yes

Dockendorff – Yes

Larson – Yes

Hanifl – Yes

Steffes – Yes

Ludwigson – Abstain

Following the election of Chair, elected Chair Ludwigson lead the meeting.

Following discussion, Chair Ludwigson made a motion to nominate Member Larson as Vice-Chair, seconded by Dockendorff.

Upon a roll call vote, taken and tallied by the Building Official, all members present voted in favor.

Ludwigson – Yes

Dockendorff – Yes

Steffes – Yes

Hanifl – Yes

Stoecklein – Yes

Welch – Yes

Larson – Abstain

8. Following discussion the March meeting date will be held on Monday the 16th at 5:30.
9. Chair Ludwigson referred to the December meeting when discussion regarding the Landscaping Ordinance took place. An update was provided by the Building Official. No action necessary.
10. Motion by Steffes, seconded by Ludwigson to adjourn the meeting. All members in attendance voted in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.