

**THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION BOARD HELD ON JANUARY 22,
2013, AT 7:00 P.M., AT THE CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M., by Mitzi Mellott. Members present were Tim Siercks, Jack Edmonds, and Dick Dobson. Township members present were Randy Atwood (Baldwin Twsp.) and Jim Kusler (Princeton Twsp.) Staff present were Carie Fuhrman and Mary Lou DeWitt.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

DOBSON MOVED, TO NOMINATE MITZI MELLOTT FOR CHAIRPERSON FOR THE PLANNING COMMISSION BOARD. MOTION DIED FOR LACK OF A SECOND.

SIERCKS MOVED, SECOND BY MELLOTT, TO NOMINATE JACK EDMONDS AS CHAIRPERSON FOR THE PLANNING COMMISSION BOARD. UPON THE CALL OF MOTION, THERE WERE 4 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED.

DOBSON MOVED, SECOND BY SIERCKS, TO NOMINATE MITZI MELLOTT AS VICE CHAIRPERSON FOR THE PLANNING COMMISSION BOARD. UPON THE CALL OF MOTION, THERE WERE 4 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED.

EDMONDS MOVED, SECOND BY MITZI MELLOTT, TO NOMINATE DICK DOBSON AS SECRETARY FOR THE PLANNING COMMISSION BOARD. UPON THE CALL OF MOTION, THERE WERE 4 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING ON DECEMBER 17, 2012

DOBSON MOVED, SECOND BY SIERCKS, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 17, 2012. UPON THE VOTE, THERE WERE 4 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED.

PUBLIC HEARING:

A. Ordinance Amendment to Hard Surfacing of Automobile and Recreational Sales Area in the B-2 and B-3 District

Fuhrman informed the Planning Commission Board that the Automobile and Recreational Sales and Service are currently allowed via a conditional use permit in the B-2 and B-3 Zoning Districts. One of the conditions requires that the parking area for the outside sales and storage area shall be hard surfaced before the operation of business begins and maintained to control dust, erosion, and drainage. The City Attorney suggested this language needs to be clarified as it is not clear if it is specified only for new automobile sales lots, existing sales lots that are expanding, or both.

It should be pointed out the general parking requirements in the Performance Standards provide one year from the permit issuance before a parking area must be hard surfaced, as long

as the parking area has a durable, dustless surface, such as Class five aggregate. It is assumed this was allowed because paving cannot occur year round in our climate.

In the case where an Ordinance conflicts with itself, the more restrictive provision applies. So, automobile sales lots currently must be hard surfaced before the operation can begin. This is not very realistic for our climate. If a business receives approval to begin operating, or to expand during the wintertime, this would prevent them from opening until the late spring months.

The Planning Commission preliminarily discuss this Ordinance at the December meeting, and a general consensus was reached that the parking areas for automobile sales lots should be paved within three months of the hot plants opening up in the spring, whether it was a new lot opening or an expansion of an existing lot. The City Attorney reviewed this language and determined it to be difficult to enforce and monitor as different plants open at varying times each year.

The City Attorney has recommended the following language:

B-2 Neighborhood Commercial District of Chapter V, Section 9, and B-3 General Commercial District of Chapter V, Section 10, Zoning Districts; Conditional Uses: 1. Automobile and recreational sales and service provided that: (c) The parking area for the outside sales and storage area, whether for a new or the expansion of an existing facility, shall be hard surfaced by the date determined by the Planning Commission after consideration of the size and scope of the project, and the effect of the cold weather season on paving construction materials, but in no event more than 10 months after final city approval. Parking areas shall be maintained to control dust, erosion, and drainage before and after hard surfacing. No parking or display of vehicles for sale shall occur on landscaped areas. Customer parking shall be clearly marked.

Performance Standards of Chapter VI, Section 2, P.1 Space Layout, Standards, Construction, and Maintenance: 5. The entire parking area, including parking spaces and maneuvering lanes, required under this section shall be provided with a durable, dustless surface in accordance with specifications approved by the City Engineer. The parking area shall be hard surfaced within one year of the date the permit is issued, except for automobile and recreational sales areas, which shall follow the requirements specified in Chapter V.

Fuhrman said this gives discretion to the Planning Commission for determining when the lot needs to be paved by, depending on the time of year the application is submitted. For example, if someone were to come in September, they could require that it be paved by that fall.

Dobson asked if the requirement for separation of landscaping and hard surfaced area is in this revision. In the Ordinance it says customer parking must be clearly marked.

Fuhrman said the Zoning Ordinance does state that in Chapter V, in both B-2 and B-3 Zoning

Districts under Conditional Uses, items (c) and (d); “No parking or display of vehicles for sale shall occur on landscaped areas. Customer parking shall be clearly marked. Interior concrete or asphalt curbs shall be constructed within the property to separate driving and parking surfaces from landscaped areas.”

EDMONDS MOVED, SECOND BY DOBSON, TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING. UPON THE VOTE, THERE WERE 4 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED.

SIERCKS MOVED, SECOND BY DOBSON, TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL TO THE CITY COUNCIL AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER V (ZONING DISTRICTS) AND CHAPTER VI (PERFORMANCE STANDARDS) OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE IN ORDER TO AMEND THE REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO THE HARD SURFACING OF AUTOMOBILE AND RECREATIONAL SALES AND STORAGE AREAS IN THE B-2 NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICT AND THE B-3 GENERAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT. UPON THE VOTE, THERE WERE 4 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Resources for Planning Commission Members

1) Planning & Zoning 101

Fuhrman said this is a good review that the League of Minnesota Cities has put together for land use plans. This handout gives reasons on why cities create and adopt comprehensive plans.

2) Planning Commission Guide

Fuhrman encourages the Planning Commission Board to keep this guide in their Planning Commission binders. The League of Minnesota Cities has put this guide together that explains the creation of the City Planning Commission, appointment of City Planning Commission members, the powers and duties of the Planning Commission, and the meeting procedures along with the review of the applications that come forth. This is a good guidebook to go by.

3) Invitation to Planning 101 Course

WSB & Associates, City Engineering firm is giving a one day course on the basics of the planning process. They will speak on why planning is beneficial for communities, the history of planning, the legal basics of the planning process, land use and zoning tools, and trending topics in the planning field. There is no cost to attend. The course will be held at the WSB & Associates Minneapolis office on Saturday, January 26, 2013, from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

COMMUNICATION AND REPORTS:

A. Verbal Report

Fuhrman informed the Planning Commission Board that the Digital Sign Committee has met a couple of times. They are looking at possibly prohibiting digital signs downtown and the round-

about area. The electronic signs that are currently in those areas would be okay, it would not allow new signs. The location they are considering allowing the electronic signs would be in the B-3 General Commercial District and south of sixth street south. Fuhrman will ask the Chambers members what they think of this idea.

Edmonds mentioned he has driven through North Branch and they have a community sign. He said it is a nice looking sign, but hard to read. The sign should have less written on it.

Fuhrman said the City and School District had met a few times regarding a community sign. The School District had to drop out because of the timing and lack of funds. The site they were looking at was on the intersection corner of Rum River Drive and Northland Drive.

The Bergstrom property was purchased by the City today. Once the asbestos and vermiculite are removed the building will be taken down, and then the City will enter into a Purchase Agreement with Habitat for Humanity. Fuhrman said she is now working on the property at 903 Ninth Avenue North. She is working with Mille Lacs County to get a reduced price since it is in tax forfeiture and needs clean up of the site.

The "It Starts Here Challenge" has had eight people apply so far and more applications are coming. The deadline is January 31, 2013. The Business Accelerator Group that has been formed will decide who receives the forgivable loan. Three applicants are eligible to receive a loan of \$10,000

Dobson asked Fuhrman if she could see about having Gerrard's remove that sign they have had on display for quite some time. It is an eye sore.

Fuhrman said it is on their residential property so it could be hard to ask them to remove it. She will check into it and see if anything can be done.

B. City Council Minutes for December, 2012

The Planning Commission Board had no comments.

DOBSON MOVED, SECOND BY SIERCKS, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. UPON THE VOTE, THERE WERE 4 AYES, 0 NAYS. MOTION CARRIED. THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:35 P.M.

ATTEST:

Mitzi Mellott, Vice Chairperson

Mary Lou DeWitt, Comm. Dev. Assistant