

Meeting Minutes
New Prague Planning Commission
Wednesday, January 25, 2023

1. Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Dan Meyer with the following members present Brandon Pike, and Jason Bentson. Absent was Shawn Ryan and Ann Gengel.

City Staff Present: Ken Ondich – Planning / Community Development Director, Kyra Chapman – Planner, and Josh Tetzlaff – City Administrator

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- A. November 16th, 2022 Regular Meeting**
- B. December 21st, 2022 Regular Meeting**

It was motioned by Pike, seconded by Bentson, to approve the November 16th and December 21st regular meeting minutes. Motion carried (3-0).

3. OLD BUSINESS

- A. None.**

4. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Review of Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Fuel Station Definition to include EV Charging Stations
City of New Prague – applicant
(Public Hearing Required)**

Planner Chapman presented the staff report and introduced the proposed zoning ordinance amendment. She explained that last November, the city received an inquiry from a business that was considering purchasing a property in the I-1 Light Industrial for use as an Electric Vehicle (EV) charging station. Under the current zoning ordinance, EV charging stations are not allowed in the I-1 Light Industrial District. As such, planning staff suggests that the amendment should allow fuel stations as a conditional use in the I-1 Light Industrial Zoning District only if it is adjacent to a state highway. While discussions with the interested party regarding an EV charging station in the industrial zoning district have changed over the last month, staff further reviewed the zoning ordinance and would like the Planning Commission to consider allowing up to three EV charging stations as accessory use with a permitted or conditional use in the industrial and commercial districts, as long as the charging stations do not occupy a required minimum parking space.

Planning Director Ondich explained that New Prague currently has three public EV charging locations. Parkview medical clinic has one charger, City Hall has a charger, and Coborn's has three EV charging stations. The reason the suggested maximum number of accessory use EV chargers is three is because Coborn's has three chargers and that has seemed to work well. Accessory use EV chargers would provide convenience for employees and the public.

Pike inquired if the business that intends to move into the B-2 Community Commercial District would be considered a fuel station.

Planning Director Ondich clarified that the business doesn't intend to install more than three charging stations. They intend to build an office building and have it as a convenience for their employees and the public, but it wouldn't be a dedicated fuel station. It's hard to suggest specific zoning requirements when the topic is relatively new and there's not much information out there.

A motion to open the public hearing was made by Pike and seconded by Meyer at 6:40pm.

A motion to close the public hearing was made by Pike and seconded by Benston at 6:41pm.

Pike liked that the ordinance would allow businesses in the commercial district to add an EV station to their property without needing a conditional use permit.

A motion was made by Pike, seconded by Benston, to approve and forward the ordinance amendment to City Council for their February 6th meeting.

Motion carried (3-0).

5. Miscellaneous

The following miscellaneous items were reviewed as information:

A. Green Step Cities – Administrator Tetzlaff

City Administrator Tetzlaff introduced the Green Step City Program and suggestions on how to proceed to Step 3. He explained that New Prague has already been approved for Step 2 in the Green Step City Program with 20 actions already completed. However, to transition to Step 3, more actions will need to be completed. City Administrator Tetzlaff recommends that the city consider completing Best Practices 15.1 and 25 which deal with sustainable purchasing and green business development. To complete Best Practice 15.1, the City would need to create a purchasing policy or guidelines to purchase paper containing post-consumer recycled content. To complete Best Practice 25, the city could participate in marketing and outreach to connect businesses with assistance providers on sustainability, grow new green businesses and green jobs, promote green businesses that are recognized in a local, regional, national, program, or strengthen value-added businesses using local "waste" material.

Planning Director Ondich mentioned that Chart Industries and Scott Equipment might satisfy the 25.4 requirement, which calls for the strengthening businesses to re-use waste materials.

Meyer added that Lakers New Prague Sanitary does computer appliance recycling, which may fulfill the requirement for section 25.4. Best Practice 25.7 requires cities to conduct or participate in a buy local campaign for local businesses and community members. Meyer believed that New Prague Chamber of Commerce already does this practice.

Pike inquired if he could receive more background on the Green Step City Program.

City Administrator Tetzlaff explained that the Green Step City Program was created by non-profits, sustainable businesses, and government entities. The program was a way for cities to reduce their impact on the environment and use less resources and utilities. Incentives for the program come in the form of recognition, signage, and increased likelihood of receiving grant funding. Cities have seen monetary savings due to their involvement in the program. One Minnesota city saved roughly \$16,000 in storm water events from changes in their utilities and infrastructure.

Pike understood that the city aims at completing at least the two of the best practices for this year to proceed to Step 3. Pike inquired if there is an idea of how many best practices the city would like to complete by 2023.

City Administrator Tetzlaff explained that the Planning Commission could suggest some sections to complete but they would have to be done by the May deadline. The sections can also be completed later in the year.

Pike liked Best Practice 5 regarding building redevelopment. In the last Planning Commission meeting, historical preservation on Main Street was touched on in terms of ordinances. Perhaps this could be something to look at as a long-term goal or look towards the Minnesota Main Street Model.

Planning Director Ondich explained that the Minnesota Main Street Model is quasi-state program. This will be something that will be looked at in the Comprehensive Plan update. It's also been talked about in the past, but the city didn't have the staff or money at the time.

City Administrator Tetzlaff stated that once the city becomes a Step 3 City, the city will not advance solely on best practices that were in Step 1 and 2. The city will have to measure itself and make improvements based on those measurements.

Meyer suggested that solar panels could be attached to the lights in town to save money.

City Administrator Tetzlaff explained that the state is really pushing the solar energy. However, Utilities General Director Reimers isn't as thrilled about solar. Since a good portion of the year in Minnesota is cloudy, snowy, or dark, it's not as beneficial. Some crossing signals are powered by solar panels but perhaps some have batteries or a storage system for the darker months. It might be worth looking into.

Pike explained that it's different from powering a streetlight and a flashing pedestrian sign that's activated.

City Administrator Tetzlaff explained that the payback for a solar was 25 years but they only last 20-25 years. In sunnier states, the payback is sooner.

B. Comprehensive Plan Update

Planning Director Ondich gave an update on the Comprehensive Plan. The first Comprehensive Plan meeting with staff occurred in January and the Council appointed the Steering Committee. Brandon Pike is the representative for the Planning Commission and Ann Gengel is the alternative. Background information and studies were given to MSA last week. MSA will send an invite in the next week to gauge when people will be able to have their first Steering Committee meeting.

C. Monthly Business Updates

Planning Director Ondich presented the Monthly Business Updates. In 2022, 14 new homes permits were processed. A new business called Innovative Waste Recycling has moved into 129 E Main St.

Pike mentioned that Innovative Waste Recycling might meet Section 25 of the Green Step City Program.

Planning Director Ondich further explained that the purchase agreements are being completed for the remaining seven shovel-ready site lots in the industrial park. There will be three businesses purchasing lots in the industrial park: Scott Equipment, CVF Racing, and Brick's Boatworks. Brick's Boatworks will likely request a conditional use permit in March for storage. Planning staff have done a preliminary overview for Brick's Boatworks and CVF Racing. Annual reports such as the permit statistics, business audit, and lot inventory from 2022 will be presented at the February Planning Commission meeting.

6. Adjournment

A motion was made by Bentson, seconded by Pike, to adjourn the meeting at 7:07 pm. Motion carried (3-0).

Respectfully submitted,



Kyra J. Chapman
Planner