

Meeting Minutes
New Prague Planning Commission
Wednesday, June 28, 2023

1. Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by Chair Dan Meyer with the following members present Brandon Pike, Ann Gengel, Jason Bentson, and Shawn Ryan.

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

2. Elect Chair and Vice Chair for 2023/2024

A motion was made by Ryan and seconded by Bentson to elect Dan Meyer as the Chair and Brandon Pike as the Vice Chair for the Planning Commission. Motion carried (5-0).

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes

A. May 24th, 2023 Regular Meeting

It was motioned by Pike, seconded by Gengel, to approve the May 24th regular meeting minutes. Motion carried (5-0).

4. OLD BUSINESS

A. None.

5. NEW BUSINESS

**A. Concept Review of the Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Screening Requirements
City of New Prague –applicant**

Planner Chapman introduced concept review of the screening ordinance amendment. She stated that since the previous Planning Commission meeting, tree diameter requirements were added to the amendment and that research on Scott County’s screening ordinance was done. In Scott County, screening is required if commercial or industrial properties abut residential, transition reserve or urban expansion zones. The ordinance requires greenbelts with an opaqueness of 80% with trees at a minimum height of 6’. The deciduous trees must be spaced no more than 40’ apart and evergreens must be planted no more than 12’ apart. The new proposed screening amendment for New Prague requires at least an 80% opacity year-round and trees with a minimum diameter of 2” when commercial and industrial properties abut residential properties. The 2” tree diameter was also added to the requirements of industrial uses abutting commercial or industrial districts.

Planning Director Ondich mentioned that some businesses along 169 in Scott County have opted for berms as opposed to fences to meet the Scott County 80% opaqueness requirement.

Ryan preferred shade trees over conifers. He inquired if the City needs a timeframe of replacing conifers if they die on the property. For instance, there could be a 6-month replacement plan requirement.

Planning Director Ondich explained that in the City's residential landscaping ordinance there are timeframes listed for planting that could be incorporated into the proposed language relating to industrial landscaping and also notes a warranty period is indicated in the residential ordinance as well.

Ryan suggested that there could be a required percentage of shade trees or conifers. He inquired if the opacity was changed since the last meeting.

Planner Chapman said that the opacity was changed from 50% to 80% for commercial, industrial, or institutional uses abutting residential districts.

Planning Director Ondich clarified that staff decided on 80%, because this was a consistent value in other cities.

Pike shared that as the light industrial district expands northward, it will only be meeting Section 2 of the screening ordinance, not section 1. He inquired if the industrial district would expand west of the High School or Music St.

Planning Director Ondich stated that that area has not been planned out yet. The Comprehensive Plan update may have the area designated as light industrial use or other uses depending on the feedback.

Ryan contemplated on whether there should be a certain number of trees per square footage for businesses.

Planning Director Ondich said that it's more common to have more screening or landscaping in industrial districts compared to commercial businesses that want more visibility to draw customers to their business.

Ryan explained that in the Maple Grove industrial district, there were medians that had lots of trees and vegetations that softened the look.

Planning Director Ondich stated that a conditional use permit could be required for industrial districts along collector roads like trunk highway 21.

Meyer suggested that the ordinance could specifically state certain collectors such as trunk highway 21, 19, and 13.

Pike recommended that a third section could be added to the screening ordinance that requires industrial uses to apply for conditional use permits if they are abutting collector roads.

Ryan proposed that the tree requirements could be similar to Lakeville's. In other words, the ordinance would require trees to be a minimum height of 8' and a diameter of 2.5" wide.

Bentson added that the tree requirements are normal standards. Contractors will meet the minimum of whatever the requirement is.

Pike remarked that there haven't been discussions on screening when commercial properties abut commercial properties.

Planning Director Ondich elucidated that there are landscaping requirements for commercial properties, but the ordinance only requires trees to be spaced a certain distance along perimeters of parking lots.

Ryan suggested that contractors could be required to donate trees to the city when they create new developments.

Planning Director Ondich commented that he'd have to consult with the City's legal team to see if that would be possible. The proposed tree donation sounds very similar to park dedication fees. Since park dedication fees are already collected, it would be difficult to legally argue for those donations.

It was motioned by Pike seconded by Bentson to schedule a public hearing for next month's meeting on the screening amendment and to have the suggested revisions in the amendment relating to tree height, tree diameter, new section for industrial along highways, warranty period and planting time periods.

Motion carried (5-0).

6. Miscellaneous

The following miscellaneous items were reviewed as information:

A. Comprehensive Plan Update

Planning Director Ondich introduced the comprehensive plan update. As of right now, MSA is doing one on one stakeholder meetings to receive more community input. MSA will be speaking with township officials, Scott County, New Prague Area School District, business owners and many others. The Community Input Workshop occurred on May 31st. Although only three community members participated in the event, there were lots of discussions. The topics discussed were related to EV charging stations and agricultural land. The second steering committee meeting was scheduled earlier this month but was canceled due to the lack of availability. MSA and the City will have a booth at Czech Out New Prague to receive more feedback and spread awareness of the comprehensive plan.

B. Monthly Business Updates

Planning Director Ondich mentioned that in May, three new single family home permits were issued, totaling a sum of 6 home permits this year. Several commercial reroof and reside permit have been pulled this last month. There has been a total of 300 reroof and reside permits. Construction at Brick's Boatworks is still underway with the structure of the main shop in place.

7. Adjournment

A motion was made by Pike, seconded by Gengel, to adjourn the meeting at 7:34 pm. Motion carried (5-0).

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kyra J. Chapman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kyra J. Chapman
Planner