

Meeting Minutes
New Prague Planning Commission
Wednesday, April 25, 2012

1. Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by Planning Commission Chair Bob Gilman with the following members present: Bob Gilman, John Roos, Dave Bruzek and Dan Meyer. Absent was Jay Nuhring.

City Staff Present: Ken Ondich – Planning Director.

Others Present: Joanne Foust – City Consultant with Municipal Development Group and Shawn Ryan – City Council.

2. Approval of March 28, 2012 Regular Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Meyer seconded by Bruzek to approve the March 28, 2012 regular meeting minutes as submitted. Motion carried (4-0, Nuhring absent).

3. Old Business

None.

4. New Business

A. Concept Plan Review – Chart Inc. Second Addition

Planning Director Ondich presented the staff report. He stated that Chart Inc. has been discussing a possible expansion plans for a new facility in New Prague to manufacture large storage tanks. He stated that the land located to the east of their main manufacturing facility was identified but would need to be acquired before a project could potentially move forward. He stated that Chart acquired purchase agreements with 3 of 4 property owners involved in the potential project area with the forth signing the concept plan application in lieu of a purchase agreement. He stated that the potential project could be phased for construction starting with an initial 88,922 sq. ft. building with expansion possible up to 208,710 sq. ft. and a potential additional 30,000 sq. ft. office building. He stated that concept plan review is the first step in the process to subdivide and develop the property. He stated that the plat includes a total of 28.86 acres as divided up into a 25.13 acre lot, a 3.27 acre lot and .46 acres for right of way for 1st Ave. NW. He stated that the proposed lots meet the minimum size requirements of 40,000 sq. ft. and that drainage and utility easements are required on all lots and under public infrastructure including an open ditch that will be buried. He also stated that an easement must be dedicated at a minimum of 100' or the width of the 100 year flood plain. He stated that additional right of way for 1st Ave. NW must be added on the west side within the site as well as to the edge of the land being platted. He stated that railroad

spur access will require permits from the Union Pacific Railroad. He stated that a vacation of 2nd Ave. NW and an alley are required during the platting process and that no direct access to County Road 37 is allowed other than the existing access and finally that a traffic impact study will be required. He stated that an open ditch on the site would be buried and rerouted and that an existing storm sewer pipe off the subject site would also be rerouted from underneath an existing building. He stated that wetlands were delineated on the property last fall and that the applicants are proposing to mitigate wetlands from the site and that an application can be made at any time. He stated that an EAW is not required because as a light industrial facility the minimum threshold is a 300,000 sq. ft. building. He also noted that a portion of the subject site on Lot 21 of New Prague Outlots was previously found to be contaminated with trichloroethane and that it is still an active file and the matter must be addressed before final plat approval. He stated that existing water and sewer stubs are provided to the property and staff strongly recommends that they be used instead of constructing new connections into the relatively new roadway. He stated that the City Engineer would like to discuss a few items prior to Preliminary Plat approval including proposed grades, stormwater management, the temporary turnaround and the traffic impact study. He also noted that fire access may be required around the building as required by the Minnesota State Fire Code. Finally he noted that a current title commitment is required for all properties involved in the plat which must be reviewed by the City Attorney and that a conditional use permit and variance will be required for other portions of the building and site approval process. He stated that no formal action is needed by the Planning Commission at this stage of review but that staff did develop two findings and 24 conditions in the staff report for consideration and revisions. He stated that the next step would be for the applicant to make changes as noted in the staff report and prepare a preliminary plat for future consideration. He also introduced Bruce Lyman, Chart Inc., Powell Minnis, HJM Architect and Andy Brandel, I&S Group.

Commissioner Bruzek asked where the two wetlands on the site were located as well as the location of the open ditch. He noted that the site would only have access via the intersection of County Road 37 and 1st Ave. NW and asked about the possibility of extending 1st Ave. NW to the north.

Planning Director Ondich identified the location of the two wetlands and the open ditch on the site. He also stated that a traffic impact study would be required for the development which will provide information about potentially required improvements to the traffic system in the area. He stated that the land north of the site was owned by the school district and was not a part of the plat, but that the City's Comprehensive plan does have 1st Ave. NW extending north to 12th Street NW at some point in the future.

Russ Sirek, 1105 1st Ave. NW, stated that he has concerns about the project. He stated that the road was built to a 9-ton standard and has questions about where the large tanks might be leaving the site. He stated that he would be concerned about maintenance on the roadway. He stated that he understands that screening would be required for outdoor storage on the site, but that sometimes the items are nearly 20' tall on the site which is not screened by normal fencing. He stated that the wetland was useable by waterfowl and would not like to see it go. He stated that he did not understand why the north end of 1st Ave. NW appeared to be part of land that would be dedicated for right of way. He

stated that he has noises concerns about the project and specifically noise from the existing operations, such as a beeping noise, at 6AM that disturbs him.

Planning Director Ondich stated that he would be happy to meet with Mr. Sirek to discuss his concerns.

No formal action was taken by the Planning Commission and they thanked the applicant for their submittal.

B. Comprehensive Plan Update – Demographics Chapter

Joanne Foust, the City's consultant with Municipal Development Group, presented updated information which will be added to the Demographic Trends and Assumptions Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. After presenting the information she asked that the Planning Commission provide feedback on the demographics information, specifically the assumptions in the population projections section.

Commissioner Bruzek asked Planning Director Ondich for his thoughts on the population projections.

Planning Director Ondich stated that he would lean towards a more conservative estimate due to the fact that new housing starts have been very low since 2007 and that they really haven't seen any upward pressure for the trend to start going the other way. He did note that the EDA and City Council are trying to address the need for more jobs in the City which could lead to more housing construction, but that such a project would take some time. He stated that he would be comfortable with a conservative approach for the next 5 years with the numbers being ramped up later in the projections. He also noted that whether or not the Chart project moves forward could have implications on the population projections as well.

Commissioner Bruzek stated that he also believes that Chart's plans will have an impact on the projections as well as the possible industrial park expansion as well as other companies in the current industrial park area. He stated that he would agree that being conservative for the first five years in the projection would be appropriate but that beyond that maybe the figures could be less conservative.

Joanne Foust noted that the 2030 population forecast in the current Comprehensive Plan was 16,300 and that none of the methods of projections showed a number this high.

Council Member Shawn Ryan stated that recently there has been a trend for smaller less expensive homes and that New Prague's income levels are lower than the Scott County average. He stated that he sees the need for more white collar jobs in New Prague. He stated that he is concerned that the City has over 300 lots ready to build on which could be filled up with lower value homes. He stated that he believes New Prague should establish itself as a higher quality area and doesn't want to see it go the other way.

Joanne Foust stated that next month the Housing Chapter would be reviewed in a draft format and added that should the Planning Commission or Council have any comments following the meeting to contact her or City Staff.

The Planning Commission thanked Joanne Foust for her presentation.

5. Miscellaneous

The following miscellaneous items were reviewed as information only:

- A. Monthly Business Update – Planning Director Ondich updated the Planning Commission with a report that was presented to the EDA earlier in the month.
- B. Comments Received Re: Outdoor Storage of Recreational Equipment – Planning Director Ondich stated that since last month's meeting when the topic of recreational equipment being stored outside was discussed, he had received two e-mails from residents asking that no further restrictions be added to the parking of RV's in the City. City Council Member Shawn Ryan stated that he also received the comments and has spoken with one of the residents that submitted a letter and said their concerns were regarding that they thought the restriction would not allow them to park anything in their backyard. He stated that he has spoken with many residents who would support a restriction on where recreational vehicles could be parked, but that he did not have any plans to bring up the topic again with the Council. The Planning Commission provided various comments about the potential for parking restrictions and ultimately did not take any further action on the item.

6. Adjournment

A motion was made by Bruzek, seconded by Meyer to adjourn the meeting at 8:16 PM. Motion carried (4-0).

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kenneth D. Ondich". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "K" and "O".

Kenneth D. Ondich
Planning Director