

Meeting Minutes
New Prague Planning Commission
Wednesday, December 14, 2011

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, Dan Meyer, Jay Nuhring and Council Representative David Bruzek (arrived at 6:32 PM). Absent: None.

City Staff Present: Ken Ondich – Planning Director

2. Approval of November 16, 2011 Regular Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Roos seconded by Meyer to approve the November 16, 2011 regular meeting minutes as submitted. Motion carried (4-0, Bruzek not yet present).

3. Old Business

None.

4. New Business

**A. Zoning Ordinance Amendment –Religious Institutions in B-1 District
(Public Hearing Required)
New Prague Planning Department, Applicant**

Planning Director Ondich presented the staff report. He stated that New Prague Lutheran Church had acquired the former State Bank of New Prague building at 201 Central Ave. N. and that they initially intend to use the building as offices and small meeting areas which are all permitted uses in the B-1 Central Business District. He stated that no corporate worship would be taking place in the building at this time as they are using the middle school and more recently the high school for this purpose. He stated that the church is asking that the City consider adding “churches” to the “B-1 District” which would widen their future options for the building beyond the office use. He stated that City Staff and the City Attorney discussed the request and suggest adding the already defined “religious institutions” as a “conditional” use in the B-1 Central Business District as it is currently not listed in the district. He stated that said use is listed as a conditional use in all the other zoning districts except for I-1 Light Industrial. He stated that the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act states that cities cannot impose substantial burdens on religious uses and that the amendment would not impose a substantial burden. He stated that five other “religious” related uses are located in other zoning districts. He stated that the zoning ordinance currently defines religious institutions and that they are not listed as a permitted or conditional use in the B-1 District at this time. He stated that he recommends adding “religious institutions” to the list of conditional uses for the B-1 Central Business District as the only proposed

amendment. He noted that the Planning Commission preliminarily discussed the amendment at their November 16th meeting and asked that a public hearing be scheduled for the December Planning Commission Meeting.

The public hearing was opened at 6:38 P.M.

Pete Sletten, 1400 Woodlands Court SE, stated that he is a member of New Prague Lutheran Church and that he would support the proposed zoning ordinance amendment as the most logical way to open up their options for the future use of the building at 201 Central Ave. N. He stated that he has been working with the Planning Department on the request and stated that he believes the request is a good idea and hopes that it goes through.

The public hearing was closed at 6:40 P.M.

It was moved by Roos, seconded by Meyer to recommend that the City Council approve the proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment to add religious institutions as a conditional use in the B-1 Central Business District. Motion carried 5-0.

B. Expansion and Modification of T.I.F. Plan for the Downtown Redevelopment Area – Resolution #1-2011

Planning Director Ondich presented the staff report. He stated that at the November 21, 2011 City Council meeting a public hearing was scheduled for December 19, 2011 to consider a modification to the Downtown Redevelopment District and Tax Increment Financing Plan. He stated that the boundaries of the redevelopment district would be expanded to include the former creamery property bound on the north by 2nd Street NW, on the west by 3rd Ave. NW, on the east by 2nd Ave. NW and on the south by the alley north of Main Street. He stated that the modification is being considered to reconstruct the public parking lot south of City Hall and also to complete storm water ponding improvements on the former creamery property. He stated that per Minnesota Statutes the plan modification is required to be reviewed by the Planning Commission to ensure it is in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan. He stated that staff believes the modification is in compliance with the comprehensive plan because the creamery property is noted in the comprehensive plan as “Redevelopment Area #1” and that a pond on this lot to be used to help with downtown drainage issues would fit with intent of the comprehensive plan and that the reconstruction of the parking lot south of City Hall is a permitted use in the B-1 Central Business District and used by the general public for the benefit of the downtown area which lacks off-street parking lots.

The Planning Commission and Planning Director Ondich briefly discussed the general function of a Tax Increment Financing District as information.

It was moved by Bruzek, seconded by Meyer to approve Resolution #1-2011 and forward to the City Council for consideration at their December 19, 2011 meeting. Motion carried 5-0.

5. Miscellaneous

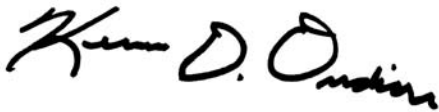
The following miscellaneous items were reviewed as information only:

- A. 2012 Meeting Schedule – Planning Director Ondich noted that the 2012 Meeting Schedule was included in the packets for review by the Planning Commission.
- B. Business Updates – Planning Director Ondich updated the Planning Commission with a report that was presented to the EDA earlier in the day.

6. Adjournment

A motion was made by Bruzek, seconded by Meyer to adjourn the meeting at 6:59 PM. Motion carried (5-0).

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