

Meeting Minutes
New Prague Planning Commission
Wednesday, March 28, 2012

1. Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Planning Commission Chair Bob Gilman with the following members present: Bob Gilman, John Roos, Dave Bruzek and Jay Nuhring. Absent was Dan Meyer.

City Staff Present: Ken Ondich – Planning Director.

2. Approval of February 22, 2012 Regular Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Bruzek seconded by Nuhring to approve the February 22, 2012 regular meeting minutes as submitted. Motion carried (4-0).

3. Old Business

None.

4. New Business

A. Concept Zoning Ordinance Amendment Review – Exterior Storage of Recreational Equipment in Residential Areas

Planning Director Ondich presented the staff report. He stated that during the March 5, 2012 City Council Meeting, the City Council discussed the current regulations regarding storage of “recreational equipment” on residential properties. He stated that a particular situation with a fish house being parked in a driveway for an extended period of time is what initiated the discussion. He stated that the City Council asked that the Planning Commission research the regulations of some surrounding cities in order to determine if an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance should be made in regards to storage of recreational equipment on residential lots. He stated that currently Section 702 of the Zoning Ordinance for Exterior Storage states that in residential districts, all materials and equipment must be stored within a building or be fully screen except for recreational equipment and boats/unoccupied trailers that are less than 25’ in length. He stated that he had asked eight area cities what they had for rules regarding exterior storage of recreational equipment. He stated that only two of the eight cities specifically had regulations that limit certain recreational equipment from being stored off-season in driveways or in front yards of homes. He stated that any regulations to require off-season recreational equipment such as boats, snowmobiles, trailers, etc. to be stored in rear yards or side yards could have far reaching impacts as many homes do not have access to their rear yards for storage of said equipment which would require them to store the equipment in their garage or to pay for an off-site storage area. He stated that such a regulation could become an enforcement problem because the City does not have the staff to

monitor it regularly as if we had a dedicated staff person to enforce nuisance code matters. He stated that the Planning Commission should review the current zoning ordinance language and compare it with the more restrictive language that some other cities have.

Commissioner Gilman stated that he believed adding additional language restricting storage of recreational equipment could open up a can of worms because New Prague has a somewhat rural feel.

Commissioner Bruzek stated that he specifically knows of a property on Columbus Ave. S. that has a truck, boat and fish house stored in the driveway most of the year. He stated that the home has a single car garage, is located on the golf course and he believes that there is no other place to store the items. He stated that while he does not necessarily like the fact that the items are stored in the driveway he believes that the enforcement aspect of language prohibiting the storage in driveways, even for certain times of the year, could be an issue for the City's small staff.

Commissioner Gilman stated that he believed that some matters with recreational equipment in driveways or yards can be addressed through the nuisance ordinances, particularly in cases where the equipment is in a state of disrepair such as a fish house.

Commissioner Roos stated that he likes the idea of allowing certain recreational equipment to be stored in driveways but only during the appropriate season, but stated that he was worried about the implications of those residents who have no alternative storage options on their site and would have to pay for off-site storage.

Commissioner Nuhring stated that some of the other cities regulations are much more detailed in terms of describing recreational equipment such as ice houses, boats, etc. He asked if it would be possible to categorize certain equipment.

Commissioner Bruzek stated that being too specific in the definition of recreational equipment could be a problem.

Planning Director Ondich stated that in the nearly 8 years he had worked for the City that he had received very few complaints about recreational equipment being stored in driveways of homes. He stated that the majority of issues have been resolved through the nuisance ordinance for equipment that was clearly in a state of disrepair or exceeded the 25' length limit. He stated that he did not know the reason behind the current regulations, but stated that the 25' length limit typically only restricts the placement of RVs on properties and that even RV's haven't been a large issue for enforcement. He stated that recreational equipment has not been a large source of complaints historically and that staff has a difficult enough time keeping up with the long grass/weed and junk enforcement around town. He stated that should the complaints about recreational equipment start to become prevalent that he could see a need to address the issue, but that he did not believe it was a widespread concern at this point based on complaints received.

Commissioner Nuhring stated that he liked the idea of potentially limiting the total number of recreational equipment items on a lot to 2.

Commissioner Gilman stated that he could also see the value in setting a minimum setback from the street to where recreational equipment could be stored.

Commissioner Bruzek noted that specifically the distance to the curb could be the measurable distance.

Planning Director Ondich stated that the minutes of the meeting would be provided to the City Council next Monday for review. He stated that the Council would provide direction on any further reviews of the matter.

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. Comprehensive Plan Update – Planning Director Ondich stated that in the packets he had included a copy of the memo that was reviewed by the City Council at their March 19, 2012 Meeting regarding the selection of consultants for the Comprehensive Plan Update. He stated that the Council had approved hiring Municipal Development Group, Inc. for the Land Use, Demographics and Housing Chapters and SEH, Inc. for the Transportation Chapter. He stated that staff had already held a “kick-off meeting” earlier in the week for the plan update and that there would be monthly updates with the Planning Commission on the progress of the plan amendments starting in April.

6. Adjournment

A motion was made by Roos, seconded by Nuhring to adjourn the meeting at 7:06 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