

Meeting Minutes
New Prague Planning Commission
Wednesday, September 24, 2014

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: John Roos and Jay Nuhring. Absent were Dan Meyer and Mark Bartusek.

City Staff Present: Ken Ondich – Planning Director

2. Approval of August 27, 2014 Regular Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Roos, seconded by Nuhring, to approve the August 27, 2014 regular meeting minutes as submitted. Motion carried (3-0).

3. Old Business

A. None.

4. New Business

**A. Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Section 702 – Exterior Storage
City of New Prague - applicant**

Planning Director Ondich stated that during the month of August that City Staff had sent out just over 25 letters to residents in the City who had trailers and RVs which were in excess of the Zoning Ordinance limit of 25' long in residential areas. He stated that this was the first time staff had reviewed the entire city at one time for violations of this particular ordinance as it had been handled on a case by case basis previously. He stated that the ordinance only allows the storage of boats and unoccupied trailers less than 25 feet in length. He stated that many of those who received letters expressed concerns about the existing ordinance language such as noting that the ordinance was only for boats and trailers and that RVs are not a both or a trailer, that the ordinance doesn't define what a trailer is, that the ordinance does not set a maximum number of days a trailer or RV can be on the residential property for loading and unloading after a trip and that the ordinance does not define storage or at what number of days on a lot its considered to be stored on a property. He stated that the topic of exterior storage was last discussed in 2012 by the City but that the City Council did not recommend any changes at that time however the specific issue was in regards to fish houses. He stated that most recently the topic was before the City Council on September 2, 2014 and that they made a motion to have the Planning Commission review the subject and look at other policies to see if they can come up with workable language to have better definitions in the ordinance. He stated that staff has contacted all residents who were sent a letter about their

RV, boat or trailer being in excess of 25' long and asked them to attend the meeting or provide comments so that the city can begin to draft ordinance language. He stated that no citations had been issued at this time regarding the existing ordinance language. He stated that while a public hearing had not been scheduled that staff suggest hearing from residents to gather their ideas to be used to draft new ordinance language. He noted that two comments had been received prior to the drafting of the staff report and were included in the packet for review from Pat Sticha at 802 Wencel Ave. NE and Steve and Brenda Hoffman at 206 4th Street SW.

Jeff Blaschko, 710 Central Ave. S., stated that he bought his home in 1995 and at that time Central Ave. S. was gravel. He stated that a few years later it was paved. He stated that after the road was paved the City implemented an ordinance that limited the amount of time a trailer or RV could be parked on the street. He stated that he takes pride in his house, yard and camper. He stated that vehicles are allowed to park anywhere on a lot and doesn't see why an RV should be any different if it can be operated and is maintained. He stated that he would like to see New Prague establish its own unique rules and not just use the rules from another city. He stated that he thinks that parking an RV on the road actually helps slow down traffic. He asked how many complaints had been received this year.

Planning Director Ondich stated that about one half dozen complaints had been received, mostly specific to people living in trailers, parking on the street or parking so as to block public right of way.

Pat Sticha, 802 Wencel Ave. NE, stated that he had submitted a letter which was included in the staff report but did want to state that the City shouldn't use any cookie cutter language for the entire city as the old areas of town are different from the new areas of town and that what works in a new area of town might not work in an old area of town where the lots are smaller.

Lon Morsching, 811 Central Ave. S., stated that he has lived at his home for 35 years. He stated that the property wasn't in the city limits when he purchased it. He stated that they have had an RV since the early 1980s and that they keep it up by the house and not out by the road. He stated that he and his wife travel a lot in it and that she has a pinched nerve and this is a good way to travel. He stated that they use their motorhome 12 months out of the year. He stated that not being able to keep the RV on their lot would affect their financial situation and that it's important that they can keep it there for winter.

Dennis Tietz, 507 Chalupsky Ave. NE, stated that they park their camper at their family farm which is in City Limits on the west side of town. He stated that he didn't like the comment in the New Prague Times that suggested that people who own an RV should have the money to store it somewhere and stated that the comment was irrelevant.

Judy Gebhardt, 814 1st Ave. SE, stated that the City should be looking at other issues like junk in people's yards rather than the nice campers that is being discussed. She stated that she pays over \$2,000 a year in property taxes and that she should be able to keep her camper on her lot.

Nick Prochaska, 1413 12th Street SE, stated that he felt the comment in the New Prague Times about if you have the money to buy an RV that you have the money to store it was absurd. He stated that not all people that have RVs can afford to store them and that they are a good family activity. He stated that he went through eight other towns rules for storage of

RVs and found that he would be fine with any of them. He stated that he has a 30' trailer that might measure closer to 34' from front to back. He stated that some other cities have setback and hard surface requirements that could be workable in New Prague. He stated that he believed it was debatable as to whether or not RVs could even be interpreted to be prohibited under the current ordinance.

Dan Metzdorff, 1411 7th Street NE, stated that he received a letter about his RV and believed that most would be over the 25' length limit in town. He stated that 25' is large for a boat for small for a camper or RV. He stated that it's a good family activity and that it is his pride and joy. He stated that his RV is not an eyes sore. He stated that he could see allowing RVs to be parked on the street could be a problem. He said that it doesn't make sense to him that just because an RV is smaller it doesn't matter if it looks bad or not that it is allowed on a lot but not a larger RV that is kept up well.

Commissioner Nuhring stated that the Planning Commission didn't come into the meeting with any preconceived ideas about what to include in any new ordinance language and that this meeting was intended to hear what the residents have to say.

Dennis Tietz stated that he believed that the City of Belle Plaine requires the RV's to have current registration.

Pat Sticha stated that if an RV is kept in good appearance why it should be an issue.

Commissioner Roos stated that he recalled the previous discussion in 2012 when the City Council ultimately decided not to amend the ordinance and that while the discussion was spurred on by the topic of fish houses it did lead to some discussion of setbacks for items and other related matters such as overhanging over sidewalks.

The Planning Commission thanked the residents in attendance for providing comments and feedback and noted that this was just the beginning of the process and that additional research and drafting of ordinance language would occur over the next few months and that all attendees would be notified of future discussions.

**B. Comprehensive Plan Updates – Chapter 4: Natural Resources
City of New Prague - applicant**

Planning Director Ondich stated that he had prepared an update to Chapter 4 – Natural Resources of the comprehensive plan by collecting information from various sources but the majority of the information was gathered from the DNR. He stated that both the text and maps were updated.

5. Miscellaneous

The following miscellaneous items were reviewed as information only:

- A. Monthly Business Update – Planning Director Ondich provided the Monthly Business update to the Planning Commission that had been provided to the EDA earlier in the month.
- B. Additional Discussion on Exterior Storage and RV Parking – Commissioner Nuhring suggested that the Planning Commission further discuss the exterior storage and RV

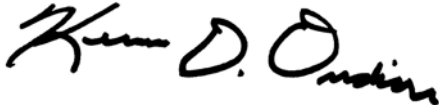
parking matter while it was still fresh in their minds. He stated that he noted that the idea to not have cookie cutter language for all areas of the city would not work and that the ordinance should be applied uniformly throughout the city but that minimum setbacks could be implemented that would not jeopardize public safety. The Planning Commission discussed that the parking of the RVs should only be allowed on residential lots during seasonal use periods or periods of activity of the RV. They discussed that they didn't see an issue with the length of the RV as long as it could fit within setbacks to preserve life and safety of the area. They discussed adding definitions to the ordinance and finally to not allow them to be parked on grass only for any extended period of time. They asked staff to include any other ordinances that pertain to RVs to be put into the research memo such as topics including maximum door height on accessory buildings, the 14 day maximum time period to stay in an RV on a lot and finally setbacks for dwellings in the residential zoning districts.

- C. Hotel Broz – Commissioner Nuhring reported that he had the opportunity to see the interior progress on the project.

6. Adjournment

A motion was made by Roos, seconded by Nuhring to adjourn the meeting at 7:43 PM. Motion carried (3-0).

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kenneth D. Ondich". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kenneth D. Ondich
Planning Director