

Meeting Minutes
New Prague Planning Commission
Wednesday, December 17, 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: Dan Meyer and Jay Nuhring. Absent were John Roos and Mark Bartusek.

City Staff Present: Ken Ondich – Planning Director

2. Approval of November 19, 2014 Regular Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Nuhring, seconded by Meyer, to approve the November 19, 2014 regular meeting minutes as submitted. Motion carried (3-0).

3. Old Business

A. None.

4. New Business

**A. Request for Variance #V1-2014 – Parking Lot Regulations
Church of St. Wenceslaus – applicant**

Planning Director Ondich stated that the St. Wenceslaus Church Campus has been in existence for over 100 years at 215 E. Main Street. He stated that the area to the northwest of the church has been used as an ever expanding parking area as single family homes were purchased by the Church. He stated that the north/south Church Street is actually private and that the Church finally took over full maintenance and responsibility in May of 2013 but that School Street is public except for the portion east of the alley which will be vacated in the near future. He stated that the parking lot that exists today is in poor condition which is part of the reason for the full redesign and reconstruction to better handle visitor parking, bus circulation and parent drop offs and pickups. He stated that the north/south alley was reconstructed in 2014 from 16.5' to 24' wide with the church paying for the widening to provide better circulation adjacent to the parking lot in anticipation of this project. He stated that the north side of the parking lot is leased to Mayo Clinic Health Systems New Prague but is also used for overflow during church events. He stated that the variances requested are a reduction from the required 15' setback to 2nd Street NE to 0', a reduction from the required 19.83' stall depth on 45 degree angled parking to 17.8' and finally to allow vehicles to back directly into the alley on the west side of the parking lot. He stated that the property is zoned RL-70 Single

Family Residential. He stated that the parking area will be located no closer to 2nd Street NE than exists today, the stall depths as proposed would still provide an angle stall depth of 20' which is the same as a typical 90 degree parking stall and finally that backing into a public alley is not specifically prohibited by the ordinance however staff has historically interpreted alleys in the same way as it concerns this regulation. He stated that the parking lot today includes 173 parking spaces including the parallel on Church Street. He stated that the zoning ordinance requires 199 spaces and the new design provides for 200 spaces which is an increase of 27 over what exists today. He stated that some aspects of the existing parking lot which are not changing do not meet the current regulations but will not be noted as variances such as a narrow drive aisle off of School Street as well as the lack of perimeter trees along 2nd Street NE because of vertical clearance issues. He stated that green space is being increased and impervious surface is being decreased with the new parking lot area. He stated that the City engineer has reviewed the concept plans and noted that he supports the variances as the redesign is a major improvement to what is there today, but notes that additional engineering details will need to be reviewed before construction. He stated that staff recommends approval of the variance with the six findings listed in the staff report.

Commissioner Gilman asked why there were so many ped ramps in the parking lot and that if some were removed that it could provide for more green space.

Chris Chromy, representative from Bolton & Menk on behalf of the applicant, stated that the ped ramps in question were for school bus drop offs so that the students could get away from the buses and drive aisle after exiting.

A motion was made by Meyer, seconded by Nuhring, to recommend that the City Council approve Variance #V1-2014 from parking lot regulations for a reduction from the required 15' setback to 2nd Street NE to 0', reduction from the required 19.83' stall depth on 45 degree angled parking to 17.8' and finally to allow vehicles to back directly into the alley on the west side of the parking lot with the following findings:

- A. The variances requested to allow the reconstruction of the parking areas are in harmony with the general purposes and intent of this Ordinance because the Church Campus, including the parking lot, is a conditional use in the RL-70 Zoning District.
- B. The variances requested to allow the reconstruction of the parking areas are consistent with the comprehensive plan because the Church Campus, including the parking lot, is a conditional use in the RL-70 Zoning District and providing for as much off-street parking as is possible on the site is in the best interests of the residential neighborhood.
- C. The applicant will continue to use the property in a reasonable manner as the intensity of the use on the site is not changing, however the amount of off-street parking will be maximized by adding an additional 27 parking spaces in order to lessen the need for parking on-street in the surrounding neighborhood.
- D. Unique circumstances apply to this property which do not generally apply to other properties in the vicinity because the church campus has historically been located in a residential area and has over the years been expanding its off-street parking in an area of limited size. In order to maximize the off-street parking on the site, the

variances are necessary due to the limited area available for the reconstruction of the parking lot.

- E. The variances do not alter the essential character of the neighborhood because the church and parking lot have existed in this area for many years and not only will the reconfigured parking lot provide for more vehicles to be parked in the lot instead of on adjacent streets it will also provide for greater aesthetics and buffering to the adjacent residential properties than exists today.
- F. The variances requested are the minimum variances which would alleviate the practical difficulties because they allow the site to maximize the number of parking spaces and increase the landscaping provided in the parking lot.

Motion carried (3-0).

**B. Public Hearing for Comprehensive Plan Miscellaneous Updates – Chapter 1 – Introduction, Chapter 4 – Natural Resources, Chapter 9 – Community Facilities and Public Services, Chapter 10 – Public Utilities, Chapter 11 - Implementation
City of New Prague - applicant**

Planning Director Ondich gave an overview of the miscellaneous updates to the Comprehensive Plan. He stated by providing an overview of what the comprehensive plan does and when previous updates were made. He stated that starting in June of 2014 the Planning Commission began reviewing Chapter 1 – Introduction, Chapter 4 - Natural Resources, Chapter 9 – Community Facilities/Public Services, Chapter 10 – Public Utilities, Chapter 11 – Implementation. He stated that the meeting tonight would be the required public hearing per state statute. He stated that the introduction chapter had included updated information from the City’s Historic Context Study which was completed in December of 2013 and also included a new area location map. He stated that the Natural Resources Chapter included an updated physical profile of the City, updated listing of MPCA stormwater permits in the City, corrected and updated groundwater information, updated list of leaking underground storage tanks and finally updated all maps. He stated that the Community Facilities and Public Services Chapter was updated with information on all city buildings, school facilities, the hospital, library and pool condition assessment. He stated that updated surveys were included such as the city’s 2011 performance measurement survey and the 2014 aquatic facilities survey. He stated that updated growth information and updated policies and objectives were included such as working with the school district. He stated that the city facilities specifically notes the condition of city hall and its future. He stated that all maps have been updated as well. He stated that the Public Utilities chapter has been updated with information on the new waste water treatment facility, the need to update the City’s comprehensive sanitary sewer plan, provides updated information on the city’s water system and wellhead protection plan, updated information on the municipal electric system and all new updated maps. He stated that the Implementation Chapter is revised to reflect recently updates to the zoning ordinance and subdivision ordinance, suggests a comprehensive city wide CIP plan and the need for future sanitary sewer trunk lines. It also provides updated growth and annexation recommendations such as revisiting the orderly annexation agreements with both Lanesburgh and Helena Townships and finally consideration of a housing maintenance code and rental housing ordinance. He stated that a public hearing is required and that a recommendation would be forwarded for the

City Council to consider in January of 2015. He stated that comments were received from Helena Township dated 12/7/14 which were included in the packets that support the proposed updates and that they will continue in good faith effort to work with the city such as on an orderly annexation agreement update. He also stated that Scott County provided comments dated 12/12/14 that thanked the city for the opportunity to comment on the updates and suggested adding reference to Scott county's adopted Natural Area Corridors, agreed that the City's Comprehensive Sewer Plan should be updated and finally support the City in working with Helena Township to develop a new orderly annexation agreement.

The public hearing was opened at 7:05PM.

No public comments were received.

The public hearing was closed at 7:06PM.

Commissioner Meyer asked if there was language included in the updates that referenced recent discussion about solar panels on homes.

Planning Director Ondich stated that specific language would ultimately need to be included in the zoning ordinance, however, he believed that some language had been included in the updates.

Commissioner Gilman pointed out that the utilities chapter did include information that the New Prague Utilities is under contract through SMMPA who is on track to meet a state mandate of energy from renewable resources.

A motion was made by Meyer, seconded by Nuhring to recommend that the City Council adopt the updates to Chapter 1 – Implementation, Chapter 4 – Natural Resources, Chapter 9 – Community Facilities and Public Services, Chapter 10 – Public Utilities and Chapter 11 – Implementation. Motion carried (3-0).

C. Zoning Ordinance Amendment Discussion – Section 702 – Exterior Storage City of New Prague - applicant

Planning Director Ondich stated that the Planning Commission heard comments from residents at their September 24th Planning Commission Meeting to start the process of amending Zoning Ordinance Section 702 relating to exterior storage. He stated that the comments received were in regards to the parking of larger sized campers and RV's. He stated that staff had scheduled the matter for a follow-up review at the October 22nd meeting but there was not a quorum so the discussion was not held. He stated that staff has researched the topic further since the September discussion and would like further comment before scheduling a public hearing. He also noted that he didn't include in the draft language a provision that recreational vehicles or equipment can only be parked on a lot which contains a principal structure so that vacant lots wouldn't be bought up to be used for open storage.

Commissioner Gilman questioned the need for a minimum side yard setback of 6' because recreational vehicles and recreational equipment are not permanent items and they can be easily moved.

Planning Director Ondich stated that a 6' minimum setback would probably not work for many homes and lots to park a recreational item on the side of a garage as many homes are built 10' or less to the side lot line. He also noted that on newer lots there are typically utility easements that preclude permanent structures. He noted that language could be added to the draft ordinance that states if recreational vehicles or equipment are parked in an easement area they are subject to removal upon request.

Commissioner Nuhring stated that he believed property owners are entitled to use their property and that the neighbors are just as entitled to install their own fencing or screening to block the view of the neighboring property. He agreed there did need to be standards, but that these items should be allowed to be parked on private lots.

Commissioner Meyer stated that it is up to the recreational vehicle and equipment owners to keep their items looking nice.

The Planning Commission reached a consensus to have a public hearing scheduled for the draft exterior storage language for the January 28th Planning Commission meeting.

5. Miscellaneous

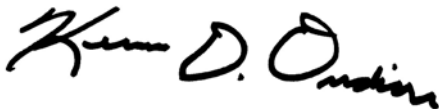
The following miscellaneous items were reviewed as information only:

- 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. 2015 Meeting Schedule – Planning Director Ondich provided the 2015 Meeting Schedule as information.

6. Adjournment

A motion was made by Meyer, seconded by Nuhring to adjourn the meeting at 7:38PM. Motion carried (3-0).

Respectfully submitted,



Kenneth D. Ondich
Planning Director