

**Meeting Minutes**  
**New Prague Planning Commission**  
**Wednesday, October 28, 2015**

**1. Call Meeting to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. by Planning Commission Chair Jay Nuhring with the following members present: Matthew Goldade and Bob Gilman. Absent was Dan Meyer (arrived at 6:51 PM).

City Staff Present: Ken Ondich – Planning / Community Development Director

**2. Approval of September 30, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes**

It was moved by Gilman, seconded by Goldade, to approve the September 30, 2015 regular meeting minutes as submitted. Motion carried (3-0).

**3. Old Business**

**A. None.**

**4. New Business**

**A. Farm Animals in City Limits – Concept Discussion of Possible Future Zoning Ordinance and City Code Amendments**

Planning Director Ondich stated that the City Council passed an interim ordinance on July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015 that established a moratorium on the keeping of farm animals in the City of New Prague for a period of time not to exceed one year so that the City could further study the issue. He stated that the City Council did not have much discussion prior to adoption of the interim ordinance other than Councilmember Bruzek stated that the existing language was vague and that more specific language should be added regarding chickens, geese and possibly bees. He stated that Councilmember Ryan stated that the regulations should be tightened up and that he didn't think farm animals were appropriate on quarter acre lots within the City and that no other council member provided any specific feedback. He stated that over the past few years City Staff has received inquiries about the keeping of farm animals in the City Limits, including chickens. He stated that the City Attorney has interpreted the City Code and Zoning Ordinance to not allow farm animals on residential lots as they are not specifically listed as permitted. He stated that staff believes there are a small handful of residences in town that have backyard chickens but have only sent one letter out regarding a nuisance violation regarding odors. He stated that the City Attorney believes the City Code – Chapter 90 for Animal Regulations and the Zoning

Ordinance could both be further refined to either allow certain types of farm animals such as backyard chickens or prohibit them on residential lots within the City Limits. He provided an overview of the existing City Code language and noted that there is no specific permission or prohibition of farm animals. He also provided an overview of the existing Zoning Ordinance language and noted that agricultural and farm uses are not listed as permitted or conditional uses within any zoning district within the City and thereby are not currently allowed by the Zoning Ordinance. He provided an overview of the interim ordinance language. He noted that staff is not proposing any suggested revisions at this time. He stated that the cities of Shakopee, Savage and Jordan allow chickens with certain restrictions and that the cities of Prior Lake, Belle Plaine and Elko New Market currently do not. He stated that at this time he's simply like the Planning Commission to discuss general opinions on the topic of allowing or not allowing backyard chickens and to forward their opinions to the City Council. He stated that some common provisions of backyard chicken ordinances include screening from neighbors, setbacks to neighboring structures, coops only being allowed in the rear yards of homes, minimum and maximum square footage sizes per chicken allowed and a limit of between 3 to 4 chickens and no roosters being allowed.

Commissioner Gilman stated that he thinks backyard chickens should be allowed in the City.

Chair Nuhring stated that he believes backyard chickens should be allowed and understands that people use them as a food source for eggs and doesn't think the City should prevent that.

Commissioner Gilman stated that he would suggest that any draft language include a limit on the number of chickens allowed based on the size of the residential lot.

Commissioner Goldade stated that he understands people want backyard chickens and doesn't want to prevent that but would want to make sure the proper regulations are in place such as a maximum size to the coops and runs.

Commissioner Gilman stated that he would like to see an annual permit be required to better monitor the situation.

(Commissioner Meyer arrived at 6:51PM)

Commissioner Meyer stated that he supports the idea of allowing backyard chickens if they are kept in coops and runs in limited size on a residential lot.

Commissioner Goldade stated that he agreed and that free-range birds would not be acceptable.

The Planning Commission generally discussed a limit on the number of birds regardless of lot size and also discussed that potentially screening may not be needed if an ordinance is developed.

Commissioner Nuhring asked if the Planning Commission would be interested in discussing bee keeping as well.

Planning Director Ondich noted that it was also a recent trend in cities to consider allowing them and noted that the City of Ramsey allows it by Conditional Use Permit.

Commissioner Meyer stated that a relative of his has an outdoor pool next to an area where beekeeping occurs and that the bees use the pool as a source of water and that they come to the pool in huge numbers, but he did not experience any stings even with his children around the area. He stated that he would be agreeable to considering allowing beekeeping in the City.

Planning Director Ondich stated that he has not received any requests to keep bees in the City so that probably wasn't necessary to address at this time.

A motion was made by Goldade, seconded by Meyer, to recommend to the City Council that city code and zoning ordinance amendments be developed to allow the keeping of backyard chickens in the City with regulations to be developed and an annual permit being required. Motion carried (4-0).

## 5. Miscellaneous

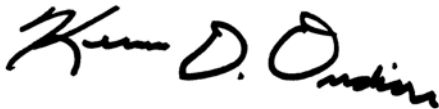
The following miscellaneous items were reviewed as information only:

- 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. Armory Property Update – Planning Director Ondich provided an update to the Planning Commission that the former armory property at 301 Lexington Ave. N. was now officially no longer subject to any agreements with the federal government which limited it's reuse.

## 6. Adjournment

A motion was made by Goldade, seconded by Meyer to adjourn the meeting at 7:24 p.m. Motion carried (4-0).

Respectfully submitted,



Kenneth D. Ondich  
Planning Director