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City of Ashland, Wisconsin

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City of Ashland – Plan Commission Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Ashland Plan Commission was held on **Tuesday, January 18th, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.** via GoToMeeting.

Committee Members Present: David Mettille, Mayor Lewis, Laurie Gregor, Eric Lindell, John Beirl, Katie Gellatly

Committee Members Absent:

Staff Present: Megan McBride

Mayor Lewis opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Agenda

1) Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda by Eric Lindell, seconded by David Metille.
Passed unanimously.

2) Consent Agenda

a) Approval of minutes from the December 3rd, 2021 Plan Commission meeting

Motion to approve the minutes from the December 3rd, 2021 Plan Commission meeting by John Beirl, seconded by Laurie Gregor. Passed unanimously.

3) Public Comment (non-agenda items)

None.

4) Action Items

a) Review and provide recommendation on a request to vacate a portion of Right-of-Way known as Outlot A of CSM #474. Applicant: Ashland Industries

Megan McBride summarized the process for a Right-of-Way or ROW Vacation for the commission. She then summarized her staff report on the Ashland Industries request for the ROW vacation.

John Beirl asked who is responsible for the maintenance of the existing road.

Megan McBride answered that the road is currently public access so the City maintains it, however if the ROW Vacation is approved maintenance of the road becomes the responsibility of Ashland Industries.

Mayor Lewis asked what Ashland Industries produces.

John Beirl answered that they make construction and earth moving equipment.

A motion to approve the review by Eric Lindell, seconded by John Beirl. Passed unanimously.

b) Review and approve Site Plan for construction of a second-story addition to the existing building located at 1400 3rd St. W, parcel #201-00274-0000, zoned: Mixed Residential/Commercial (MRC). Applicant: Jarrod Dahl and Jazmin Hicks-Dahl

Megan McBride summarized her staff report and the process for a site plan review. She explained the existing use of the building on the property and the wish for the applicant to expand their artist studio. Approval has been recommended with the condition that the applicant install exterior lighting.

John Beirl mentioned that he believes that this project would improve the site and the area overall.

Eric Lindell asked if there was any public comment on the exterior lighting.

Megan answered that there are no proposals at this time, but they would want to install one light that would not violate the light ordinance.

A motion to approve the Site Plan by John Beirl, seconded by David Metille. Passed unanimously.

c) Initial review and possible recommendations regarding City-owned properties for residential redevelopment.

Mayor Lewis explained that this review is meant to evaluate the City's current properties that could be used for housing development.

Megan McBride summarized the strategic planning process and the goal to expand housing within the City. She also explained that these properties are possible housing development sites.

Junction Road Property - Megan McBride summarized the property characteristics, including utilities, acres, zoning, and environmental concerns. The Housing committee had recommended two options, the first to sell the property as one big piece of land, making the goals of the property very specific for developers. Second, to subdivide and market individual plots of buildable land.

David Metille agreed that this property is the most shovel ready, but asked about adding another city street if we subdivided the land.

Megan McBride answered that there are several options in regards to a new street that would depend on the marketing the city decides on.

John Beirl asked if we have talked to the existing developer that put apartments on Beaser.

Megan mentioned that there is developer interest in the property, but not from that particular person.

Mayor Lewis commented that there was a proposal to build apartments on the Junction Road property before and the neighbors opposed the plans with wishes to keep the character of the neighborhood. Thus, Mayor Lewis suggested taking input from the neighbors.

Eric Lindell commented that selling the land as one piece makes sense to avoid empty subdivided lots. He also asked about the timeline for a request for proposals.

Megan said that we can send out a proposal if that is what is recommended.

Mayor Lewis commented that she wants to talk more specifically about what kind of housing the commission wants before starting a Request for Proposals.

Megan McBride summarized the Request for Proposals process.

Mayor Lewis mentioned that previously the Request for Proposals has been very vague and the City has received a variety of proposals that might not fit what those properties need.

David Metille commented that selling the whole parcel as one piece feels restrictive and mentioned public interest in townhouses. He asked if there is wording that can be used that keeps the proposals open.

Laurie Gregor agreed with David Metille.

Megan asked if the commission agrees that the property should be sold as one whole lot.

The commission agreed.

Beaser Site - Megan McBride summarized the property characteristics, including utilities, acres, zoning, and environmental concerns. She also mentioned that this is another shovel ready lot, but might need some utility upgrades for multi-family housing.

Laurie Gregor asked if the City did another RFP would there be any changes?

Megan McBride answered that the last RFP was very broad and a variety of proposals came up, and it is up to the planning commission whether it is kept broad or more focused on community demand.

David Metille said he agreed with John Beirl's previous statement that Beaser could be a good site for many kinds of housing development. He also mentioned that the RFP for this site should be dependent on other sites RFPs.

Laurie Gregor agreed.

Mayor Lewis asked if the RFP should be restricted to housing.

Eric Lindell commented that housing should be a priority for this site.

Laurie Gregor and John Beirl both agreed that this site should not have a housing restrictive RFP. John Beirl also commented on the proximity of this site to the police station.

Megan McBride asked if it would be helpful for the commission to see previous RFP's for the Beaser site.

David Metille said that was a great idea.

John Beirl asked about previous proposals and how they were narrowed down.

Megan McBride said that the most proposals this property had at one time was three, and none of them were able to move forward. Others were interested but never submitted official proposals.

Ortman Property - Megan McBride summarized the property characteristics, including utilities, acres, zoning (Heavy Industrial), and environmental concerns including potential wetlands that could impede buildability. Housing committee recommended assessment for wetlands, and considered this as a good area for single buildable lots. The Housing Committee also wanted to know how a possible rezone of this property as residential would impact the amount of Heavy Industrial zoned land.

Megan mentioned that with the possibility of wetlands residential development would be more flexible than heavy industrial development.

John Beirl asked if this would be a desirable site for residential development.

Mayor Lewis said that this property was acquired by the City to accommodate potentially industrial development, but as far as she knows no industrial developers have come forward for the land.

David Metille commented that this is his neighborhood and comments that he has received a residential development would be preferred by neighbors.

Eric Lindell mentioned that a wetland assessment would clarify what development could be done on the property.

Laurie Gregor mentioned that people do want to be on the outskirts of the City and that buildable land out there would sell.

David Metille mentioned that residential development on that property could lead to better road infrastructure for the whole area.

Toll Road Property - Megan McBride summarized the property characteristics, including utilities, acres, zoning (Light Industrial), and environmental concerns. Housing committee recommended prioritizing other residential sites, if this site is rezoned as residential the development should complement the Timeless Timber site.

Eric Lindell asked how full the industrial park is?

Megan McBride answered that she would have to look into this more, but the primary

development that is happening there is expansions, sometimes into adjacent properties.

5) Announcements/Reports/Comments/Questions

a) Updates on the Timeless Timber development projects

Megan McBride updated the commission, the site plan for the residential development should be up for review at the next Plan Commission meeting. Properties that are surrounding the area will receive a site plan. Commercial wise the property has been subdivided and is still on track for Spring construction.

6) Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by David Metille. Seconded by Eric Lindell. Passed unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:31 pm. Minutes done by Megan McBride and Mandelyn Lyons.