

**MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
CITY OF WHITE BEAR LAKE
December 18, 2017**

The regular monthly meeting of the White Bear Lake Planning Commission was called to order on Monday, December 18, 2017, beginning at 7:00 p.m. in the White Bear Lake City Hall Council Chambers, 4701 Highway 61, White Bear Lake, Minnesota by Chair Jim Berry.

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL:

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Jim Berry, Mary Alice Divine, Marvin Reed, Peter Reis, Ken Baltzer and Mark Lynch.

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Erich Reinhardt.

MEMBERS UNEXCUSED: None.

STAFF PRESENT: Anne Kane, Community Development Director, Samantha Crosby, Planning & Zoning Coordinator, Connie Taillon, Environmental Specialist and Amy Varani, Recording Secretary.

OTHERS PRESENT: Ken and Karen Smith and Joe Prigelmeier.

2. APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 18, 2017 AGENDA:

Member Reis moved for approval of the agenda. Member Reed seconded the motion, and the agenda was approved (6-0).

3. APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 27, 2017 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES:

Member Baltzer moved for approval of the minutes. Member Divine seconded the motion and the minutes were approved (6-0).

4. CASE ITEMS:

A. Case No. 17-24-V: A request by **Karen Smith** to allow a third accessory structure, per Code Section 1302.020, Subd.4.i, in order to construct a 12' x 14' detached screen room in addition to the existing garage and shed for the property located at 1817 Richard Court.

Crosby discussed the case. Staff supports the variance.

Berry opened the public hearing.

Karen Smith, 1817 Richard Court, stated that she's in favor of the case.

As no one else came forward, Berry closed the public hearing.

Member Reis moved to recommend approval of Case No. 17-24-V. Member Baltzer seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 6-0.

- B. Case No. 17-25-V:** A request by **Joe Prigelmeier** for a 169 square foot variance from the maximum size of a second accessory structure, and a 1.75 foot variance from the 15 foot maximum building height, both per Code Section 1302.030, Subd.4.i, in order to construct a 522 square foot detached garage in addition to the 407 square foot attached garage, which together exceeds the size of the first floor area of the 2-story home for the property at 2628 Riviera Court.

Crosby discussed the case. Staff supports both variances.

Divine asked if there would be a driveway to the new garage. Crosby stated that the applicant said there would not be a driveway. It is not a condition of approval, but it can be added. Divine asked if it would carry over to another owner. Crosby stated that was correct.

Lynch asked how much bigger the new garage would be compared to what's currently there. Crosby stated that it's around 100 square feet bigger.

Berry opened the public hearing.

Joe Prigelmeier, 2628 Riviera Court, came up to answer any questions. As there were none, Berry closed the public hearing.

Member Lynch moved to recommend approval of Case No. 17-25-V, as amended by adding the condition about the driveway. Member Divine seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 6-0.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS:

A. Comprehensive Plan – Sustainability.

Crosby introduced Connie Taillon, Environmental Specialist. Crosby explained that Sustainability GOPs (Goals, Objectives or Policies) had been broken down into six categories, which were organized in a large matrix: Energy Conservation, Climate Resiliency, Water Conservation, Waste Reduction, Health/Food and Natural Resources. The matrix will also be on the agenda of both the Parks Commission and the Environmental Advisory Commission for their review and feedback. Staff also provided e-mail notices to about 30 residents who had signed up as being interested in the Comprehensive Plan process, asking them for their feedback.

Taillon explained the layout of the Matrix. Staff welcomed any comments the Planning Commissioners might have.

Baltzer referred to the Waste Reduction category, "Educate the public on the benefits of reducing consumption of material goods". He's in favor of getting rid of stuff, but are they going to present this to downtown businesses and then say, "You can't be buying more stuff, buy less." Will we be hurting our business people? Crosby didn't think the category would be directed towards businesses. Also, she doesn't think that it'll be that significant of an economic impact that it would put the City at a lesser advantage than the surrounding municipalities. Baltzer wondered will they get feedback from the business people? Taillon stated that they'd have to define what an education program might include, and they could get feedback from business owners at that time.

Crosby suggested using the word "consider" at the beginning of that particular objective.

Lynch wants to be careful of the type of campaign they do; is education about consuming goods something that people want the City to do? Crosby pointed out that not everything consumed is bought. For example, the wastefulness of a plastic drinking straw. It is forever trash for one drink. Lynch is okay with that, but he's not okay with "You should have less stuff in your house". There's a fine line. Staff agreed.

Divine thought it might be an issue of wording. Lynch agreed that could be a possibility.

Reis asked if the City would be banning plastic bags. Taillon stated that it is her understanding that a considerable new state ruling will prohibit the banning of the bags. However, a City may be allowed to charge for bags. Research has shown that it's more effective if you charge someone 5 cents per bag versus just giving them 5 cents if they have a reusable bag with them.

Taillon stated that Ramsey County has just approved their solid waste management plan, in response to the MPCA's (Minnesota Pollution Control Agency) solid waste plan. One goal of the plan is to reduce landfill waste. The County has come up with methods to do that, some of which are on the matrix of things that the City will be required to do. This all works together with the goal of reducing waste. Recycling uses a lot of energy; it's better than throwing waste away, but not using those items in the first place is the best thing.

Lynch asked Taillon to clarify what reducing solid waste to 1% by 2025 means; did we mean "by" 1%? Taillon explained that it is to reduce landfill waste to 1%. All of Ramsey County's and Washington County's trash (not recycling) goes to a facility in Newport. The counties purchased the facility this year. Solid waste at that location gets shredded and trucked south to an Xcel Energy plant, where it is burned as fuel. The counties still want to reduce the amount of waste that goes to the plant, because there's a large amount of food waste that goes to the facility. Staff is going to have to figure out ways to recycle the food waste. We're well on our way to reaching 1% because much of our solid waste is incinerated and used for electricity and does not go to a landfill.

Divine asked if Trash to Treasure is on the matrix. Staff will add it. Taillon stated that it's posted on the new website, under Reuse.

Divine asked about the wording of some of the items on the matrix; how is it decided what's in the process of being considered and what's "in the works"? Taillon explained that some will be requirements through the Ramsey County Solid Waste Master Plan, some are things staff is already doing, and some are being considered, they just don't know the details yet and whether it's feasible. Crosby stated that it can depend on things such as funding and staff time.

Divine asked about and Taillon explained "The Random Acts of Environmental Kindness" program. It was noted that there are observed violations of our ordinance and perhaps an educational program aimed at correcting these behaviors would be helpful.

Lynch stated that there's a lot of "gentle-nudging" in the matrix, which he really likes. Examples are the Arbor Day events, the tree sales and promoting the native drought-tolerant landscaping; it educates in a way that doesn't seem painful or punitive, which he likes. If the plastic bags and consumption of material goods comes across the same way, he'd be okay with that.

Baltzer asked for clarification about Climate Resiliency, encouraging the use of lighter-colored surfaces for driveways and roofs to reduce the urban heat island effect. Crosby stated that it would be when staff interacts with the public about those things. For example, if it looks okay either way, lighter-grey shingles would be better than darker grey shingles.

Reed asked for an explanation of a city-wide ban of neonicotinoids. Taillon explained that it's an insecticide that farmers, nurseries and homeowners use. It is toxic to bees, whose population has declined as a result. It's on the matrix for discussion. A resolution was adopted by the City last year, stating that we're a pollinator-friendly city. Staff will educate the public on the use of neonicotinoids and purchasing plants that have not been treated with the chemical.

Crosby added that the City led the way on the coal tar ban on driveway sealant projects. It's something to consider to generate discussion. Lynch puts the two in the same category; so he'd be okay if the city leads the way regarding this issue.

Divine stated that it would be helpful to know where you can purchase plants that aren't treated with neonicotinoids. Taillon stated that you can ask the nursery if they use neonicotinoids. The City does not use the chemical and we will try to purchase plants from nurseries that don't use it.

Berry asked about rain barrels. Are those being used on city property yet? Crosby stated that rain barrels are of a more residential item; you have to turn them on to empty them out. Berry asked if there's a commercial version of them. Taillon stated that Maplewood Mall has a very large cistern that takes water off the roof. The watershed district put in a lot of money to install tree trenches and rain gardens in the parking lots. Pioneer Manor, a city-owned property, has rain barrels.

Kane stated that Public Works has a green roof. Taillon stated that they can add wording that says the city will pursue stormwater reuse systems in the future. There is grant money available for water reuse projects.

Divine asked if the city has a program or budget for ash tree removal. Taillon stated not to her knowledge, although the engineering department has talked about that. It's very costly. Divine urged staff to be proactive – spreading out the cost may alleviate some of the impact.

Reis asked if there's been any discouragement of planting ash trees. Kane stated that ash trees are still on the allowable list. They would discourage it on commercial plans.

Divine suggested staff talk to the White Bear Press about putting in a piece about when Trash to Treasure day is, where people can recycle holiday lights, etc. Reed stated that maybe they could integrate it into their calendar of events. Taillon stated that she will try to get more regular items in the Press.

Lynch thanked staff for their work on this.

B. City Council Meeting Minutes of November 28, 2017.

Reis asked if the proposed tax changes contemplated in Washington, D.C. will take away the city's ability to provide tax-exempt bonds is true. Kane confirmed that is what the City Attorney advised. She stated that if there's more information from the League of Minnesota Cities, she will share that electronically before the next meeting.

C. Park Advisory Commission Meeting Minutes from November 16, 2017 – Not ready yet.

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6. ADJOURNMENT:

Member Baltzer moved to adjourn, seconded by Member Lynch. The motion passed unanimously (6-0), and the December 18, 2017 Planning Commission meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.