The public may view/listen to the meeting by:
- Calling Toll Free 1-844-992-4726, access code: 263 375 77920
- Visiting the web link: https://tinyurl.com/rfpc6623; Webinar number: 2633 757 7920; Webinar password: 1234
- Viewing the City’s YouTube Channel: https://www.youtube.com/user/cityofriverfalls

CALL TO ORDER – 6:30 p.m.
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
ROLL CALL

APPROVAL OF MINUTES
1. Minutes of the May 2, 2023 Plan Commission meeting

PUBLIC COMMENTS – Non-Agenda Related Topics

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS
2. Final Plat for Oak Hill (S. Apollo Road near W. Maple Street) – TEG Land Holdings, LLC
3. Specific Implementation Plan and Final Plat for South Pointe 1st Addition (Steelhead Dr./Aurora Circle – northwest of Hwy 29 and CTH FF) – GMTZ, LLC
4. Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment regarding electronic signs amending Title 17 Zoning; Chapters 17.44, 17.68, 17.84, and 17.116.

REPORTS
5. Planning Update

ADJOURNMENT

Council members may be in attendance for informational purposes only.
No official Council action will be taken.

NOTES:
Those wishing to speak during “public comment” may do so at the discretion of the presiding officer (the Mayor). Please be advised that the Mayor may set time limits or limit repeat comments.

Persons wishing to make a public comment should contact Angie (abond@rfcity.org or 715-426-3427) prior to 4 p.m. on the day of the meeting in order to ensure they are added to the list and can be accommodated during the meeting.

Any person who has a qualifying disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act that requires the meeting or materials to be in an accessible location or format, may contact City Clerk Amy White at (715) 426-3408 or in person at 222 Lewis Street, for accommodations. Requests for accommodations should be made at least three (3) business days in advance of the meeting. Every effort will be made to arrange accommodations.

Published: 05/31/23 the Pierce County Journal; Posted: 05/25/23
MINUTES
PLAN COMMISSION
MAY 2, 2023
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Members Present: Patricia La Rue, Chris Holtkamp, Dan Toland, Diane Odeen, Rebecca Prendergast, Mike Woolsey and Lisa Moody
Members Absent: none
Staff Present: Emily Shively, Sterling Hackney, Keri Schreiner
Others Present: Ben Fochs, Jeff Bjork

CALL TO ORDER
Meeting convened at 6:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES
M/Woolsey, S/Odeen to approve minutes. Motion carried 6/0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS
None.

ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS
PUBLIC HEARING: Public hearing regarding the proposed creation of Tax Incremental District No. 19, the proposed boundaries of the District, and the proposed Project Plan for the District; and consideration and possible action on a “resolution Establishing the Boundaries of and Approving the Project Plan for Tax Incremental District No.19”.
Mayor Toland opened the Public Hearing.

Public comments: Ben Fochs, 2529 Powell Ave, stated that part of the new TID 19 is also in TID 16 and asked how the same property can be in both TID Districts. He also inquired how it is determined what the current taxes are.

Jeff Bjork inquired as to why the time frame of the TID is not stated, the notes state 20 years however the ordinance does not note that time frame.

Mayor Toland closed the public hearing.

Keri Schreiner, Economic Development Manager gave a presentation on the proposed Tax incremental District (TID) No. 19 and Tax Incremental Financing (TIF). Schreiner explained that a TIF allows a city to pay for public improvements and other eligible costs within a TID by using the future taxes collected on the TID’s increased property value to repay the costs of the improvement. It is a widely used economic development tool. Schreiner showed a graph to explain the value growth and tax sharing in the TIF. She explained that to create a TID, there must be approval from the Joint Review Board (JRB), which is made up of a representative from
the City, County, School District, Chippewa Valley Technical College, and a public representative. The JRB met early in May to approve, and the next step is the Public Hearing tonight of the Plan Commission, then City Council for approval, then back to JRB. The final step is State approval.

The Plan Commission’s role in creating a TID is to hold a public hearing to allow the public to express views. Plan Commission reviews the district boundaries and draft project to determine they are in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan and provide recommendation to City Council.

Schreiner explained the proposed TID 19 is a mixed-use district consisting of 380.93 acres including City of River Falls and Gary Moelter properties. The goal of TID 19 is to extend infrastructure to Mann Valley Corporate Park, making it ready for large scale development. The City works with Ehlers Public Financial Advisors to create the plan. The City has identified projects the TID will cover including but not limited to 35,000 cubic yards of earthwork, 4.5 miles of water main with pressure reducing station, and 3,400 feet of roadway construction. If approved, construction will begin this fall and complete in the fall of 2024. Future projects will total 58.6M. Projects will be approved by City Council and based on development. Ehlers completed analysis on the project list. Tax rate is held steady through the 20-year project. The base value of the proposed TID is $405,712 and project future increments is 55M over the 20 years.

The next steps include the plan being forwarded to the City Council on May 23, 2023. JRB has final consideration set for May 25, 2023. Staff recommends forwarding the enclosed resolution designating proposed boundaries and approving a project plan for TID 19 to the City Council with a favorable recommendation.

M/Holtkamp, S/Moody made a motion to approve the TID 19 Project Plan and TID 19 Boundary.

Discussion consisted of the overlap of property in two TID Districts and how taxes are determined for the City owned property. Schreiner explained the overlapping property will now belong to only TID 19, and showed the portion that will come out of TID 16 and be in TID 19. This is allowed by the State. The $405,000 value noted in the plan is the value of the Moelter property.

Further discussion included how TID boundaries are determined and the term length of TID being 20 years. Schreiner stated the 20-year length is required by the state and can be added in the wording for TID19. The blight district in TID 19 was questioned and Schreiner said that would get removed as it is a mixed-use district, not blighted. There was discussion on the open space remaining as 1/3 of the land area within the Mann Valley Corporate Park.

Motion carried 6/0.

REPORTS

Planning Update
Shively updated the Plan Commission on two annexations that have been approved by City Council. Staff is working on the electronic sign ordinance to bring back to the Plan Commission in June. Shively expects to receive South Pointe 1st Addition final plat and Oak Hill 1st Phase soon. Shively updated the Plan Commission on Saturday Properties, expecting to see them submit in the next few months.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Woolsey made a motion to adjourn at 6:50 p.m. S/Holtkamp; motion carried 6/0.
Respectfully submitted,

Angie Bond, Community Development Assistant
ITEM: Final Plat for Oak Hill (S. Apollo Road)
APPLICANT: TEG Land Holdings, LLC
OWNER: Creative Homes Construction Investment, LLC
STAFF: Sam Burns, Planner

BACKGROUND
TEG Land Holdings, LLC is requesting final plat approval for Phase 1 of the Oak Hill subdivision. A planned unit development (PUD) and Preliminary Plat for the entire Oak Hill subdivision was approved during the March 28, 2023, City Council Meeting. The applicant is anticipating three total phases for the development.

A developer’s agreement approved during the same meeting details the developer’s obligations for the subdivision, including adherence to city development and design ordinances, construction of all streets and public improvements, and dedication of utility, stormwater easements and certain outlots. Staff has reviewed the engineering and development plan sets for all three phases of the development. After the final plat is approved and recorded, the applicant may begin selling lots in the first phase of development.

Location Map - Site outlined in red
DESCRIPTION
Oak Hill Phase 1 will create 29 single-family lots and 16 twin homes for a total of 45 lots. Phase 1 will also include the partial construction of Gambel St, Chestnut Ave, and all of Compton Ave.

10 outlots will be platted and 7 will be dedicated to the city for stormwater management and a future publicly accessible trailhead. Of the remaining 3 outlots, 2 will be for future phases of the development and 1 will be open space deeded to the neighborhood HOA.

Oak Hills Phase 1 Final Plat

ANALYSIS
Consistency with Official Map
The development is consistent with the Official Map; public sewer and water services will be provided and the proposed connections to existing roads are consistent with topography and natural features.

Consistency with Comprehensive Plan
The future land use map identifies this area as medium density residential, which means density should fall within 4-8 dwelling units per acre. The proposed layout provides 110 lots total at approximately 3.10 du per acre, which is slightly less density for the site than dictated by the comprehensive plan. However, with the topographical constraints of the site, staff recommends moving forward with a slightly lower density and grant the flexibility as is allowed with a PUD.
Consistency with Preliminary Plat
The final plat is consistent with the preliminary plat, with no changes in layout or the overall number of lots in the subdivision.

Consistency with Subdivision Ordinance
The final plat is consistent with the subdivision ordinance. The design of streets, blocks, and lots are all in conformance with code.

Consistency with Zoning Ordinance
The area is zoned R-2 multi-family medium-density residential. While the development does not meet the density, setback and lot size requirement for the designated zoning, the applicant has been approved for a PUD and is providing the nature trail and trail connections in exchange for the requested flexibility.

Consistency with Developer’s Agreement
The submitted final plat meets the standards that were laid out in the Developer’s Agreement. Staff will ensure compliance with these agreements prior to recording of the final plat and prior to issuance of a certificate of completion for the development. The contingencies are the standard conditions for all final plat approvals and are called out in the attached resolution.

Site Characteristics
The Final Plat creates residential lots, multiple outlots for stormwater, steep slopes, future development, and a dedicated public trailhead consistent with the PUD and responding appropriately to site characteristics such as steep slopes and connectivity to existing parks and open space.

SUMMARY
This is the first of three phases of the Oak Hill development. The first phase will include 45 lots with a total development wide density of 3.10 du per acre. Flexibility is being granted on density, setback and lot size requirements in exchange for the applicant including publicly accessible trails and greenspace.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:
Staff recommends that the final plat of Oak Hill Phase 1 be forwarded to the City Council with a favorable recommendation subject to the contingencies listed in the attached resolution.
RESOLUTION NO.
APPROVING THE FINAL PLAT FOR OAK HILL

WHEREAS, TEG Land Holdings, LLC submitted a final plat for Oak Hill located on South Apollo Road;

WHEREAS, the final plat is consistent with the Official Map and Comprehensive Plan and is in substantial conformance with the Preliminary Plat approved by Council on March 28th, 2023; and

WHEREAS, the Plan Commission reviewed the final plat at their June 6th, 2023 meeting and forwarded it to the Common Council with a favorable recommendation; and

WHEREAS, the Common Council reviewed this item at its regular meeting of June 27, 2023 and found it to be acceptable.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Common Council for the City of River Falls hereby approves the Final Plat of Oak Hill subject to the following conditions:

1. All of the developer obligations have been satisfactorily met or addressed as determined by the City Engineer as outlined in the Developer’s Agreement for Oak Hill.
2. The final plat shall not be recorded until the City has received an irrevocable letter of credit in an amount approved by the City Engineer for all public improvements that are required to be installed in accordance with the plans and specifications;
3. The final plat shall not be recorded until the City has received notice of certification from the State of Wisconsin.

Dated this 27th day of June 2023.

CITY OF RIVER FALLS

ATTEST:

Amy White, City Clerk

__________________________
Dan Toland, Mayor
ITEM: Specific Implementation Plan (SIP) and Final Plat for South Pointe 1st Addition
APPLICANT: Auth Consulting & Associates
OWNER: GMTZ, LLC
STAFF: Sam Burns, Planner

BACKGROUND
Auth Consulting & Associates have submitted a Specific Implementation Plan (SIP) and Final Plat for a 4-unit twin home and a 25-unit single family home development. The SIP is the final step for development review for a planned unit development (PUD) which includes detailed architectural, engineering, landscaping, and stormwater plans and the final plat creates the lots, outlots, new streets, and easements for the neighborhood.

City Council approved the General Development Plan (GDP) for the development on April 4, 2022. The previously approved GDP established the density and general design of the site.

Site outlined in red
**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

South Pointe 1st Addition will create 25 single-family lots and 4-twin home lots. South Pointe 1st Addition will also include the continuation of Steelhead Drive from the west to the east and connect with the existing Aurora Circle. A 1.6 acre Outlot will be platted and dedicated to the city.

South Pointe 1st Addition’s 29 newly created lots are intended for owner-occupied single-family homes. The 7 lots north of Steelhead Drive will be intended for general occupancy, the remaining 22 lots to the south and east of Steelhead Drive will be intended for for-sale senior housing. However, this will not be an age restricted community.

Access to the newly created lots will be available from the existing Steelhead Drive and the adjacent Aurora Circle. Sidewalks will be provided on both sides of the street to provide a safe and connected pedestrian network throughout the neighborhood.

The R-1 zoning district requires a 5-foot side yard setback, a 20-foot front yard setback, and a 25-foot rear yard setback. The applicant sought flexibility on lot sizes and widths for some of the lots in the area via PUD.

There are three different model types proposed for the senior housing portion of development:

*Model A Example – Elevation Drawings*
Model B Example – Elevation Drawings

Twin Home A Example – Elevation Drawing
SIP ANALYSIS
Staff review of the South Pointe Neighborhood Specific Implementation Plan has found it to be consistent with the approved General Development Plan in maintaining the same number of units, street layout, and open space. The applicant has requested flexibility for reduced side, rear, and front-yard setbacks for certain lots in the development.

Specific Implementation Plan for SouthPointe 1st Addition
**FINAL PLAT ANALYSIS**
The final plat for South Pointe 1st Addition creates 25 single family and 4 twin-home lots for development and one publicly dedicated outlot on the north side of the development. Drainage and utility and trail easements have been provided and streets are designed per subdivision requirements. The existing Steelhead Drive will be continued east and south to connect with the existing Aurora Circle.

*Final Plat for SouthPointe 1st Addition*

**Consistency with Official Map**
The development is consistent with the Official Map; public sewer and water services will be provided and the proposed connections to existing roads are consistent with topography and natural features.

**Consistency with Comprehensive Plan**
The future land use map identifies this area as low density residential, which means density should fall within 2-4 dwelling units per acre. The overall density for South Pointe 1st Addition will be approximately 3.12 du/acre.

**Consistency with the General Development Plan**
The applicant submitted a General Development Plan in lieu of a preliminary plat. The Final Plat is consistent with the GDP with no changes in layout or the overall number of lots in the subdivision.
Consistency with Subdivision Ordinance
The final plat is consistent with the subdivision ordinance. The design of streets, blocks, and lots are all in conformance with code.

Consistency with Zoning Ordinance
The area is zoned R1 single family residential. Some of the lots do not meet the setback requirement mandated by code, however the applicant is pursuing a PUD and seeking flexibility.

Site Characteristics
Engineering has no concerns regarding slopes, stormwater or other site characteristics.

SUMMARY
The SIP is the final design phase of a PUD where detailed engineering specification are provided to ensure the civil, stormwater, and architectural details meet the Municipal Code and function appropriately for the site. The project meets the requirements for SIP approval with regard to engineering aspects and is consistent with the approved GDP from April 4, 2022.

The proposed final plat will include 29 lots. The proposed plat is consistent with the General Development Plan, Comprehensive Plan, and meets relevant subdivision requirements.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends forwarding the enclosed resolutions for the Specific Implementation Plan and Final Plat for South Pointe 1st Addition to City Council with a favorable recommendation.
RESOLUTION NO.
APPROVING THE SPECIFIC IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (SIP) AND FINAL PLAT FOR
SOUTH POINTE 1ST ADDITION

WHEREAS, GMTZ, LLC submitted a final plat and Specific Implementation Plan (SIP) for South Pointe 1st Addition located on Steelhead Drive and Aurora Circle; and

WHEREAS, the final plat and SIP is consistent with the Official Map and Comprehensive Plan and is in substantial conformance to the General Development Plan approved by Council on April 4th, 2022; and

WHEREAS, the Plan Commission reviewed the final plat and SIP at their June 6th, 2023 meeting and forwarded it to the Common Council with a favorable recommendation; and

WHEREAS, the Common Council reviewed this item at its regular meeting of June 27th, 2023 and found it to be acceptable.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Common Council for the City of River Falls hereby approves the Final Plat and Specific Implementation Plan of South Pointe 1st Addition subject to the following conditions:

1. All of the developer obligations have been satisfactorily met or addressed as determined by the City Engineer as outlined in the Developer’s Agreement for South Pointe (2006).
2. The final plat shall not be recorded until the City has received an irrevocable letter of credit in an amount approved by the City Engineer for all public improvements that are required to be installed in accordance with the plans and specifications;
3. The final plat shall not be recorded until the City has received notice of certification from the State of Wisconsin.

Dated this 27th day of June 2023.

CITY OF RIVER FALLS

______________________________
Dan Toland, Mayor

ATTEST:

______________________________
Amy White, City Clerk
ITEM: Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment regarding electronic signs amending Title 17 Zoning; Chapters 17.44, 17.68, 17.84, and 17.116.

APPLICANT: N/A
OWNER: N/A
STAFF: Emily Shively, Assistant Director of Community Development in collaboration with Mark Roffers, MD Roffers Consulting

BACKGROUND
Staff have received inquiries from various businesses desiring more flexible electronic reader board sign regulations, especially related to the current requirement that such signs have either amber or red messaging only. Several churches have also expressed interest in electronic signs, which are not currently permitted for churches located in residential zoning districts. Finally, staff have received a request from the owner of the four billboards along Highway 35 east of the Whitetail Ridge Corporate Park to convert one or more of the existing static billboards to digital billboards. There have also been instances where Special Sign Permits have been issued for electronic signs in locations otherwise not permitted and additional requests for such permits may lead to confusion as to the existing standards or create inequities or inconsistency in the application of sign code requirements.

The City contracted with Mark Roffers of MD Roffers Consulting to assist in facilitating a discussion with Plan Commission regarding electronic signs and drafting a potential ordinance amendment. On April 6, 2023, Plan Commission discussed possible approaches to amending the sign ordinance with a range of options from keeping the current ordinance as it is now; to modernizing the code, but with a limited approach; to modernizing and expanding the flexibility and capacity for use of electronic signs.

Plan Commission provided guidance to staff for drafting an ordinance amendment that would provide for the expanded use and capacity of electronic signs along with appropriate performance standards for the various uses and locations of such signage. This memo discusses the proposed ordinance amendment that was drafted to effect the changes discussed by Plan Commission.

DISCUSSION
Purpose of the Sign Code
To provide a foundation for discussion of any code amendment it is helpful to review the general purpose of the regulations. The purpose of the sign code as stated in Sec.17.84.010 is as follows:

The purpose of these provisions is intended to lessen threats to public safety from poorly constructed and maintained signs; to ensure compatibility of location, size and placement of signs; to prevent hazards to life and property; to protect against hazards to vehicular...
traffic movements through improper placement of signs; and to preserve the natural beauty and attractiveness of the city.

Signs serve a number of purposes including wayfinding and communication of information (including advertising). The City has the authority to regulate the size, location, manner, and duration of signage. Sign regulations ensure safe placement of signage, readability, and character and aesthetic considerations.

Existing Regulations for Electronic Signs

Electronic reader board signs allow for numerous messages to be displayed easily rather than a single static message increasing the amount of information conveyed and reducing or eliminating the need for additional temporary signage (such as banners, flags, sandwich boards, etc.) or multiple signs on a single property.

Electronic signs are currently permitted only in Business/Commercial and University zoning districts (excluding the Downtown Overlay District) subject to the following standards (Sec.17.84.030 J.):

Electronic Reader Board and Time/Temperature Signs.
1. Electronic reader board and time/temperature signs shall be permitted in the B-1 (General Commercial), B-2 (Limited Business), B-3 (Highway Commercial), or U (University District).
2. An electronic reader board shall not exceed sixty (60) percent of the overall sign area.
3. Messages displayed on the electronic reader board shall be one color, either amber or red.
4. Messages displayed on the electronic reader board shall change no more than one time per hour from six a.m. to twelve a.m.
5. All electronic reader boards must be equipped with photosensitive equipment, which automatically adjusts the brightness and contrast of the sign in direct relation to the ambient outdoor illuminations.
6. Commercial messages displayed on the electronic reader board shall promote only goods or services provided by companies occupying the site on which the sign is erected.
7. Messages displayed on an electronic reader board sign shall not scroll or flash.
8. Temporary signs as defined in Section 17.84.020 of this chapter are prohibited on a lot where an electronic reader board sign exists.

These regulations establish where electronic signs may be located, size, color, duration of display, brightness, and manner of display (message must be static and not scroll or flash).

Plan Commission Discussion

Mr. Roffers provided a matrix to guide the Plan Commission discussion on April 6, 2023 (attached). Potential modifications to the ordinance were discussed related to definitions, where these types of signs may be allowed, and performance standards such as size, number, color, message duration, and brightness.

There was a diversity of opinions regarding the approach to electronic sign regulation, however, a majority of members agreed that having different standards for different zoning districts was appropriate to recognize the context of an area and that greater flexibility regarding color and display time for messages may be appropriate. Plan Commissioners were generally open to
allowing digital billboards, expanding the ability to utilize electronic sign technology, and allowing electronic message signs for non-residential uses in residential districts with performance standards to ensure health, safety, and welfare by taking an incremental approach initially while understanding that greater flexibility could be offered at some time in the future if it were deemed necessary or desired (see attached minutes from the April 6th meeting).

*Proposed Ordinance Amendment*

The proposed ordinance amendment updates definitions, addresses where electronic signs may be located, and updates performance standards for all electronic signs. An explanation of the proposed changes follows (see also the attached draft ordinance amendment):

**Section 1:**
Billboards (with a static message) are currently allowed via Special Use Permit in I-1 Light Industrial and I-2 General Industrial zoning districts. This section adds language to the Special Use section to state that electronic/digital billboards are subject to the performance standards in the sign code. Any new electronic billboard or conversion of an existing billboard to an electronic billboard would require a Special Use Permit which is subject to review and approval by Plan Commission. Conversion of any of the existing billboards adjacent to Whitetail Ridge Corporate Park to electronic reader boards would require a rezoning of the parcel from B-3 Highway Commercial District to I-1 Industrial District and approval of a Special Use Permit.

**Section 2:**
This section updates definitions in the Sign Code to modernize the definition of an Electronic Reader Board sign; clarifies the definition of a Flashing sign; and eliminates the definition of a Time/Temperature sign as these are increasingly uncommon and such signs may be considered as an Electronic Reader Board sign.

**Section 3:**
This part of the proposed ordinance amendment rewrites the existing performance standards for electronic signs.

The first section expands the zoning districts where electronic signs are allowed to include Industrial Districts, Hospital Zones, School Zones, and Park Districts. Electronic signs would also be permitted for certain uses in other zoning districts including parks, churches and similar non-residential institutions, nursing homes, hospitals, daycare centers, clubs or other non-profit organizations, municipal facilities, and Planned Unit Developments with an approved PUD plan.

The second section states that electronic signs are prohibited in the Downtown Overlay District (this is an existing regulation found in Sec.17.68.100 C. and staff determined it would be helpful to include this in the Sign code section as well so that it is not overlooked); and that digital billboards require a Special Use Permit.

The third section limits the size of electronic signs and the time that electronic messages may be displayed in Park, School, and Residential zoning districts in recognition of the different characteristics of these districts than Commercial or Industrial areas. Notably, signs must be turned off overnight or revert to a dark screen. Currently, signs in Residential districts may be up to 32 square feet; the proposed ordinance allows for 75 percent of the sign area (24 square feet) to be electronic ensuring that a portion of the signage is static to assist with wayfinding.

The fourth section reflects existing sign code for size, height, and other district-specific regulations for all signage.
The fifth section places a distance and visibility limitation of 200 feet from any electronic sign to a property used solely for residential purposes to address potential nuisance concerns.

The sixth section allows only one electronic sign per lot.

The seventh section continues the current ordinance standard prohibiting temporary signs on properties where an electronic sign is located as the ability to change messages eliminates the need for additional temporary signs.

The eighth section only allows electronic reader boards on monument signs (not as wall signs); requires the electronic portion of a sign to not exceed 75 percent of the total sign area; and requires the sign base to be at least 75 percent of the width of the electronic sign and designed with materials matching or complementing the associated building on the property. This addresses some aesthetic considerations that the Plan Commission wanted to include.

Sections 9 – 12 address the manner in which messages may be displayed and the message display duration. Messages must be legible, not interfere with traffic safety, and display a static message for a specified amount of time which varies based on location and allows for more messages to be displayed than currently permitted in the Sign code.

Sections 13 – 14 require that the brightness of electronic signs appropriately adjust to ambient light conditions and shut off in an event of a malfunction. Existing technology allows for these functions on electronic signs.

Section 15 requires that messages displayed relate to the property on which the sign is located with the exception of billboards and allows for public service or community information messages.

The final section (16.) has specific standards for digital billboards seeking a Special Use Permit. A digital billboard may not be located any closer than one mile from another digital billboard; in order to construct a new or convert an existing billboard to digital, two square feet of existing static signage must be removed for every one square foot of new digital signage; and the sign base supporting a digital billboard must be constructed with materials complementary to the area and include landscaping around the base of the sign. These provisions recognize the ability for multiple messages on one digital billboard eliminating the need for additional static signage and address character and aesthetic considerations.

Section 4:
The last section of the proposed ordinance amendment inserts language in the Large Scale Retail zoning district to clarify that electronic signs are permitted in that district subject to the requirements in the Sign Code. There are no areas within the City with this zoning designation at this time, however, electronic signs may be appropriate in the type of commercial development described in the zoning district.

SUMMARY
The intent of the proposed ordinance amendment is to allow for greater use of existing technology available for electronic signs where such signs are currently allowed; provide a process and standards for a billboard to change from static to electronic (or construct a new digital billboard); and allow electronic message signs on properties in non-commercial zoning districts such as churches, hospitals, and schools while recognizing the context and character of locations where electronic signs are placed.
The City Attorney has reviewed the proposed ordinance amendment.

RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends that the Plan Commission discuss the proposed ordinance and any desired modifications and forward the ordinance amendment to Council with a favorable recommendation.
AN ORDINANCE AMENDING
TITLE 17 ZONING; CHAPTERS 17.44, 17.68, 17.84, AND 17.116 (RELATED TO
ELECTRONIC READER BOARD SIGNS)

THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RIVER FALLS DOES ORDAIN:

Section 1. That Section 17.44.040 D. of Chapter 17.44 – I-1 Industrial District of
the City of River Falls Municipal Code be amended as follows:

D. Billboard, with each billboard that is also an electronic reader board sign as
defined in Section 17.84.020 subject to applicable requirements of Section
17.84.030 J.

Section 2. That, where they appear, the following definitions in Section 17.68.030
of Chapter 17.68 – Downtown Overlay District and Section 17.84.020 of Chapter 17.84 –
Signs of the City of River Falls Municipal Code be amended as follows:

Sign, Electronic Reader Board. "Electronic reader board sign" means any sign that
by electronic or digital means conveys a message and that changes the message from one
message to another message. It displays words, lines, logos, graphic images, or symbols that
can change automatically or by computer program change to provide different information,
and which includes computer signs, LED and other video display signs, and time and
temperature signs.

Sign, Flashing. "Flashing sign" means an illuminated sign on which artificial or
reflected light is not maintained stationary and constant in intensity and color at all times
when in use, but not including an electronic reader board sign when such sign meets all
requirements of this chapter.

Sign, Time/Temperature. "Time/temperature sign" means a sign having
electronically changing copy that displays current time/temperature not to exceed eight
square feet.

Section 3. That Section 17.84.030 J. of Chapter 17.84 – Signs of the City of River
Falls Municipal Code be repealed and recreated as follows:

J. Electronic Reader Board Signs. Such signs:

1. Shall be permitted in the B-1, B-2, B-3, I-1, I-2, U, HZ, SZ, and P zoning
districts (except per subsection 2), and for the following where such uses
are allowed in other zoning districts under this chapter:
a. Public parks, playgrounds, and recreational buildings;

b. Churches, columbaria, schools, parking lot facilities, day care centers, libraries, hospitals and nursing homes;

c. Municipal buildings, warehouses, garages, shops and storage yards;

d. Charitable institutions, clubs and lodges;

e. Planned unit developments where authorized by a City-approved specific implementation plan.

2. Notwithstanding the allowances in subsection 1, shall be prohibited within the Downtown Overlay District described in Chapter 17.68, and where also billboards shall be allowed only in the I-1 and I-2 districts by special use permit.

3. If within an SZ, P, or residential zoning district, shall not exceed 24 square feet in sign area or be operational between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. (or shall revert to a dark screen if operational during such hours).

4. Shall be included in the calculation of permitted sign area for the business or lot, and subject to the same height and area requirements as other signs in the zoning district.

5. Shall not be positioned such that the electronic reader board component is both visible and within 200 feet from any building occupied exclusively for residential use.

6. Only one such sign is permitted per lot.

7. Temporary signs as defined in Section 17.84.020 of this chapter are prohibited on a lot with an electronic reader board sign.

8. Except for billboards where allowed, shall be part of a monument sign only and shall not exceed 75% of the total sign area on such sign. Further, monument sign base shall be at least 75% of the width of the sign face, with the base constructed with materials similar to the exterior materials used on the principal building on the same lot.

9. Shall not contain any message or image that resembles or may be confused with a traffic control device.

10. Shall be maintained so as to display messages in a complete and legible manner, with consideration of the distance and travel speed of intended users.

11. Each image or message shall remain static for no less than 15 minutes in an SZ, P, or residential zoning district; 1 minute for non-billboard applications in other zoning districts; and 15 seconds for billboards.
where permitted. No more frequent changes, scrolling, intermittent brightness changes, or animation is permitted.

12. Transitions from one image or message to another shall be instantaneous; no fading, fly in, float in, or other alternative transitional approaches area permitted.

13. Shall be equipped with and shall at all times utilize photosensitive equipment which automatically adjusts the brightness and contrast in direct relation to the ambient outdoor illumination, such that brightness is not in excess of 0.5 footcandle above ambient lighting conditions.

14. Shall be equipped with and shall at all times utilize a function that shuts the sign off or defaults to a dark screen in event of malfunction.

15. May not include any message or image advertising products or services not offered on the same site, except for billboards where permitted or for information of interest to the general public that is not directly tied to a private use or product.

16. As part of its consideration of a special use permit for a billboard that is also an electronic reader board sign, the Plan Commission shall require:
   a. Placement no closer than one mile from any other billboard that is also an electronic reader board sign. Measurement shall be as the crow flies from sign base to sign base.
   b. A two square foot reduction of sign area from a traditional/static message billboard on the same premises, or elsewhere in the City from a billboard controlled by the same or affiliated entity, for every one square foot of electronic reader board/billboard sign area.
   c. A decorative support/base with design and materials that complement the City and the sign’s surroundings, a landscape plan that effectively screens the support/base, or some combination.

Section 4. That Section 17.116.060 O. of Chapter 17.116 – Large Scale Retail Development be amended as follows:

O. Signs. Freestanding signs shall not exceed a maximum of one hundred fifty (150) square feet per parcel of land.

Maximum height of a freestanding sign shall be twelve (12) feet as measured from the elevation of the nearest sidewalk and shall be no closer than ten (10) feet from the right-of-way and shall not infringe on any required vision sight lines for traffic safety.

A maximum of one hundred fifty (150) square feet of display area signage shall be allowed on the facade of the structure. Display surface shall be defined as the area enclosed by the outer extremities of all letters, characters, or delineations used for purposes to attract attention to a given sign. A display surface shall not include supports or devices used to attach the sign to another structure.
Animated signs, flashing signs, blinking signs, or signs that have copy that changes automatically are prohibited, except for electronic reader board signs meeting the requirements of Section 17.84.030 J.

No more than twenty five (25) percent of window area may be occupied by signage of any kind.

The design and materials from which signs are constructed shall be consistent with those incorporated into the principal structure of the large scale retail development in question.

Section 5. Effective date. This ordinance amendment shall take effect from and after its date of publication as provided by law.

FOR THE CITY OF RIVER FALLS

____________________________________
Dan Toland, Mayor

ATTEST:

____________________________________
Amy White, City Clerk

Adopted:    ____________
Published:    ____________
# GENERAL ZONING APPROACH OPTIONS
## For Electronic Reader Board Signs (Variable Message Signs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regulatory Aspect</th>
<th>Maintain Current Approach</th>
<th>&quot;Modernize and Limit&quot; Approach</th>
<th>&quot;Modernize and Expand&quot; Approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>How defined?</strong></td>
<td>“Any sign that by electronic means conveys a message and that changes the message from one message to another message.”</td>
<td>Rename as “variable message signs” and redefine for new technology like LED and other video display signs</td>
<td>Similar renaming and redefining as “modernize and limit” approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What zoning districts allowed?</strong></td>
<td>B-1 (General Commercial—except in Downtown Overlay), B-2 (Limited Business), B-3 (Highway Commercial), or U (University District)</td>
<td>Same districts as “maintain” approach, except no longer in B-1 district to help preserve downtown character</td>
<td>Same districts as “maintain” approach, plus I-1 (Industrial), I-2 (Heavy Industrial), HZ (Hospital Zone), SZ (School Zone), and for religious and other institutional uses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location and spacing requirements?</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Same as “modernize and expand” approach, and also not on any lot with a residence, within 200 feet of a residence or street intersection, or on a non-collector or non-arterial street</td>
<td>Basic standards to protect traffic safety and avoid confusion with traffic signs and signals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Size or configuration limitations?</strong></td>
<td>≤60% of overall sign area as regulated by zoning district</td>
<td>Same as “maintain” approach, and also a limit to apply to monument signs only, or otherwise to incentivize City’s desired types or configurations of signs</td>
<td>No % of total sign area maximum—whole sign could be variable message sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quantitative limitations?</strong></td>
<td>No, except pursuant to overall sign regulations for zoning district</td>
<td>Yes, limit to one variable message sign per site</td>
<td>No, except to meet overall sign regulations for zoning district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Are temporary signs allowed where electronic reader board used?</strong></td>
<td>No (changeable message replaces need for temporary signs)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Message length limitations?</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Maximum of four lines of textual electronic message and an established minimum letter height for ease of reading</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Color limitations?</strong></td>
<td>One color, either amber or red</td>
<td>Owner’s choice of one color</td>
<td>No color limitations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### GENERAL ZONING APPROACH OPTIONS

**For Electronic Reader Board Signs (Variable Message Signs)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regulatory Aspect</th>
<th>Maintain Current Approach</th>
<th>“Modernize and Limit” Approach</th>
<th>“Modernize and Expand” Approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How frequently can message change? Can messages scroll?</td>
<td>May change no more than one time per hour from 6 a.m. to 12 a.m. (not at all between 12 and 6 a.m., or as frequently as desired?—ordinance not clear)</td>
<td>If change more than one time per hour, duration of each display between 6 and 10 seconds. 1 to 2 second transition between messages without rolling, fading, or the illusion of movement during transition.</td>
<td>Allow message changes at any interval, provided that scrolling does not exceed 10 seconds (too slow for traffic safety) or message change is not so fast as to resemble flashing sign (too fast)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do signs have to be turned off overnight?</td>
<td>Probably not, but ordinance not clear</td>
<td>Yes, except maybe in limited situations (e.g., along Hwy 35&amp;65 or for billboards)</td>
<td>No, except maybe in non-commercial settings (e.g., School Zone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can messages flash?</td>
<td>No, but no definition of flashing</td>
<td>No, but describe what non-flashing means. Default to “freeze message” in event of malfunction</td>
<td>No, but describe what non-flashing means. Default to “freeze message” in event of malfunction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illumination adjustment equipment for different ambient conditions?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes, with requirement that equipment be operational at all times, with brightness not in excess of 0.3 foot candles above ambient light levels for example</td>
<td>Yes, with requirement that such equipment actually be operational at all times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can advertise off-site products (i.e., billboard)?</td>
<td>No, except if products also sold on premises (so, generally cannot be used on billboards at present)</td>
<td>No, except to enable nonconforming billboard conversion to variable message sign output only with reduction in number of nonconforming billboards (2:1 to 4:1 reduction)</td>
<td>Yes, for conversion of nonconforming billboards, and in industrial zoning districts (where new billboards are currently allowed by special use permit) with additional spacing and other requirements considered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exemption to off-premise limits for community signs (e.g., welcome signs)?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overview of Current Ordinance Requirements by Section – for reference purposes, and supplied “Maintain Current Approach” column in matrix

17.04.020 – Definitions.

"Billboard" means a structure which directs attention to a business, commodity, service, activity or entertainment not necessarily conducted or offered upon the premises where the structure is located.

Sign, Advertising. "Advertising sign" means a sign which directs attention to a business, commodity, service, activity or entertainment not necessarily conducted, sold or offered upon the premises where such sign is located.

17.08.050 - Setback requirements.

A. No structures shall be allowed any closer to streets, roads or traffic ways than as follow:
   1. Principal arterial, minimum setback: Forty-two (42) feet.
   3. Collector street, minimum setback: Twenty-five (25) feet.
   4. Local street, minimum setback: Twenty-five (25) feet.

B. Individual zoning district requirements, where different, shall prevail.

17.08.060 - Nonconforming building and uses.

C. Nonconforming Uses and Structures. The lawful use of a building or premises existing at the time of the adoption or amendment of this title may be continued although such use does not conform with the provisions of this title. Such nonconforming use shall not be extended. The total structural repairs or alterations in such a nonconforming building or premises shall not during its life exceed fifty (50) percent of the assessed value of the building unless changed to a conforming use. If such nonconforming use is discontinued for a period of twelve (12) months, any future use of the building or the premises shall conform to this title.

Chapter 17.44 - I-1 INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT

17.44.040 - Special uses (special use permit required).

D. Billboard;

Chapter 17.48 - I-2 HEAVY INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT

17.48.040 - Special uses (special use permit required).

A. Special uses permitted in the I-1 district;

Chapter 17.68 - DOWNTOWN OVERLAY DISTRICT

17.68.030 - Definitions.

"Animated" or "revolving" means any sign or part of a sign that changes physical position or light intensity by any movement or rotation or gives the visual impression of such movement or rotation, excluding flags and barber pole signs.
"Billboard" means a sign used as an outdoor display for the purpose of advertising or promoting a business, service, activity or products, which are not found or located on the premises on which a sign is situated.

"Changeable copy sign" means a sign or portion thereof with characters, letters or illustrations that can be changed or rearranged without altering the face of the sign. Time, temperature, and theater signs are not considered changeable copy signs.

"Electronic reader board sign" means any sign that by electronic means conveys a message and that changes the message from one message to another message.

"Flashing sign" means any directly or indirectly illuminated sign that exhibits changing material by means of artificial light, color or by any means.

"Portable changeable copy sign" means a single or double surface painted sign or poster panel type sign or variation thereof with characters, letters or illustrations that can be changed or rearranged without altering the face of the sign, temporary in nature, is easily moveable and is not permanently attached to a building or to the ground.

17.68.100 - Design review standards.

C. Signs. All signs in the downtown design district are regulated and are allowed only by sign permit. Permit fees for new or replacement signs shall be in accordance with the current fee schedule on file with the city clerk. Signs that have not been erected within six months from the date of the receipt of the permit shall not be allowed to be erected until such time as a new permit has been issued and all requirements have been met.

20. Prohibited Signs.
   a. Moving;
   b. Flashing;
   c. Roof;
   d. Painted signs on buildings except on windows;
   e. Animated or revolving;
   f. Internally illuminated unless otherwise permitted in this section;
   g. Changeable copy;
   h. Inflatable signs;
   i. Pennants;
   j. Neon on outside of building;
   k. Portable changeable copy;
   l. Billboard;
   m. Conspicuous vehicle sign;
   n. Searchlights;
   o. Electronic reader board signs.
Chapter 17.72 - PUD PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT

17.72.030 - Flexible development standards.

D. Signage. Flexibility in the design and location of signage is permitted; however, in no case shall pylon signs be permitted.

Chapter 17.84 – SIGNS

17.84.020 - Definitions.

"Billboard" means a structure which directs attention to a business, commodity, service, activity or entertainment not conducted or offered upon the premises where the structure is located.

"Public service message" means advertising of a civic or philanthropic nature displayed or posted in the interest of community welfare or service.

Sign, Advertising. "Advertising sign" means a sign which directs attention to a business, commodity, service, activity or entertainment not necessarily conducted, sold or offered upon the premises where such sign is located.

Sign, Electronic Reader Board. "Electronic reader board sign" means any sign that by electronic means conveys a message and that changes the message from one message to another message.

Sign, Flashing. "Flashing sign" means an illuminated sign on which artificial or reflected light is not maintained stationary and constant in intensity and color at all times when in use.

Sign, Off-Premises. "Off-premises sign" means a sign identifying or advertising a business, person, activity, goods, products or services not located on the premises where the business or commercial activity is conducted.

Sign, Time/Temperature. "Time/temperature sign" means a sign having electronically changing copy that displays current time/temperature not to exceed eight square feet.

17.84.030 - General provisions.

J. Electronic Reader Board and Time/Temperature Signs.

1. Electronic reader board and time/temperature signs shall be permitted in the B-1 (General Commercial), B-2 (Limited Business), B-3 (Highway Commercial), or U (University District).

2. An electronic reader board shall not exceed sixty (60) percent of the overall sign area.

3. Messages displayed on the electronic reader board shall be one color, either amber or red.

4. Messages displayed on the electronic reader board shall change no more than one time per hour from six a.m. to twelve a.m.

5. All electronic reader boards must be equipped with photosensitive equipment, which automatically adjusts the brightness and contrast of the sign in direct relation to the ambient outdoor illuminations.

6. Commercial messages displayed on the electronic reader board shall promote only goods or services provided by companies occupying the site on which the sign is erected.

7. Messages displayed on an electronic reader board sign shall not scroll or flash.

8. Temporary signs as defined in Section 17.84.020 of this chapter are prohibited on a lot where an electronic reader board sign exists.
O. Signs. Freestanding signs shall not exceed a maximum of one hundred fifty (150) square feet per parcel of land.

Maximum height of a freestanding sign shall be twelve (12) feet as measured from the elevation of the nearest sidewalk and shall be no closer than ten (10) feet from the right-of-way and shall not infringe on any required vision sight lines for traffic safety.

A maximum of one hundred fifty (150) square feet of display area signage shall be allowed on the facade of the structure. Display surface shall be defined as the area enclosed by the outer extremities of all letters, characters, or delineations used for purposes to attract attention to a given sign. A display surface shall not include supports or devices used to attach the sign to another structure.

Animated signs, flashing signs, blinking signs, or signs that have copy that changes automatically are prohibited.

No more than twenty five (25) percent of window area may be occupied by signage of any kind.

The design and materials from which signs are constructed shall be consistent with those incorporated into the principal structure of the large scale retail development in question.
MINUTES
PLAN COMMISSION
APRIL 5, 2023
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Members Present: Patricia La Rue, Chris Holtkamp, Dan Toland, Diane Odeen, Rebecca Prendergast, Mike Woolsey and Lisa Moody

Members Absent: none

Staff Present: Emily Shively, Sterling Hackney, Sam Burns

Others Present: Mark Roffers, MD Roffers Consulting (virtual); David Curtin, Lamar Advertising; Phil Larsen, business owner

CALL TO ORDER
Meeting convened at 6:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES
M/Odeen, S/Woolsey to approve minutes. Motion carried 6/0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS
Dave Curtin with Lamar Advertising commented on the electronic sign ordinance up for discussion this evening. He stated he is available for questions. He would like to see options to modernize electronic signs which would benefit his billboard sign business. Phil Larsen, Century 21 Real Estate business owner, commented that he has done a lot of research on electronic reader board signs. It is a challenge to buy what the current code allows. They now have far more capabilities. He understands the need to limit electronic signage but would like to see more abilities and options allowed per code for electronic reader boards. He discussed applying for a special sign permit and wants to see that process be more fair and clear. Larsen also discussed the setback for pylon signage needing to be setback as far as it is tall. He would like to see the focus on building a structural solid sign instead. Also discussed are the proposed regulations referring to the size of the print. He would like to see the print size requirement be at the discretion of the building owner as they will want the print to be seen. Larsen also stated he would like the ability to advertise for community events and benefits on electronic reader boards.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS
Proposal for annexation and rezoning for property located at 99 Highway 35 and 101 Highway 35 (New Life Worship Center).
Sam Burns gave a presentation on the annexation and rezoning. Keith Fletcher, Minister of New Life Church, has submitted an annexation request for 99 and 101 Highway 35. The property plans include building a church and to convert the existing structure to church offices and construct a youth center in the future. Burns showed the site location that is approximately 4.07 acres. The property is contiguous to City boundary. The Future Land Use is Community Commercial, and the Extraterritorial Zoning is Commercial. Proposed zoning classification is B3 Highway Commercial. The use of the property as a church is permitted in the B3 Highway Commercial
district. Staff recommends forwarding the enclosed council ordinance regarding annexation and zoning to City Council with a favorable recommendation.

M/Odeen, S/Woolsey made a motion to approve the annexation and rezoning. Motion carried 6/0.

There was discussion clarifying access location to the property.

REPORTS
Electronic Sign Ordinance Discussion
Emily Shively introduced Mark Roffers of MD Roffers Consulting who attended the meeting virtually. She gave a brief overview of what he will present regarding electronic signage. Shively stated the Planning Department has been approached with some electronic sign proposals that are currently not allowed by City ordinance. Examples are making static billboards electronic, allowing churches in residential locations to have lit or electronic signs, and businesses that currently have electronic signs be able to use more of the sign’s capabilities. This led to the discussion of the sign code and the opportunity to discuss keeping the ordinance the same, or modify things minorly or make major changes to the sign ordinance. Roffer was hired to assist. Shively stated health, safety and welfare are important when making decisions about signage. She noted the City can regulate size, location, and number of signs but cannot regulate content of signs.

Mark Roffers introduced himself virtually and said his background includes 30 years in Planning and he has worked with many communities regarding sign regulations. He showed examples of current electronic signs allowed by code with the one color, either red or amber lettering. Roffers stated the purpose of sign regulations is public safety due to hazards from poorly constructed signs or sign clutter that can cause confusion or distraction to drivers. Other purposes are to ensure compatibility of location, size and placement of signs. A final reason is to preserve the natural beauty and integrity of the City. Sign ordinances differ by zoning district. Signs also need to provide reasonable identification and opportunity to the business to allow them to grow. It also benefits the public to be able to get around successfully and find business locations. Roffer discussed maintaining compliance with federal law and a Supreme Court decision regarding sign content and the First Amendment, for example if you must read the sign to regulate it, that is not an appropriate regulation.

Roffers shared three approach options regarding electronic signs. They are as follows; maintain the current approach, modernize and limit, or modernize and expand. He reviewed aspects of each approach which includes regulations such as color, illumination, and location of electronic signs. Roffers stated that technology has improved dramatically for these signs so modernizing language may be appropriate. Roffers explained that discussions this evening will help determine what a draft ordinance amendment should look like and will be shared at a later meeting for further discussion and detail. There was discussion regarding signage in different zoning locations, and sign standards being based on zoning location including overnight lighting, color of lighting, brightness levels, length of time for changing messages and the amount of time to transition messages.

Odeen stated this discussion has been helpful and would like to see more updates to the ordinance to use more of the technology available in electronic signs but still keep the character of River Falls.
Roffers asked if anyone in the audience had further comments. Phil Larson commented on the downtown overlay district being more restricted for signage however he has noticed that business find a way to get around having more signage. An example is installing large tv’s in their windows facing the street displaying ads.

David Curtin commented that color limitation on billboard electronic signs would limit the ability to display pictures. He prefers keeping time intervals to 6-7 seconds to have the ability to display numerous messages. His sign locations are on the highway so not allowing off site advertising would make his signs not usable.

Planner Burns shared that the ordinance won’t be one size fits all. The zoning districts currently have different sign regulations and that can remain the case.

Roffers asked for the opinion of each commissioner on what approach they prefer to see for electronic signage. Holtkamp preferred the current approach with more restrictions applied. Moody, Woolsey, Odeen, Toland, Prendergast, and La Rue preferred the modernize and expand approach. Moody and Woolsey commented they would like to see restrictions based on zoning locations. Odeen commented that she could support a mixture of both the modernize and limit and modernize and expand options and is not a fan of billboard signage. Prendergast commented that electronic signage has a sustainability feature; new sign materials are not being used to construct new messages. La Rue stated she would like to see the downtown area protected and outside the downtown have more options for signage. Prendergast inquired about public comment regarding Turnkey’s large electronic sign in Sterling Ponds. The sign was put up without approval and they applied for a special sign permit and was granted after the fact.

Roffers summarized that most prefer the modernize and expand approach. He stated it is easier to open the door a bit to expanding options for electronic signage and then more if desired later than opening the door wide and trying to restrict later. Standards for signs was discussed such as quality, size and quantity of signs. It was restated that standards can be designed for particular zoning locations.

Shively thanked everyone for the discussion. She summarized by stating that the consensus is that context and character matter. The capabilities of technology can be considered as well. There is a broad range of options to approach this and the discussion will be taken into consideration. She concluded that Shively and Roffers will come up with ordinance language to meet the goals discussed.

2022 Housing Study Presentation
Planner Sam Burns provided a presentation. He stated the 2022 study is an update to the 2018 Housing Study. In 2018 the City contracted with Maxfield Research and Consulting to complete a Housing Study. The most crucial data collected was the Housing Needs Analysis which looks at current demographics, current housing stock, and projects the needs for future housing. The City contracted again in 2022 with Maxfield Research and Consulting to update the Housing Needs Analysis section only. Burns shared statistics from the 2018 and 2022 studies. He stated it is projected that more housing is needed in 2022 than in 2018 due to not enough units being built between 2018 and 2022 even though we saw a record permitting for new units and River Falls being a desired community to live in. The numbers take into consideration the new housing permits for 2022 and 2023 so far and the units that are currently in the development pipeline. Burns stated a lot has been done, there is still more to go. Senior housing is a major need and discussed the different kinds of senior living units needed. Burns summarized the outcomes from the updated study. He explained the vacancy rate and said the housing supply remains critically
low. He explained the housing market is an ecosystem and different housing types compliment and affect each other. The 2022 study gave a better understanding of the needs and allows the City to promote different housing types and assist in the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. This data is crucial to ensure our community has adequate housing. It is noted there has been progress in housing, specifically in market rate rentals however there remains a need or new units. The issue is not unique to River Falls, as housing shortage is faced everywhere. The study can be viewed on the City of River Falls website.

Odeen commented on working with developers in encouraging them to building in River Falls. Burns stated the market has the ultimate effect but the City can be intentional on development design standards, and provide flexibility while maintaining quality to draw interest. Developers and builders look at these studies. Holtkamp asked about the timeline on zoning code review and Shively stated new policy guidance and goals in the Comprehensive Plan have been approved and staff will begin prioritizing zoning changes to start implementing. La Rue gave a history of all new housing development since 2017 and the number of units it has added to the City. She stated there has been a lot of work completed and a deliberate plan for what is needed.

Planning Update
Shively reviewed projects recently approved in March which include Oak Hill’s first phase, The Current, Thompson Heights site work has begun, and Saturday Properties will move forward soon. The Comprehensive Plan has been approved. The next meeting will be May 2.

ADJOURNMENT
Commissioner Holtkamp made a motion to adjourn at 7:54 p.m. S/Odeen; motion carried 6/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Angie Bond, Community Development Assistant
Introduction

This report is provided monthly to update the Plan Commission on Community Development efforts for the past month, as well as to provide a look forward to the upcoming Plan Commission work.

**Reporting Period:**
May 1- May 31, 2022

**Next Plan Commission Meeting:**
June 6, 2023

**2023 Community Development Major Projects**

- Ensure sustained development/redevelopment of the City from the prospect stage through construction
- **Economic Development**
  - Customer Relations Management Software (CRM)
  - Shovel ready sites
- **Engineering**
  - North Water Tower Project
  - North Loop Utilities Project
  - WisDOT Wasson Lane design
  - WisDOT Powell Avenue bridge construction
  - Water and Wastewater Service Area Planning
  - Mann Valley Construction
- **Planning/Zoning/Inspections**
  - Comprehensive Plan update
  - Outdoor Recreation Plan update
  - Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan update
  - Roll out code enforcement changes
  - Permitting/code enforcement software research
Planning and Zoning

- **Development Review/Current Planning**
  - Currently working with developers that plan to submit over the next few months
  - Fielded questions and review of ETJ potential projects
  - Council also approved the annexation of approximately 19 acres of City-owned property adjacent to the Mann Valley Corporate Park on April 11, 2023.
  - Council approved an annexation petition on May 9, 2023 to annex approximately 5 acres of land at 99 and 101 Hwy 35 which was recently purchased by New Life Worship Center of River Falls.
  - Council approved a new Tax Increment District for the Mann Valley Corporate Park at their meeting on May 23, 2023.
  - A site plan review application has been received for a proposed Scooter’s Coffee located at 130/132 E. Pomeroy Ave (southeast corner of E. Pomeroy and N. Main)
  - An application has been received for Final Plat approval for the first phase of the Oak Hill development. Plan Commission will review the Plat on June 6th.
  - An application has been received for Specific Implementation Plan and Final Plat approval for the South Point 1st Addition near Comforts of Home. Plan Commission will review the SIP and Final Plat on June 6th.
  - On June 6, 2023 Plan Commission will review a draft ordinance amendment to the sign code related to digital/electronic signage which is intended to modernize the code and reflect current technology and use of electronic signs. The draft ordinance will include performance standards appropriate to the location and use of these signs.

- **Historic Preservation Commission**
  - HPC and Park Board met in May to begin the planning for the Celebration of Glen Parks 125th Anniversary.
  - HPC is working on a library display for the lower level and display cabinets upstairs slated for May for Historic Preservation Month and the 100th Anniversary of the River Falls Public Library system.
  - The Glen Park Sign was installed in May. This sign celebrates the history of the park and replaced the former Cascade Mill Sign.
  - HPC and Park Board are working to incorporate historic images inside and outside Glover School House.
  - HPC was awarded a $12,000 reimbursable Certified Local Government grant from the WI Historical Society in February hire a consultant to nominate two individually eligible properties to the National Register of Historic Places. Work is underway on that process.

- **BID Board**
  - Facilitated the yearly hanging basket work on Main St
  - Provided support/funding for 2nd St garden work

- **Mapping**
  - Map of available sites for development; [Click here for map](#)
  - Map of active development projects map; [Click here for map](#)

- **Projects**
  - Focus River Falls – staff is shifting focus to implementation of the three Focus River Falls Plans by identifying policy priorities and beginning work on grant applications to help fund key initiatives.
  - The City Won an AARP grant to begin implementing Bike and Ped recommended demonstration improvements at the intersection of Division and Main St.
  - Staff has applied for State and Federal Grants that would provide a 50% to 80% match for the future Mann Valley Recreation Trail.

- **Assist customers with zoning and subdivision questions daily**
**Economic Development**

- Attended online Innovation Center Management Committee Meetings (Schreiner)
- Treasurer duties for the RFEDC and Innovation Center Management Committee (Schreiner)
- Secretary duties for the RFEDC (Burns)
- Sent three RFIs
- Continue Mann Valley project management
- Led the Mann Valley Council Workshop (Schreiner)
- Presented at the Plan Commission meeting regarding the creation of TID 19 (Schreiner)
- Attended the St. Croix Valley Quarterly Partner Meeting (Schreiner)
- Attended the St. Croix Valley Business Innovation Center Five Year Celebration (Schreiner)
- Attended one Business Retention and Expansion meeting (Schreiner)
- Attended the Community Venture Network quarterly event (Schreiner)

**Building and Inspections/Code Enforcement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building and Inspections/Code Enforcement</th>
<th>Permits (May 1 – May 31)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>745 Sycamore St, Frisbie/River Falls Senior Living – 1st week of May, temp occupancy was granted for employee training, May 25th a final inspection/occupancy was completed.</td>
<td>36 Building Permits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>677 Whitetail, BOH – HVAC rough inspection was completed by State Inspector, Joe Merchak</td>
<td>3 New Home Permits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1355 Sunshine Ave, Renaissance – Above grade plumbing inspections</td>
<td>6 Fence Permits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>137 W. Cascade Ave, Gerrard – 4th floor rough inspection was completed</td>
<td>4 Sign Permits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>590 S. Wasson Ln, CVTC – Plumbing underground and venting were inspected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>650 S. Main, Associated Dentist – A final/occupancy inspection was completed for ½ the project</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>140 Quarry Rd, Dunkin – Rough inspection were completed by State Inspector, Joe Merchak and prelim final inspection was completed</td>
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<tr>
<td>122 S. Main St, Swinging Bridge Brewery – Plumbing inspection</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reviewed plans for a Scooter’s Coffee</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Engineering**

- Internal Consulting Projects
  - Powell Avenue Bridge Rehabilitation – Bids were opened on May 9th, and construction is expected to begin in late summer.
  - S. Wasson Lane Reconstruction (Strand) design is ongoing.
  - Wells Park Sidewalk (Stevens). Project is currently advertised for bids, and to be up for Council consideration in June.
  - The Wastewater Utilities Biosolids Design Contract (Strand) is ongoing. 60% design plans are expected in June.
  - Water & Sewer Service Area Plan Updates (Strand) – Models are being updated to guide future utility maintenance and improvements.
  - Developing 2023 Public Works project plans and specifications
- Development review assistance for the following sites:
  - Saturday Townhomes (North of Paulson Road): GDP review completed. Waiting on SIP submittal.
  - The Current (South of Paulson Road, West of Thompson Heights): SIP review completed, construction is pending.
Red’s Place: Staff commented on preliminary concept December 2022. Development layout is contingent upon Wisconsin DOT controlling access points to the proposed development.

CVTC: Under construction.

Thompson Storage: Site plans and water main extensions are approved, construction is anticipated to commence in June 2023.

Best Maid (Rise Baking) parking expansion was proposed and determined the disturbed area triggers stormwater requirements.

Scooter’s Coffee plans are nearing approval.

**Stormwater**

- Erosion control inspections are ongoing.
- Application preparation and submitted for Wisconsin DNR non-point source stormwater management planning grant. Awards in 2023 and funding available in 2024.
- Application prepared and submitted for FEMA “Building Resilient Communities” flood study grant. Grant award is expected in June/July 2023 and funding available ~November 2023.
- Engineering Staff responded to and supported clean-up efforts for a spill from a Best Maid Cookies. Best Maid promptly reported cleaned up spill.

**Public Construction Projects**

- North Water Tower – Watermain and foundation construction are complete. Tower fabrication is in progress.
- Mann Valley Corporate Park: Council authorized a resolution accepting the low bid from Hass Sons, Inc. Construction is anticipated in Fall 2023.

**Subdivisions**

- Highview Meadows 7th Addition: Public construction is nearing completion pending second lift of asphalt placement.
- Thompson Heights (Subdivision South of Paulson Road): Construction is ongoing.
- Oak Hill (Maple St. and Apollo Rd). Developer is refining engineering plans to address City and WDNR review comments.

**Private Development Projects**

- BOH Electronics (Whitetail Blvd): Under construction, ~50% complete.
- Eurofins (Highland Dr): Greenhouse constructed, utilities and grading needed, ~30% complete.
- Dawes Place Phase II: Majority of water and sewer installed, several building permits issued, and several foundations poured.
- The Sycamore: Construction is nearing completion. Expecting staff to begin occupying buildings by late May.
- Wasson Townhomes: Slow progress is reported due to supply issues, hopeful for summer completion.
- Lake George Lofts has completed significant underground and building work, ~60% complete.
- Renaissance Academy: Construction is ongoing.
- The Uplands (Paulson Road Apartments) are fully approved and anticipating construction to start in July.

**Director**

- Focus River Falls project management
  - Waiting for final plans and data from SRF to wrap up the final plan logistics
• Department
  o Meetings: Staff 1:1s, consultant check ins, ED meetings, developer meetings, development team, exec team
  o Modify and fill vacant position
  o Meet with Hudson Community Development Department
  o Learn about the CRM
• Kinni Corridor implementation
  o Met with KCC
  o Participated in Leave No Trace
  o Provided USACE team tour
• Clifton Cooperative Agreement
  o Begin research
• External
  o Meeting with Huppert
  o Meeting with O'Keefe
  o Attended the St. Croix Valley Tourism Meeting
  o Wrap up Valu Stay development agreement
  o Attend WLM Local Government Day
Community Development Staff

Amy Peterson, Community Development Director

David Hovel, Building Inspector

Chris Buntjer, Sr. Civil Engineer

Tamarra Jaworski, Engineering Technician

Todd Nickleski, City Engineer

Keri Schreiner, Economic Development Manager

Angie Bond, Community Development Assistant

Emily Shively, Assistant Director of Community Development

Tyler Galde, Planning & Engineering Technician

Amy Peterson, Community Development Director

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