

Community Development Department

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MINUTES
PLAN COMMISSION
January 15, 2019 at 6:30 p.m.
City Council Chambers

Members Present: Scott Morrisette, Lisa Moody, Susan Reese, Bill Stuessel, Dan Toland, Michael Woolsey, Craig Hinzman

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Amy Peterson, Sam Wessel, Brandy Howe

Others Present: Ben Fochs

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting convened at 6:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

M/Morrisette, S/Woolsey – motion carried 7-0

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ben Fochs of 2529 Powell Avenue addressed the Commission to advise them to consider farm leases and crop rotation schedules when planning for the Mann Valley corporate park plan.

CURRENT ITEMS

Consideration of an Ordinance Annexing Certain Territory from the Town of River Falls to the City of River Falls (Cemetery Road/S. Wasson Lane Annexation)

Howe reported that the City received an annexation request from the three property owners at the southeast intersection of Cemetery Road and S. Wasson Lane. The annexation area includes 4.73 acres. This area was first considered for annexation in January 2018 when the Apostolic Church had an option to purchase the SSS Partnership and Scheffler properties to build a new church. That deal fell through last spring when the church decided against purchasing the property. The SSS Partnership and Scheffler property owners have entered into a new purchase agreement with Bald River Properties, LLC. It is anticipated that Bald River will develop multifamily down the road; however, no specific development plans have been submitted at this time. The property is currently zoned Commercial in the ETZ and the zoning of adjacent properties is residential. Future land use for the surrounding properties is residential, while the annexation area is shown as commercial. Staff is proposing that the zoning for the property, if annexed, be R3 multifamily residential, which is consistent with the zoning of surrounding properties in the City and the Town. Given the size, configuration, and access limitations (a new driveway would not be permitted at Cemetery Road, a principal arterial) the lots are not conducive to most types of commercial development. The R3 would allow for multifamily development and the petitions are amenable to the R3 zoning. The existing ministorage is not anticipated to be redeveloped at this time.

Morrisette asked if the easement issue has been resolved that resulted in the Church from backing out of the sale in 2018. Howe responded that the cross-access easement is still present on the property, but it is likely not going to pose the same issue (the configuration of a church to the north with parking to the south of the easement would have created pedestrian cross-walk concerns for the church). Howe noted that the traffic pattern would flow effectively between the Red Cedar Estates and multifamily on the annexation area. Morrisette expressed concern that the buyer may not be aware of the existence of the easement, as had been the case with the Apostolic Church. Peterson noted that the annexation petition was submitted by the property owners and the City has very limited conversations with the buyer, so we cannot say definitively if they are aware of the easement. Morrisette noted that it is probably not the job of the Plan Commission to be the body that makes the buyer aware of the easement; he just wanted to note that it could be a potential pitfall down the road in terms of developing the property.

Morrisette made a motion to recommend approval of an ordinance annexing certain territory from the Town of River Falls to the City of River Falls.

M/Morrisette, S/Moody – motion carried 7-0

UPDATES AND INFORMATION

Mann Valley Update

Peterson provided a presentation on the Mann Valley concept plan, which was prepared by MSA with a market analysis prepared by Addy Advantage. The plan accounts for drainageways and provides two access roads and 214 acres of land for light manufacturing/industrial uses. The lots are flexible and can be configured in larger or smaller parcels based on the prospective developer. From what the City has heard, large parcels are unavailable west of River Falls. Additional roads can be included as well, and those are depicted as conceptual roads and would be determined based on future users. Mixed use commercial/residential is also included, and the plan leaves the current school district property as institutional. Sewer and water infrastructure would come in from the south and thus it is expected that development would start near the south side of the corporate park.

Shoreland Zoning Update

Wessel provided a brief presentation about the City's shoreland ordinance and the existing issues with it. He described the three zones within the ordinance. He described that the existing ordinance poses challenges for redevelopment in older parts of the City where the shoreland setback may cover the entire parcel in some cases. He described a provision in the ordinance that would allow for averaging of setbacks to enable the construction of new buildings within the setback, but over time, this provision could result in structures moving closer to the river. He also noted that there are some statutory changes that need to be addressed in an upcoming ordinance revision. The purpose of this presentation was to notify Plan Commission of upcoming revisions to the ordinance as part of the 2019 Community Development Work Plan.

2019 Plan Commission Priorities

Peterson provided an update on the Community Development work plan, specifically focusing on the projects that would involve the Plan Commission. Those projects include ordinance updates, a university development plan, impact fee and capital cost review, trends report, downtown alley upgrades, power plant clean up, and some Plan Commission workshops.

Development Review Update

Howe reported that staff is completing review on the school district projects and is currently reviewing the Glen Park Plan, Montessori Elementary, Westside Elementary, and Sterling Ponds Apartments. Staff is anticipating the Depot and food pantry projects to be submitted for development review in the next few weeks.

AJOURNMENT

Morrisette made a motion to adjourn at 7:21 p.m.

M/Morrisette, S/Hinzman – motion carried 7-0

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brandy Howe".

Brandy Howe, AICP, Senior Planner