

MINUTES OF THE NEENAH PLAN COMMISSION
Tuesday, April 25, 2017
4:15 p.m.

Present:

Mayor Dean Kaufert, Chairman	PRESENT	Gerry Kaiser, Director of Public Works	PRESENT	Nick Piergrossi, Vice Chairman	PRESENT
Kate Hancock-Cooke	ABSENT	Ald. Christopher Kunz	PRESENT	Karen Genett	PRESENT
Gerry Andrews	PRESENT	Ald. Jane Lang	PRESENT		

Also present:

Brad Schmidt, Deputy Director of Community Development	Samantha Jefferson, Office Manager of Community Development	Alderwoman, Cari Lendrum
		Grant Birtch, 534 E. Peckham, Neenah

Minutes:

MSC Piergrossi/Andrews, to approve the March 28, 2017 meeting minutes. All aye.

Public Appearances:

None.

Public Hearings:

None.

Action Items:

1. Site Plan Review – Main Street/Torrey Street Parking Lot

Director Schmidt gave an overview of the parking lot on the proposed location of the southeast corner of Main Street and Torrey Street. The parking lot will be CDA-owned but will be used and maintained by the Gateway Office Building. It will consist of 277 stalls (including 7 handicap stalls). A landscaping plan has not been submitted but certain elements will be required. A lighting plan will be required.

Some members of the Plan Commission had concern about protecting the adjoining properties from lights in the parking lot. The landscape plan will address most of those issues and there was discussion about possibly constructing a fence along one of the properties.

The question was raised as to why there was not access to the parking lot from Martnes Street. This was intentional to prevent a large number of vehicles from traveling down that street. Director Kaiser said that there is a taper along Main Street right after the entrance of the new lot that would help a right hand turn out of the lot onto Main Street.

The number of stalls will be sufficient for the Gateway building. Members questioned if the handicap stalls could be placed closer to the building and removed from this lot. As this is a Plexus controlled lot, it will be their decision whether or not to allow the public to utilize this lot.

MSC Piergrossi/Kaiser, the Plan Commission to approve the site plan for a new surface parking lot located on the south east corner of Main Street and Torrey Street subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Submit a detailed landscape plan identifying the location, type, and size of each planting which meets the minimum requirements for frontage landscape standards and perimeter landscape standards.**
- 2. If outdoor lighting is proposed, please submit a photometric (lighting) plan to be reviewed by the Community Development Department.**

All Aye.

2. Public Statue Location – Main Street/W. Wisconsin Avenue

An anonymous donor has presented the City with a bronze statue of President George Washington. The City is requesting that this statue be put on public right-of-way adjacent to the new Gateway Office Building. The Plan Commission must accept it or deny the donation as public art and review the location to determine if the location is consistent with the requirements in the sidewalk furniture ordinance.

There is no issue with the vision triangle in either of the two spots that the City has suggested for placement. Ald. Lendrum asked Member Kaiser about how the DOT may feel about distractability. Director Kaiser explained that the DOT would like sterile right-of-way.

MSC Kunz/Genett, the Plan Commission to recommend Council to accept the statue as public art and approve the location of the statue and bench along the south side sidewalk of Main Street/W. Wisconsin Avenue subject to the sidewalk furniture standards. All Aye.

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Misc. Items:

1. Non-Conforming Uses in C-2 District

Citizens living on Bond Street have raised concerns about single-family residential uses not being a permitted use in a C2 district. They have come across information that potential buyers may have trouble getting loans for the homes because of this. Deputy Director Schmidt explained that at one time, the City viewed this as a business growth area but that has stalled. He is hesitant to change the zoning simply because the zoning creates needed boundaries between residential and commercial properties. However, he is willing to correspond with banks in whatever way necessary to help the loan to go through. The redevelopment plan for this area may scare off lenders as well.

Member Genett explained that in her experience, a letter may not help as the underwriters of these loans are usually just following a set of rules to which this would be against.

Deputy Director Schmidt indicated he will look at all options, including rezoning the single-family houses to C-1, which permits that use. The most appropriate option is for the home owners to contact the City when potential buyers of their houses are having issues with lending companies and let the staff explain the situation.

Zoning Code Review:

1. Short-Term Rentals

Deputy Director Schmidt provided an overview written up by intern Bryce Hembrook of short-term rentals and how cities around the country are dealing with them. Unfortunately, the Zoning Code is not very clear on this use and the Plan Commission may want to further explore them. Deputy Director Schmidt was looking for some direction from the Plan Commission on where to go with this situation.

Attorney Grant Birtch explained that he has been working with Deputy Director Schmidt in reference to these short-term rentals. He went on to say that because there are no codes regarding these rentals, a threat to zoning codes and also to public safety. He would like to see this regulated potentially with some sort of licensing so that at least they can be inspected and the neighbors notified.

Member Kunz and Member Piergrossi expressed their distaste in trying to regulate the short-term rentals and not long term rentals. Deputy Director Schmidt said that he realizes that long-term rentals have issues, too, but they are controlled by codes and ordinances (albeit occasionally not enforced). Short-term rentals are missed in the codes completely.

Member Lang disagreed with Member Kunz and believes that people in long-term rentals are more invested in the properties and may not cause as many negative impacts as short-term. She would like this to be regulated.

Member Andrews would like this to continue to be monitored but would not like to regulate it at this time.

Member Gennett will contact the WRA to see if they have taken a stance on this issue.

Mayor Kaufert could understand a tiered regulation of this. Possibly by number of times rented in a year. Member Kaiser would like to see this kept simple.

Deputy Director Schmidt's recommendation is to require a Special Use Permit for all short-term rentals. That way they are registered, can be inspected, and the permit can be revoked. Another option is a home occupation permit. He will bring alternatives to the Plan Commission to give options as to what can be done.

Announcements and future agenda items:

Next meeting May 9, 2017 – A site plan for Washington Park and a structure on Harrison Street will be brought to the commission.

Comprehensive Plan Update- Deputy Director Schmidt indicated that the Future Land Use Map is currently being worked on.

Adjournment: The Commission adjourned its meeting at 5:45 P.M. MSC Genett/Kaiser. All Aye.

Respectfully Submitted,



Samantha Jefferson
Office Manager, Community Development