

MINUTES OF THE NEENAH PLAN COMMISSION
Tuesday, November 29, 2022
4:15 p.m.

Present:

Mayor Jane Lang, Chairperson	PRESENT	Gerry Kaiser, Director of Public Works	PRESENT	Sarah Moore-Nokes	EXCUSED
Kate Hancock-Cooke	PRESENT	Karen Genett	PRESENT	Betsy Ellenberger	PRESENT
Gerry Andrews	PRESENT	Ald. Dan Steiner	PRESENT		

Also Present:

Brad Schmidt, Deputy Director of Community Development	Chris Haese, Director of Community Development	City Attorney David Rashid
City of Neenah Chief Aaron Olson	Andy Dumke, Northpointe Development	Jonathan Brinkley, Precedent Architecture
Lisa Mroczkowski, Office Manager, Public Works Department	Members of the public (see attached sign-in sheets)	

Minutes:

Mayor Lang noted that there was one correction to the minutes that needed to be made. She stated that Nevis Martin referenced as “he” and needs to be corrected to “she”.

Kate Hancock-Cooke/Betsy Ellenberger, the Plan Commission to approve the November 8th, 2022 meeting minutes subject to the requested change. Motion passed.

Public Appearances: - Chairperson Mayor Lang opened public appearances and stated that there is a 10 minute time allotted to public appearances. She stated she will be a bit lenient, but asked for those who have spoken at previous meetings to allow others who have not, an opportunity to do so during this time.

Alexander Collins-331 E Wisconsin Avenue, Neenah

He stated that he has been a lifelong renter. He stated that renters have very little vetted interest in the community. He stated if he doesn’t like a place where he is living he finds a new place. He stated that these residents do not have that luxury. They have invested their hard earned money into the land essentially committed to the city. He stated why would the city want to favor uncommitted renters over committed residents. He stated that with a \$25,000 per lot price based off the project calculations of 2.5 million, there would have been others interested in the property.

BJ Houk-512 Elm Street, Neenah

She stated that she has been resident of Neenah at this address for over 40 years. She said this plan has been pushed through to make these changes. She would be asking that no

changes are made until other options have been presented and talked about. She asked if Northpointe could come up with other options than all the apartments. She said it will destroy the neighborhood.

Kristine Giornalista-769 Yorkshire Road, Neenah

She said she is in support of the Northpointe proposal to include affordable rental housing and the redevelopment of Shattuck Middle School. She said the Plan Commission is considering the land use amendment and rezoning not whether this development should be rental or home ownership and also not whether it should be affordable or market rate. She said many objections to this rezoning are not about density or setbacks, but about lower and moderate income renters. She stated there is a need for affordable rental housing in Neenah. She stated that for most of her childhood and adult life she has been a renter. She said that professionally she has spent 18 years in affordable housing and community development. She has seen the positive impact that affordable rental housing options can have on the financial stability and families. She said when we talk about affordability it's often easy to lose sight of who's going to be living in the new rental community. She said consider a single mom with two kids looking for at a 60% AMI apartment. She could earn \$46,000 a year, \$22 per hour. She said based off of recent listings on Indeed.com, this mom could be dental assistant, a CNA at a nursing home, a document processor at a bank or an entry level para-legal for the City of Neenah. She said now let's consider a family of 4 interested in one of the new single family homes at 70% AMI. To quality she said the family could earn up to \$60,000 a year or around \$29 per hour. These are jobs as a HVAC repair specialist or an assistant district attorney for Winnebago County. She stated that in the Neenah-Oshkosh area nearly 40% of renters are rent burdened and 70% of renters are paying more than half of their income in rent. She said this proposed development will have long term restrictions. She said that people who need affordable housing already live in our community.

Edward Palmer-416 Pine Street, Neenah

He stated that he and his wife have lived in the neighborhood for 25 plus years. He said he is in favor of this development. He does not want to see Shattuck school sitting empty for a couple of years while another option is on the table. He thinks it's a great opportunity to improve our neighborhood and keep our wonderful city going.

Bradley Jensen-740 Chestnut Street, Neenah

He said it's a good idea in terms of repurposing the building in terms of making that apartments, maybe for older, elderly people, he feels would be a better idea. He said the thing that he is against is the rental homes. He would not mind rezoning the school itself into this development, but the rest of the property if anything should rezoned to R1.

Kathryn Noll-Arias-732 E Reed Street, Neenah

She said this piece of land was gifted to the City of Neenah and the residents of the City of Neenah in 1928. Please allow this land to continue to be a gift to our Neenah Community by voting to keep R1.

Steven Spanbauer-314 E Wisconsin Avenue, Neenah

He said he became aware of this proposal a couple of weeks ago when a flyer was on his door. He said he came to the last council meeting to better understand this issues that are going on. He has spoken to many of the residents in the area and city. He said what he found was the people in the area, in that neighborhood are probably 90 to 95 percent against the rezoning.

They do not want the council to take away what they have earned. He thinks that is fair. He said that has he talked with more people around the city, they did not know what was going on. Most had not heard that Shattuck was for sale. He said he feels that he has a vetted interest because of his family history in Neenah and family history at Shattuck. He said what is concerning to him is that the constituents of the city feel like they are not being heard. He said he tells them the council is good and they will do the right thing for the city. He said he is opposed to the rezoning at this point, but only because he need to hear more and learn more. He said that if the rezoning is done it will set a dangerous precedent in that the city would be able to haphazardly change the zoning in any neighborhood.

Tiffany Meunier-620 Oak Street, Neenah

She said she is an independent hair stylist. She has worked very hard to get to where she is. She lived in rental property most of her life. Growing up she lived in a nice area on Congress Street where Shattuck was her back yard. She said that she has lived behind Primrose. She said she works near Main Street where there is a lot of rental properties. She sees a lot of things that the police don't see. She said that she is not saying that all rental property owners are bad but for living in two different types of rental areas of Neenah, there is a rise in crime with rental properties. She does not want to see this area which has been single family, to turn into something where she just lived. She feels it is going to become too populated. She said give the residents a choice of what we want it to be. She said there should choices presented to the residents and they should be given the opportunity to vote on what they want. She said a lot of people do not agree with this.

Valarie Gulke-517 Elm Street, Neenah

She stated this is the first home by herself. She does not want to see it turn into a slum because she has lived in Milwaukee. She has looked into rental properties and nobody cares about their rental properties. She said there was a rental house across from her and it was a drug house. She said this is what is going to happen to the neighborhood so please do not change it.

Kela Ellis-620 Hansen Street, Neenah

She said she moved to Neenah three years ago. She said she moved into a beautiful neighborhood and couldn't ask for better neighbors. She said she feels safe in this city and have told people how wonderful Neenah is. She said it worries her because she knows the dynamic of the city will change and the dynamics of this neighborhood will change with the amount of people that will be coming in. She said there are parking issues. She asked where are the renters going to park. She would like the commission to please reconsider because we're against it.

Shannon James-516 Hansen Street, Neenah

She said questions have been asked to this commission and we have been given no answers. The commission has done nothing to help us understand what you're you doing to make us feel more comfortable about this. She said we have not received answers on where people are going to park. She said people are complaining about the renters and density that will come with this project.

She said there are a lot of different reasons why this is an inappropriate choice to rezone. She said renters are not horrible people and there is a need for affordable housing. She said though you don't take a 100 year old neighborhood and bring this in. She said you plan for that type of housing, you plan your community with that type of housing in mind, and you just

don't do this to people. She does not feel that the commission is listening and that this is just a formality and does not understand why this is going through so quickly and needs to slow down. She said that it seems some poor choices were made financially by the school district and maybe that the city as well. It seems that you are just rushing this through because someone's in trouble and they have some money and they have to get it taken care of.

Mr. Spanbauer spoke again and added this is a great opportunity for the City of Neenah Council and residents to work together and do something great just as SF Shattuck did over 100 years ago.

Gerry Sitor-1424 Mansur Drive, Neenah

He said he grew up in Chicago and is familiar with high density housing. He said he could hear his neighbors fighting because they were 10 feet away. He said it was his ambition to move out of Chicago. He said he lived in rental housing and his father was the landlord. He said people are not bad they are just awfully close. He moved to Neenah 30 years ago and thought he had gotten away from the big city. He said every square lot and every open space is filled with another house. He said he would be very disappointed to see that mentality going on here. He said how will this improve the quality of life for the people living here. Does it make it better? He said is the city so desperate for tax revenue that they have to fill every empty space with buildings. He urges to give that some thought because the mistakes made here won't be corrected over a year or two, we will live with them for the rest of our lives. He said he is not familiar with what the planning commission does, but that there must be a master plan for the City of Neenah. He said there must be a plan that addresses what you want the city to look like years down the road. He stated that we must ask what kind of people do you want here and what kind of people do you want to go into school with your children.

Chairperson Mayor Lang closed the public appearance forum.

Chairperson Mayor Lang stated that there have been some adjustments made to the developers plan. She asked that Northpointe Developer Andy Dumke update the Plan Commission on the changes.

Mr. Dumke stated that the one of the concerns of the neighborhood is with the duplex lots. He stated that Northpointe Development is committed to today is taking the green space and opening it up to Laudan Boulevard and donating it to the city for a park. He also stated that they are eliminating the remainder of the duplexes that were part of the original proposal and converting them to single family homes.

Mr. Dumke stated that there is a misunderstanding that all of these homes will be renter occupied. He stated a home owner can rent out their house, but wanted to make it clear that Northpointe intends to develop the lots and market them for single-family homes.

Chairperson Mayor Lang asked Deputy Director of Community Development, Brad Schmidt to give an overview of the proposal.

Deputy Director Schmidt stated that he first wanted to explain what the City's role in this process is. He stated there has been conversation that the city should deal with this property. Deputy Director Schmidt stated that this is not a City owned property.

Deputy Director Schmidt stated that how the city approaches rezoning applications is dictated through the city's zoning code. He stated that when the City receives an application for rezoning an informal public hearing is held. He stated that Wisconsin State Statute also requires a formal public hearing to be scheduled. He stated that with the formal public hearing, a notice is required to be placed in the newspaper on two separate occasions and all neighbors within a 200 foot radius must also be notified by mail.

Deputy Director Schmidt presented a power point presentation that further explained in detail what a Traditional Neighborhood District (TND) is, gave examples of other TND's in the City of Neenah, explained the City's Comprehensive Plan, and showed a scenario of costs associated with development if the property were to be developed as single-family.

Director Haese presented a power point presentation that addressed the property value and traffic impact concerns of the residents and provided examples of other multi-family developments that have not affected the property value of homes in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Commissioner Genett asked if there will be parking for the rental units. Deputy Director Schmidt stated that there will be two parking stalls per unit. Commissioner Genett stated so no need for on-street parking. Deputy Director Schmidt stated that is correct.

Commissioner Hancock-Cooke asked who controls the type of single family homes that will be built. Deputy Director Schmidt stated that with the TND there will be architectural standards that will have to be met.

Alderman Steiner asked what the standard vetting process will be for the rental units.

Mr. Dumke stated that a management company will be in charge of renting the units. He stated there will be a full time, on site manager as well as a full time maintenance person. He stated that only the name on the lease will be allowed to live in the rental unit.

Director Haese stated that if there is an issue with a tenant in a unit, is it the tenant who is living in the unit, their responsibility to deal with that issue. Mr. Dumke stated yes, and if it becomes disruptive to the rest of the residents we could evict them.

Commissioner Hancock-Cooke asked if the management company is made aware of a person living in a unit that is not on the lease, what is done. Mr. Dumke stated that we could evict the tenant.

Commissioner Ellenberger asked if a crime is committed by a tenant, what will be the threshold to have someone evicted. How will the manager of the building find out about it, is it self-reported? She stated that she thinks that is what worries a lot of the residents.

Mr. Dumke stated that whatever the management company is legally allowed to do they do. He stated that when there is a lease renewal, a new background and criminal check is done.

Commissioner Andrews stated that there seems to be a lot of misunderstanding of how this process takes place. He stated that there have been requests for the city to slow down, but this is our normal process. He stated we did not go out and look for this project. He asked the Neenah Joint School District (NJSD) Superintendent, Dr. Pfeiffer how this property was marketed and how the developer came to the city with this project.

Dr. Pfeiffer stated that formally the property was marketed through Pfefferle. She stated that informally, it was part of the referendum. She stated that the NJSD made a commitment to the community that we would be selling the Shattuck property should the referendum pass.

Commissioner Ellenberger asked Dr. Pfeiffer what impact this sale will have on the clinic that is currently in the Shattuck building. Dr. Pfeiffer stated that it will cost \$600,000 to move the wellness center if the property is sold.

Aldersperson Steiner asked Dr. Pfeiffer what will happen to the property if this is not passed and no new developer came forward. Dr. Pfeiffer stated that the school will be vacated at the end of the school year. She stated the building would need to be secured in some way, possibly with a fence all around the property. She stated is a liability for the school district and we have to create a safe environment so people do not get hurt.

Discussion was held on how the project is proposed to be funded and how section 42 and historic credits are used in the funding and how density relates to the cost of the project.

Commissioner Andrews asked Mr. Dumke how he was made aware of the property. Mr. Dumke stated that another broker from Green Bay that he had worked with in the past on another development similar to this one, informed him of the property.

Director Kaiser asked if the number of units in this project were part of the master plan and how will that be adjusted with the proposed elimination two family homes.

Deputy Director Schmidt stated that the number of units in the building and the number of single family lots will be part of the master plan. He stated if that number is reduced it would still be consistent with the master plan. He stated if the number were to increase, it would have to come back through this process.

Commissioner Andrews stated that he lived on Doty Island for 36 years. He stated that he saw the removal of the Jerslid building and old grocery store. He stated that the property still is empty. He stated the residents are asking for this Shattuck site to be all green space and made into a park, but there are better places for a park. Commissioner Andrews stated he has toured some of Northpointe's property and believes this is a good development.

Action Items

- a. **Future Land Use Amendment** - Shattuck Middle School (PC Resolution No. 2022-2 & Ord. No. 2022-20)

Aldersperson Steiner stated that we're all here because we care about the community. People might have different opinions and different perspectives but we all care about Neenah. He appreciates that everyone has come and showed up because from his perspective the more involvement that there is across the board, the better community we have. A lot of consideration evaluation, and assessment was done on what is the most important thing for our city, what is the best avenue and best decision to be made. He stated with the Shattuck building in its current state, this property contains a lot of unique and challenging characteristics and economic realities which make financing the property very difficult. Based on the reality that this property has been available for purchase including up to tonight and has only received one actual pen to paper bid, it leads him to a reasonable conclusion that the approach created by NorthPointe is truly the only economically, viable and best use of this property. He stated that he has great concern that this property will be left abandoned for an extended period of time and of unknown duration. He stated that he has viewed the property in Oshkosh that NorthPointe converted from a schoolhouse into apartments. He stated that he went down there with a skeptical eye and with concerns that have been raised to me. I asked very specific questions of NorthPointe in regards to what has been raised over email, phone calls and in person discussions. He stated that the apartments are beautiful. These are not tenements. He stated they have high ceilings, they have hardwood floors, they're better than the apartments that I was in when I first graduated and worked for a public accounting firm. He stated that he knows that there are concerns about renters living in this area and causing problems. He stated that there are very specific and strict vetting requirements imposed on this property. In addition, nearly everyone I know at some point rented. He stated that one of his first memories are of his mom and him (she was a single parent), living in a one bedroom apartment. He stated that he remembers knowing the names of my neighbors and remembers individuals taking care of me when my mom had to work extra hours. He remembers the feeling of community and he knows that's not indicative of every single apartment complex, but my memory is not of some of the horror stories that I've heard today. It's just my own personal experience. He stated that each of us has a home because something prior change, something was

removed. Something had to make way so that we could live where we are. None of us would have homes if at some point there was some development that changed the previous existence of whatever there was before. The city and many others across the country are in need of affordable housing for working families the same as housing was in need each time our home was built. He stated that he does respect resident's viewpoint and that's why he has taken the time to talk to several of you and read emails. He stated that he thinks that the residents are very sincere in their concerns. He stated that he does respectfully disagree with some of the comments and with some of the conclusions that this will destroy the neighborhood and Neenah as past developments including rentals, have not destroyed the wonderful city we call Neenah, He stated that he will be voting for a recommendation to change the zone to TND.

Commissioner Genett stated that those of us who have lived in single family neighborhoods are not immune to having renters in our neighborhoods. She stated anyone can purchase a home and rent it out. She stated that we are going to get more management of these rentals in this kind of development than if it is just left to be a single family neighborhood. She stated that she also toured the Northpointe, Oshkosh apartments and was very impressed.

Chairperson Mayor Lang stated that two and a half years ago when any Neenah Joint School Districts referendum passed the decision was made to build a new high school. At that time, it also became known that the Shattuck property would no longer be used as a school building, starting in 2023. Since that time, the Shattuck property has been understood to be for sale. Five months ago, a proposal was put before the community in the form of a neighborhood meeting conducted by the Neenah Joint School District. At that meeting, the Neenah Joint School District introduced NorthPointe as a potential buyer for the Shattuck site. This is no small task to consider or envision what the site could become. Having spent her entire childhood in this neighborhood and having attended Shattuck for 9th and 10th grade, and having bought her first house in the adjacent neighborhood, it is frankly difficult to imagine it being anything but the school property we have all known it as. It has in fact been a school property for nearly 100 years. However, it has been clearly understood for at least the past two and a half years that the Shattuck building would no longer be used as a school. There are basically two options with this property, and more specifically, the Shattuck building itself which frankly is the most difficult part of the issue. One is to demolish it, and one is to rehabilitate it. Again, over the course of the past few years, it has been well understood that this historic property would no longer be used as a school. There are only a handful of developers within the state who do the extremely complex work of historic renovation properties. One of those developers NorthPointe, has submitted an offer to the Neenah Joint School District for consideration. The Planning Commission now must make a decision on whether the proposal at hand, rezoning the parcel as a Traditional Neighborhood District and the

ORD NO 2022-20

concept plan presented by NorthPointe is a viable and appropriate plan to recommend to the City Council. As we have learned Traditional Neighborhood District zoning is not new nor is inappropriate for this parcel of land. Rezoning the parcel to TND in fact, gives the city more flexibility and more control over what happens on the site than it does to leave the parcel R1. A TND for instance, requires that open space be set aside within the parcel. One of the concerns of the neighborhood is losing the green space that they're accustomed to. Rezoning to TND would require open space to be set aside and the NorthPointe plan includes that. Some have said they would like the entire property to be developed a single family homes. Unfortunately, that is not economically feasible considering the high cost to remove the Shattuck school building, fairly estimated to be at least \$2 million. That suggestion of only single family homes also eliminates all of the green space of the neighborhood which seems to be a concern for many. Question of rushing to a decision on this project has also been put forward. The property in question has been known to be available for at the very least a couple of years. Our job as members of the Planning Commission is to recommend or deny this proposals based on the determination of whether it fits the appropriateness test. This is the proposal that is before us. There's so much more that she could say, but she will withhold at this point and simply say she supports this proposal. She thinks it is the highest and best use of the Shattuck building and the surrounding property and I will be voting in favor of it at this time.

MSC Andrews/ Steiner, the Plan Commission recommends to Common Council to approve the Future Land Use Amendment-Shattuck Middle School (PC Resolution No. 2022-2 & Ord. No. 2022-20) Roll Call Vote 6/1 (Commissioner Ellenberger). Motion passed.

- b. Rezoning – Shattuck Middle School (600 Elm Street) - Traditional Neighborhood Development District (Ord. No.2022-21)**

ORD NO 2022-21

MSC Kaiser/Andrew, the Plan Commission recommends to Common Council to approve the Rezoning-Shattuck Middle School (600 Elm Street)-Traditional Neighborhood Development District (Ord. No.2022-21) with the modifications presented to the Plan Commission at the meeting of November 29, 2022 of the removal of all the duplexes. Roll Call Vote. 6/1 (Commissioner Ellenberger)

Site Plan #10-22 -223 Edna Avenue-Storage Building

Deputy Director Schmidt stated that the only condition of approval is the removal of cargo shipping containers which are not permittred per code. The applicant is proposing to construct a storage building for the storage of foundry sand.

MSC Genett/Andrews, the Plan Commission recommends Common Council approve the Site Plan #10-22 -223 Edna Avenue-Storage Building. All aye. Motion passed

c. CSM #13-22-515 W North Water Street-Lot Line Adjustment

Report

MSC Ellenberger/Steiner, the Plan Commission recommends Common Council approve the CSM #13-22-515 W North Water Street-Lot Line Adjustment. All aye. Motion passed

Discussion Items:

None

Announcements and future agenda items:

a. Next meeting: December 13, 2022

Adjournment: The Commission adjourned its meeting at 6:00 p.m. MSC Ellenberger/Genett. All Aye. Motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted,



Lisa Mroczkowski
Office Manager, Department of Public Works