

MINUTES OF THE NEENAH PLAN COMMISSION
Tuesday, January 7, 2025
4:00 p.m.

Present:

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

Also Present:

Brad Schmidt, Deputy Director of Community Development	Kayla Kubat, Administrative Assistant of Community Development	Chris Haese, Director of Community Development
Carol Kasimor, Assistant Planner of Community Development	Alderman William Pollnow	Alderman Lee Hillstrom
Alderman Cari Lendrum	Florence Bruno- 1002 E Forest Ave	Frank Cuthbert- 1533 Fallow Dr
Scott Becher- 1061 Green Acres Ln	Mark Wiese- 1149 Westwind Ct	Pat Wiese- 1149 Westwind Ct
Scott Roh- 821 Kensington Rd		

Minutes: MSC Andrews/Genett, the Plan Commission, to approve the December 10, 2024 meeting minutes. All voting aye. Motion passed.

Public Appearances: Chairperson Mayor Lang opened public appearances to topics not related to the agenda.

Scott Becher- 1061 Green Acres Ln- He is interested in the housing study since this is a very important decision for the city.

No one else in attendance spoke. Chairperson Mayor Lang closed public appearances.

Public Hearings: None

Action Items: None

Neenah Housing Study and Needs Assessment

Deputy Director Schmidt introduced the consultant from Stantec, Spencer, and his presentation of their initial findings in the housing study.

The consultant for Stantec went over their initial findings. This portion of the study is going through the analytic side of the study, including the community survey and the stakeholder interviews.

After the conclusion of the presentation, the consultant opened up to questions.

Deputy Director Schmidt brought up the statistic that Neenah is a community that is getting younger and not an aging community. One of the challenges the city is facing is the lack of

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available developable land. With the Homes at Freedom Meadows and Freedom Acres nearing completion, trying to acquire land in the periphery of the city will put a strain on new single-family housing.

Member Andrews asked why the vacant land on Doty Island hasn't been developed. Deputy Director Schmidt stated that much of the land on Doty Island is privately-owned. The City has worked and continues to work with potential developers by connecting them to those property owners. There are also environmental conditions that would need to be addressed.

Member Steiner asked if there are incentives or tax credits the city hasn't utilized. Deputy Director Schmidt stated from an incentive standpoint, the primary City tool available is Tax Incremental Financing, which is primarily available to multi-family housing due to how the state law is written. There is some ability for single-family, but it is limited. The State of Wisconsin and Wisconsin Housing Economic Development Agency have created a loan program to incentivize affordable housing, with an example being Marathon Flats.

Stantec Consultant Spencer added from speaking to developers, the city is aggressive in using every tool. However, the low-income housing tax credits, which is the major federal program to produce affordable rental housing, is a developer led program. Looking at some of initial findings, Neenah has fewer affordable units than other communities, but this could be in part to some of the community resistant to affordable housing in the past.

Member Ellenberger asked if the city or the consultant reached out to the Winnebago County Housing Authority for assistance. Deputy Director Schmidt stated the consultant did have a conversation with Winnebago County.

Stantec Consultant Spencer stated they spoke with people who work with homelessness related issues and lower income housing. The main issue is there are not many programs to add deeply affordable units, such as Section 8.

Member Steiner was wondering regarding the potential updates or things to consider with our municipal code, if we can now take these reports and information and revisit those items. Deputy Director Schmidt stated Spencer and his team are working on this now. They are looking at the zoning code and will be giving suggestions to help increase the supply of housing.

Vice Chairperson Moore-Nokes asked if we have goals after looking at the numbers. Stantec Consultant Spencer stated the main strategy is getting up the supply and reduce the amount of cost burden renters.

Member Ellenberger asked what we are looking at as solutions. Deputy Director Schmidt stated a step is looking at the zoning code and identifying regulations that could be modified to increase housing development.

Member Genett suggested more conversations with state legislatures, specifically regarding short term rentals where a lot of homes are taken off the market to become these rentals. Deputy Director Schmidt stated the state recently did pass a few affordable housing policies but there is more that can be done.

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Announcements and Future Agenda Items: Next meeting is scheduled for January 28, 2025.

Adjournment: The Commission adjourned its meeting at 5:00 p.m. MSC Kaiser/Genett. All voting Aye. Motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kayla Kubat".

Kayla Kubat

Administrative Assistant, Department of Community Development