

MINUTES OF THE NEENAH PLAN COMMISSION
Tuesday, September 24, 2024
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	PRESENT	Karen Genett	ABSENT	Betsy Ellenberger	ABSENT
Gerry Andrews	PRESENT	Alderman Dan Steiner	PRESENT		

Also Present:

Brad Schmidt, Deputy Director of Community Development	Lisa Mroczkowski, Public Works Office Manager	Alderman Lendrum
Alderman Pollnow	Tom Leighton, Stantec	

Minutes: MSC Andrew/Moore-Nokes, the Plan Commission, to approve the July 30, 2024, meeting minutes. All voting aye. Motion passed.

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

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

Public Hearings:

a. Chapter 26 – Zoning Code – Amendment

Deputy Director Schmidt distributed an email from S. Dabill Taylor in regard to the proposed amendment to Chapter 26, Zoning Code pertaining to Tourist Housing.

Chairperson Mayor Lang closed public hearings.

Action Items:

a. Chapter 26 – Zoning Code – Amendment (*Ordinance No. 2024-20*)

Deputy Director Schmidt stated that staff is proposing a modification to the tourist housing ordinance, which was adopted in 2017. The background on this is that we've been receiving requests over the years for tourist housing, primarily in commercial districts, where there are mixed uses, commercial on the first floor and resident/apartment on the second floor. Typically, these have been denied because the property is not the owner's primary residence. This proposal would expand tourist housing, or short-term rentals in the city.

Deputy Schmidt stated that the intent of the ordinance in the first place was to protect neighborhoods, so we said that the tourist housing has to be your primary residence. You can't have third party property managers managing the property. Looking at the commercial side of things, tourist housing is really no different than a hotel, which is allowed in our downtown and other commercial districts. Staff is proposing two modifications, the first is adding "except those tourist housing properties located in commercial buildings" language to Sec. 26-661(3) and

ORDINANCE
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suggests moving the last sentence talking about third party management companies being prohibited to the beginning of the section. Deputy Director Schmidt stated that not just any commercial building can be tourist housing. It still must have a dwelling unit per the definition of a dwelling unit standards. The second change regarding Section 26-661(8) removes the primary residence requirement from commercial property.

Member Andrews said commercial buildings could be apartments. Deputy Director Schmidt stated that apartments would fall under commercial buildings. I look at our downtown business properties, where you have the residents on the second floor, those are commercial properties, and that's where the requests have been coming from, primarily in the downtown where people have an apartment above a business.

Member Moore-Nokes asked what is generating the requests. Deputy Director Schmidt stated that owners are looking at other options for rentals because I think that downtown is a place where people want to be from a tourist standpoint.

Member Moore-Nokes referred to the email that was distributed and how it relates to the effect this change will have on housing shortage in the area. Deputy Director Schmidt stated that it is certainly a concern. I don't know if it's as impactful as that letter is suggesting. He said that we don't have a lot of apartments downtown. I don't think every owner that has an apartment downtown is going to rent it all for short term rentals.

Member Andrews asked how tourist housing is defined. Deputy Director Schmidt stated it is any rental less than 30 days.

Member Moore-Nokes asked if there is a limit to the number of days that a dwelling can be rented. Deputy Director Schmidt stated that it is no more than 180 days per year.

MSC Steiner/Moore-Nokes, the Plan Commission, to recommend Common Council approve Ordinance No. 2024-20, amending Section 26-661(3) and Section 26-661(8) of the Code of Ordinances relating to Tourist Housing. All voting aye. Motion passed.

b. Annexation #235-Breezewod Lane – Town of Neenah (Ordinance No.2024-19)

Deputy Director Schmidt stated that there Gerald & Barbara Porsche have submitted a petition for direct annexation to the City of Neenah for property located along the southside of Breezewood Lane in the Town of Neenah. The annexation is approximately 0.27 acres which is currently vacant land. The petitioners want to annex the land and reconfigure it with land they own along Baytree Lane. The property will be zoned R-1 , Single Family Residence District once annexed.

MSC Moore-Nokes/Steiner, the Plan Commission, to recommend Common Council approve Annexation #235 (Ordinance 2024-19), and the property also receive an R-1, Single-Family Residence District zoning classification. All voting aye. Motion passed.

REPORT

c. CSM #7-24 – Baytree Lane – 3 Lots

Deputy Director Schmidt stated that a certified survey map was submitted which proposed to reconfigure two lots on Baytree Lane and two on Breezewood Lane. There is a narrow strip of land between the three lots (two on Baytree Lane and one on Breezewood Lane) which is located in the Town of Neenah. This strip of land is owned by Gerald and Barbara Porche who reside at 1407 Baytree Lane. The CSM proposed to add a portion of the that strip of land to their property and to the property south of them at 1411 Baytree lane. Deputy Director Schmidt stated that additionally the southern portion of 1480 Breezewood lane is proposed to be added to 1411 Baytree Lane.

MSC Kaiser/Andrews, the Plan Commission, to approve the 3 lot CSM for the property located along Breezewood lane and Baytree Lane conditioned on the approval of Annexation #235.

d. Preliminary Plat #3-24 – 4th Additional to Homes at Freedom Meadows – 47 Lots

Deputy Director Schmidt stated that this is the final phase of the Homes at Freedom Meadows. It is located within the Freedom Acres and Freedom Meadows subdivisions on that north corner. It is a little over 15 acres and will have 47 single family lots. The average lot dimensions are 72 feet wide and just under 12,000 square feet in area, which is consistent with pretty much everything else in the Homes at Freedom Meadows. There are two roads that are proposed, Sovereign Way and Freeman Drive. Deputy Director Schmidt stated that staff is dealing with the DNR, because there are wetlands impacted here. It is possible that Sovereign Way, might curve just a little bit, depending on DNR is action on that wetland permit.

MSC Andrews/Steiner, the Plan Commission recommend Common Council approve the Preliminary Plat for the 4th Addition of the Homes at Freedom Meadows subdivision subject to the conditions on the preliminary plat review letter.

5. Housing Study and Needs Assessment – Consultant Introduction

Deputy Director Schmidt stated that Stantec is the consultant that's working on our housing study. to the Plan Commission will be serving as the steering committee for the housing study as we continue to develop it. There will be future meetings where Tom's and his colleagues will be bringing back information, data analysis, survey questions and other information that the steering committee will need to address and provide feedback on.

Mr. Leighton provided information to the Plan Commission on the staff that will be working on the housing study, project timeline, strategies, and how they offer a unique look at developing individual housing studies for communities.

Announcements and Future Agenda Items: Next meeting is scheduled for October 8, 2024

CONSENT AGENDA

Adjournment: The Commission adjourned its meeting at 4:48 p.m. MSC Steiner/Kaiser. All voting Aye. Motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lisa Mroczkowski".

Lisa Mroczkowski
Public Works Office Manager

Brad R. Schmidt

From: Dabill Taylor <sdabilltaylor3@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 24, 2024 9:54 AM
To: Cari C. Lendrum; Mark A. Ellis; Kathie A. Boyette; Brad R. Schmidt; mlang@neenahwi.gov
Subject: Plan Commission Public Hearing - Tourist Housing

I am writing to express an opinion regarding the change to the Tourist Housing Ordinance (Section 26-661(3) and Section 26-661(8)) to allow Commercial properties (mixed use dwelling units) to be used as Tourist housing in lieu of traditional long-term rental property.

The investor demand for Tourist Housing has excelled in recent years (COVID), and with it - the large profit margin investors/owners make renting units as short-term rentals versus long-term. Typically, a short-term rental can generate more income in a weekend than a traditional rental can generate in a month. Therefore, if the City is concerned about the lack of 'affordable housing' (or just long-term housing) - expanding the scope of Tourist Housing is not the answer. The increased requests by investors/owners for allowing short-term rentals is strictly based on profit - not what is best for the community. This amendment also does not address increased on-street parking needs in the downtown area or maximum persons per unit.

S. Dabill Taylor

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