

## REPORT OF CITY PLAN COMMISSION

Monday, March 1, 2010 – 6:00 P.M.

PRESENT: Chm. Mayor Halverson; Ald. Jerry Moore; Jami Gebert; Tony Patton; Daryl (Bo) DeDeker (Excused, Shari Laskowski and Anna Haines)

ALSO

PRESENT: Comm. Dev. Dir. Mike Morrissey; City Attorney Louis Molepske; City Zoning Adm. Brent Curless; Pub. Works Dir. Joel Lemke; Transit Mgr. Susan Lemke; Ald. Molski, R. Stroik, Trzebiatowski, M. Stroik, and Brooks; Tom Brown; Jo Ellen Seiser; Mary Ann Laszewski; Gene Kemmeter of Po. Co. Gazette

### INDEX:

1. Approval of the February 1, 2010 Plan Commission Minutes
2. Discussion on Proposed Change to Sec. 23.07 of the Zoning Code – Yard Signs
3. Consideration and Possible Action on Amending Sec. 23.04(2) of the Zoning Code to Add the Definition of Municipal Service and Operational Facilities
4. Consideration and Possible Action on Amending Sec. 23.02(1)(a)3. of the Zoning Code to Add Municipal Service and Operational Facilities as a Conditional Use
5. Adjournment

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Chm. Halverson noted he and staff met with Jason Glisczynski. The landscaping plans have been submitted and are up to speed in terms of the berming, species, and layout of the landscaping. We will bring the landscape plan to the commission in April.

1. Approval of the February 1, 2010 Plan Commission Minutes

**Tony Patton moved, seconded by Jami Gebert, to recommend approval of the February 1, 2010 Plan Commission minutes. Ayes all; Nays none; Motion carried.**

2. Discussion on Proposed Change to Sec. 23.07 of the Zoning Code – Yard Signs

Dir. Morrissey reviewed the history of the yard signs and noted signs have not been posted on a regular basis. Failure to post the signs does not invalidate the action. Signs add cost and an unnecessary administrative step. Requests for rezoning seem to ebb and flow and winter comes along and sometimes we forget about the signs. It strikes me that posting signs in peoples' front yards seems like homeowners are involved in some wrongdoing. He feels the ordinance should be changed to not require posting the signs and asks the commission to reconsider requiring the signs.

Jami Gebert noted as a commissioner, she appreciates the signs because they make the properties more visible.

Chm. Halverson noted as an awareness mechanism, they do what they are supposed to. The neighbors know that something is being proposed, but could it be too obtrusive.

Bo DeDeker noted if we are also sending letters to the neighbors, maybe the signs are somewhat redundant.

Ald. Trzebiatowski noted when the yard signs were proposed, sometimes neighbors would come before the Plan Commission and state that they were not notified. The downside is the cost of mailing the letters and staff time involved. The signage was supposed to be a compromise with maybe fewer letters being mailed. He is in favor of keeping the practice alive because it is a public service.

Ald. Randy Stroik noted without all the information on the sign, it is a negative connotation because a neighbor or someone driving by has no idea what is going on. Maybe we should add an information box like realtors with just a one page fact sheet.

Jerry Moore noted we had more people showing up at the meetings that did not have the proper information. We should keep the signs.

Chm. Halverson noted we are not required to notify any adjacent property owners. We do it because it is the right thing to do. It sounds as though there are more positives than negatives so we will continue to use them. As we get into better weather, we will re-introduce the on-site visits.

Ald. Brooks asked Dir. Morrissey how Wausau handled it if people didn't feel they were informed enough.

Dir. Morrissey responded that the planning division in the City of Wausau had a certain distance from the subject property that received notices. Someone here indicated to him that one of the reasons for the signs was to improve transparency of our government, but Stevens Point is the most transparent government that he has ever worked with in 33 years. It doesn't seem to be an issue in other communities and he doesn't think other local governments are as transparent as Stevens Point.

### 3. Consideration and Possible Action on Amending Sec. 23.04(2) of the Zoning Code to Add the Definition of Municipal Service and Operational Facilities

Chm. Halverson noted we have the Zoning Administrator and City Attorney here in case there are any specific questions.

Dir. Morrissey noted at the February meeting, commissioners requested staff prepare a definition of "Municipal Service and Operational Facilities". Staff felt the title was a self-defining term, but we offer the attached definition.

Chairman Halverson read the definition for the folks at home.

**Tony Patton moved, seconded by Bo DeDeker, to recommend approval of adding the definition for Municipal Service and Operational Facilities to Sec. 23.04(2) of the Zoning Code.**

**Ayes all; Nays none; Motion carried.**

4. Consideration and Possible Action on Amending Sec. 23.02(1)(a)3. of the Zoning Code to Add Municipal Service and Operational Facilities as a Conditional Use

Tom Brown, 317 6<sup>TH</sup> Ave., requested permission to distribute photos of the area that shows what he feels is a terrible application of a public facility in a conservancy district.

Chm. Halverson reluctantly allowed the photos to be distributed and noted we prefer things be received in the office and sent out with the packets.

Tom Brown noted with regard to the previous discussion on signs for rezoning/conditional uses, it would have been nice if he, as a neighbor, had seen a sign in front of that facility alerting him to the meeting.

Chm. Halverson responded the sign would have been up when it was noticed and up for a conditional use and not prior. The sign will only be up when the actual request for the transit facility is to come before the commission.

Tom Brown noted he has lived next to the city garage for 33 years and there was a lot of discussion when the addition to the city garage occurred as to the expansion in a city park. He feels it is bad public policy to allow these types of uses in conservancy district and the definition should not be allowed either.

Jo Seiser, 317 6<sup>th</sup> Ave., feels a definition of the conservancy district should be reviewed. The park plan was reviewed and updated in 2002 and they discussed long range plans and also discussed getting those services out of Bukolt Park. She is confident that at some point, we will get these facilities out of there. Whenever we do it, the costs will be great. This is not a consistent use with the valuable property that is our riverfront lands. Development should not be in conservancy districts.

Chm. Halverson noted we are faced with the ability for the city to treat itself as anyone else that would come before the Plan Commission and Council. He indicated on the aerial photo the area outlined in white (which was laid out in 1983) which is officially known as the street department/municipal garage area. We aren't changing the use of anything that goes on within the municipal garage area now. We are trying to create an area directly north of the current street garage that would be the house of the new transit facility for which we have a \$2+ million grant to construct. One reason the city would like to have it in this area is because all of our mechanics and fuel station are in the same area, and in part of leveraging our dollars in the facilities that we already own to use a local match for the grant that we have is the other reason that we want to keep it on the site because we get credit for the land that it sits on being that we already own it. Our local match will be approximately \$400,000 to get over a \$2 million transit

facility and gain a \$1 million street garage addition at the same time. Knowing that we are not changing the use of what has already been accepted as municipal garage area, being very focused on not breaching that white line and keeping those two functions separate, is why we want to look at allowing this to be a conditional use while still being respectful of the area it is in and placing other conditions as the Plan Commission sees fit. We are in the planning process and the site plan will come before you much later.

Bo DeDeker questioned if we did not approve this, would it prohibit building a shelter in Iverson Park.

Chm. Halverson responded accessory buildings are an allowed use in conservancy. A park shelter in a park would probably be an allowed use. A garage for park lawn mowers and pick-up trucks would not be allowed if this did not pass.

Jami Gebert noted she is conflicted on this. She understands that it will be a conditional use and we will still have to approve it, but she is looking ahead and feels uncomfortable that we are opening up a can of worms that we can't close later.

Ald. Randy Stroik questioned if the city could have built the transit building and not brought it before this commission.

Chm. Halverson responded we would have found ways to do it, but we did not feel it would be the right protocol. He felt that the more appropriate way to do it being that it was zoned conservancy and we knew that it is officially a part of Bukolt Park was to do it the correct way to modify the zoning ordinance under conservancy zoning to allow it with strict review as a conditional use and hold us to the same level of scrutiny as we would anyone else.

Ald. Randy Stroik noted he agrees with that and it justifies the fact that the city is looking out more for the residents and the zoning by having it subject to public hearings and public notice without just saying this is what we are going to do. The feelings that Jami and Bo are having really should be addressed at the time of conditional use once you see the plan. He supports this as a conditional use request.

**Tony Patton moved, seconded by Jerry Moore, to recommend approval of amending Sec. 23.02(1)(a)3. of the Zoning Code to Add Municipal Service and Operational Facilities as a Conditional Use. Ayes, Patton, Moore, Halverson, and DeDeker; Nays, Gebert; Motion carried.**

Jerry Moore noted that he seconded the motion because he feels it is appropriate at this time to move it to the Common Council and allow for more debate.

5. Adjournment. Meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.