

City of Stevens Point Meeting Minutes

City Plan Commission

Tuesday, November 10, 2009

PRESENT: Chm. Mayor Halverson; Jami Gebert; Anna Haines; Shari Laskowski; Tony Patton; Daryl (Bo) DeDeker

ALSO PRESENT: Comm. Dev. Dir. John Gardner; Po. Co. Senior Planner Jeff Schuler; Ald. Molski, R. Stroik, M. Stroik; Jim Dyer; Reid Rocheleau; Chris Fish; Mary Ann Laszewski; Mike Morrissey; Gene Kemmeter, Po. Co. Gazette; Jeanne Dodge; Jim Clark; Dave Medin

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 4. Consideration and Possible Action on Courthouse Proposal at Arlington Pl./Elk St. including Letter of Intent between Portage County and the City of Stevens Point
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1. Approval of the Plan Commission Minutes of: October 5 and Special Meeting of October 13, 2009

Jami Gebert moved, seconded by Shari Laskowski, to recommend approval of the October 5, 2009 and October 13 Plan Commission minutes. Ayes all; Nays none; Motion carried.

2. Consideration and Possible Action on a Sign Variance at Pacelli High School - 1301 Maria Drive

John Gardner stated the request is to replace the existing sign with one that is a little taller and larger because of the large trees along the street. A similar variance was granted to SPASH. Staff feels the request may be warranted for the reasons as stated in the staff report. He received a call from the Schmidt's, a neighbor, stating they had no opposition to the request.

Tony Patton moved, seconded by Bo DeDeker, to recommend approval of the request for a sign variance for Pacelli High School at 1301 Maria Drive as proposed. Ayes all; Nays none; Motion carried.

3. Consideration and Possible Action on Conditional Use Requests for the following:

a. Operating a Tavern at

- Rhody's - 2301 Church St.
- Holiday Inn - 1001 Amber Ave.
- Pete's Sports Bar - 200 Division St.

b. Operating an Electronic Amusement Parlor at Tech Lounge - 1036 Main St.

John Gardner stated each conditional use expires December 31. The resolutions with conditions were sent to you under a separate mailing. The Police Department has reviewed the requests and recommends approval. He recommends a termination date of June 30, 2011 to coincide with the renewal of the liquor licenses.

Jami Gebert moved, seconded by Chm. Halverson, to recommend approval of the conditional use requests of Rhody's, Holiday Inn, Pete's Sports Bar, and Tech Lounge with the expiration date of June 30, 2011 and include the conditions stated on the resolutions. Ayes Gebert, Haines, Laskowski, DeDeker, and Chairman; Nays none; Motion carried. (Patton abstained)

4. Consideration and Possible Action on Courthouse Proposal at Arlington Pl./Elk St. Including Letter of Intent between Portage County and the City of Stevens Point John Gardner's Slide Presentation

John Gardner reviewed the power point presentation that was shown at the last meeting highlighting the sale of city-owned land, tunnel across Arlington Place and rezoning to accommodate Law Enforcement construction setback, option to close Arlington Pl., parking analysis, and urban design. The Letter of Intent was drafted by the County and is a non-binding letter of agreement that supports and endorses the location of a new courthouse downtown, indicates the city will consider the closure of Arlington Place if deemed necessary, and will coordinate and ensure the availability of parking for the new courthouse including the city parking lot at Arlington Place and Water Street.

Jeff Schuler noted following any approval of the concept by the Plan Commission and Common Council, the proposal would then go to the Portage County Board for discussion only on November 17, with a vote on December 15 on the referendum question. The question would then go to referendum in April of 2010. Following approval in April, the design process would begin with plenty of opportunities for input. We appreciate your consideration and support of this project.

Chm. Halverson read the Letter of Intent.

Anna Haines indicated she is uncomfortable with the closure of Arlington Place but supports the rest of the document.

Jami Gebert asked if there have been any comments from the Historical Society.

Chm. Halverson responded the local society is very comfortable with the layout of the plan.

Ald. O'Meara stated parking is huge on this and we should request the county set up the plan so that pedestrian and bicycle use is enhanced, including a secure place for bicycle parking, and possibly showers for staff.

Reid Rocheleau noted he would like to see the plan commission be more aggressive and helpful and welcoming to the county to do this project. This is the time to get the best price to build. The school will have a referendum at the same time and this will be a tough sell. We have to help the county.

Chm. Halverson noted this is a time when the Plan Commission needs to be flexible and understand that the county will have financial needs. In terms of accommodating a new courthouse that is going to be vibrant in terms of a lot of other ancillary benefits that the city would receive, we need to be open to the idea of closing Arlington Place. It is important that we be supporting and flexible.

Jami Gebert noted it would be easier to be flexible if we had a plan to look at. If we knew what the building would look like and how it fits in the area, it would be easier.

Shari Laskowski moved, seconded by Chm. Halverson, to move forward with the Letter of Intent.

Jami Gebert asked if any of the staff recommendations could be added to the Letter of Intent.

John Gardner suggested a side letter and not amend the Letter of Intent so that there is an understanding that the design will have to be reviewed by the city with the city having early involvement.

Chm. Halverson noted the county has a unique opportunity because of low construction prices and sound financial planning for several years prior with the accumulation of fund balances that were created particularly for the use of a large capital improvement like this. We will include a separate side letter that deals with these recommendations:

1. A parking study is completed with recommendations to satisfy existing and future parking demand.
2. The final building design is contingent upon approval of the Historic Preservation/Design Review Commission
3. Traffic impacts are addressed
4. Option to close Arlington remains open to consideration
5. Sensitivity to the Synagogue and other adjacent properties addressed in the final design.
6. The City is involved early in the design process to address site layout and building considerations including pedestrian and bicycle access.

Ayes all; Nays none; Motion carried.

Chm. Halverson reminded everyone that this is Dir. John Gardner's last Plan Commission meeting and wished him congratulations.

John Gardner thanked all of the plan commissioners, present and past. The decisions you make really make a difference in the community. You make the rules and apply them to the community. He is proud of all commissioners. Thank you for the work that you have done for the community and thank you for allowing me to work with you.

5. Adjournment.

Meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

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