

Meeting Minutes

City Plan Commission

Monday, February 5, 2007

PRESENT: Chm. Mayor Wescott; Jerry Moore; Ann Shannon; Lois Feldman; Fred Steffen

(Excused, Jeff Zabel and Karen Aldinger)

ALSO PRESENT: Comm. Dev. Dir. John Gardner; Parks & Rec. Dir. Tom Schrader; Ald. Walther, Hanson Wiza, Robinson, Trzebiatowski, Molski, Stroik, & Barber; Paul Rogers; Scott Koran; Scott Winn; Reid Rocheleau; Mary Ann Laszewski; Peggy & Norbert Dalsbo; Dan Coble; Marcy Kirsch; Pat Hubbard; Ron & Sandy Piotrowski; Irene Taves; Clarence & Betty Wiza; Kathy Wright; Bonnie Zawislan; Ron Zimmerman; Liz McDonald; Chris Northwood; Bill Yudchitz; Cathy Dugan; Richard Spreda; Chris Diehm; Norm Myers, Sr.; Gene Kemmeter, Po. Co. Gazette

NOTED: The original agenda was re-arranged due to the number of people present for the Skateboard Park item.

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 5. Conditional Use - Telecommunication Tower - 5370 Hwy. 10 East (Postponed) - Amend setback requirement in "B-5" Highway Commercial Zoning District
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1. Approval of the January 8, 2007 Plan Commission Minutes

Jerry Moore moved, seconded by Ann Shannon, to recommend approval of the January 8, 2007 minutes. Ayes all; Nays none; Motion carried.

2. Sale of 3.8 Acre City Land at Maria Dr./Michigan Ave.

Chm. Wescott stated the University has requested the city sell them the property. The use would be limited to storm water detention in Mosey's Creek before it enters the storm sewer system. The university would like to add this land to Schmeekle Reserve and manage it in a natural state. Staff recommends approval.

Ron Zimmerman, representing the University, stated the property is kind of an un-managed piece of property. We plan to work with the city and put in walking trails and boardwalks. The university will be responsible for mowing and snow removal.

Chm. Wescott moved, seconded by Lois Feldman, to recommend approval of the sale of 3.8 Acres of city land at Maria Dr./Michigan Avenue to UWSP with the condition that any change to the land be reviewed by the City Engineering Department prior to construction. Ayes all; Nays none; Motion carried.

3. Schmeekle Trails Subdivision North of Stanley St. - Modify Donation to UWSP

Chm. Wescott reviewed the staff memo and noted the amount of land will exceed dedication requirements. Staff, and Ron Zimmerman from Schmeekle Reserve, recommend approval.

Bill Yudchitz stated they would like Schmeekle to have control of both sides of the Creek. The intention is to leave enough room and trees along the Creek. The land south of the Creek will be kept as outlots and not buildable land.

Ann Shannon questioned whether the restrictive covenants will be recorded with the deed and the outlots.

Bill Yudchitz responded yes it would.

Chm. Wescott moved, seconded by Fred Steffen, to recommend approval of the modification of the land to be dedicated to UWSP as proposed. Ayes all; Nays none; Motion carried.

4. Request of Roger's Cinema (2725 Church Street) to Reduce Setback Requirements in "B-4" Commercial Zoning along Warner Street

Paul Rogers, representing Roger's Cinema, reviewed the 30-year history of the property and stated their request is to construct an additional 200-seat, state-of-the-art stadium theater 20 feet from the right-of-way of Warner Street. The setback requirement is 25 feet. Stadium theaters require one-third more space than a sloped-floor theater. We can build without the additional 5' with less seating, but he is reluctant to build something that would not have the proper viewing ratios. We would be in compliance with the parking requirements.

Jerry Moore questioned whether a theater is allowed in "B-1" zoning and wondered why this is not a rezoning?

John Gardner responded "B-1" allows a number of uses that generally tend to be of smaller scale and are limited by square footage. This size of complex would not be appropriate for B-1.

Fred Steffen noted we are only concerned with the setback on Warner Street. What happens with the 20' setback, is it green space?

John Gardner responded if this were made a conditional use, you could make restrictions on how that space is used. It would probably be landscaping.

Paul Rogers noted their intention is landscaping.

Mary Ann Laszewski, 1209 Wisconsin St., distributed photos and expressed concern with how this was ever built, and a 50'-60' cement block wall towering over a block of homes on Warner Street. She doesn't think any amount of landscaping will change the impact of this wall. This type of project belongs in a strip mall. Possibly the theater could be located in the north central portion of the property. She further expressed concern with the conditional use standards: #1 - being detrimental to the safety, comfort, and welfare of the neighbors, #2 - diminishing and impairing property values, #4 - architectural appeal and function will not be at variance of structures already constructed or cause a depreciation of property values in the neighborhood, #10-d - blank walls not being acceptable.

Cathy Dugan, 615 Sommers St., stated this is an old fashioned neighborhood that could still be renovated and restored. She also wonders how this could have been built.

Kathy Wright, 2543 Warner St., stated she watched this concrete wall go up and up. She has been trying to sell her home for two years. She originally bought this property because it was affordable at the time and it was close to schools for her children. She is concerned with the proposed theater blocking the sunlight and safety when she backs out of her driveway. There is more traffic on this street than you might think. Landscaping and trees won't cover that wall.

Ron Piotrowski, representing the property at 2530 Warner St., located right next to the theater stated many years ago his father declined an offer from Mr. Rogers to purchase his property. Their property is pretty much useless to us without Rogers buying it. Maybe the new theater should be back-to-back with the existing theater. Mr. Piotrowski would be interested in discussion a sale to Mr. Rogers.

Reid Rocheleau, 408 Cedar St., stated the developer did not talk about the neighborhood impact from this project. A 25' setback is not enough especially with the height ratio.

Clarence Wiza, 2517 Warner St., stated the neighborhood has been stripped of half of its homes in the last 20 years.

Ald. Stroik questioned when was the property zoned commercial. Did the residents in this area buy knowing the property was zoned commercial.

John Gardner responded he is sure the property was zoned commercial at least 20 years ago. The properties on the west side of Warner St. around to Church St. are zoned commercial and the properties on the east side of Warner St. are zoned residential. All properties along Church St. from Patch St. to Rice St. are zoned commercial. Any place you have a strip of commercial and residential abuts the rear of the parcel, you have similar conflicts. This is true on Division St. and Hwy. 10 East as well.

Pat Hubbard, 2849 Water St., part owner 2530 Warner St., stated the wall is not a pretty sight. The new wall would be right along the kitchen windows of 2530 Warner St.

Ald. Robinson commended Mr. Rogers for re-investing in our south side, however they need to look at the proposal with the least impact on neighbors.

Bill Yudchitz stated the 25' is immaterial. Proper fast-growing trees and landscaping can make the neighborhood better.

Paul Rogers stated we don't want to be a bad neighbor. They own theaters in six cities throughout Wisconsin. They would not be able to connect a new theater elsewhere on the site with the existing corridor systems and electrical connections. We have too much money involved in this site to abandon it. A realtor had contacted the current owner and been told the property is not for sale. We would be interested in purchasing the Piotrowski property and he would like to talk with them.

Fred Steffen noted Fleet Farm came in with a cross-section showing the angle of sunlight at December 22 and how it would affect the neighbors. Could we have that done again

John Gardner said we can have the shadow plotted. He noted one difference may be that it was a north property line at Fleet Farm and this is a southwest angle so the answer will be different. Most of the issues raised by the audience were addressed in the staff report. A question raised by the neighbor was how close this new wall would be to the street. The porch on the house next door is about 20' from the sidewalk, so the new wall would be about where the porch is. He noted staff worked with Mr. Rogers on other places to locate the theater. It is much more complicated than it seems and we were not successful.

Ann Shannon questioned whether there are any CDBG housing rehab loans in this area.

John Gardner responded he believes there are some revolving loans in the area.

Chm. Wescott questioned whether Mr. Rogers needs more time in light of the new information provided today.

Paul Rogers responded perhaps they should defer for one month.

Chm. Wescott moved, seconded by Lois Feldman, to postpone this item until the March meeting. Ayes all; Nays none; Motion carried.

5. Conditional Use - Telecommunication Tower - 5370 Hwy. 10 East - Amend setback requirement in "B-5" Highway Commercial Zoning District

This item was postponed because the applicant was unable to attend.

Ann Shannon requested information regarding the "lack of telecommunications infrastructure in Stevens Point" as noted in the memo from the applicant.

6. Consideration of Skateboard Park - Goerke Park

Chm. Wescott stated our role today is to review the information provided and forward a recommendation on to the Common Council. The Common Council will make a final decision.

Ald. Robinson, representing the Skate Board Committee, introduced the members of the committee that are present and stated they are requesting to change this corner of Goerke Park to allow the construction of a skate board park. We have not conducted a formal site assessment nor have any plans been made for the exact layout of the proposed park. They propose fencing for safety and security. He is available to answer questions.

Marcy Kirsch, 2801 Sims Ave., stated she has attended previous meetings on this request and stated the following reasons not to approve this request: 1) shoe-horning the skate board park into areas used for existing track and field activities & outdoor ice skating. 2) aesthetics - the east entrance to the city is attractive and this would eliminate open green space and reduce the attractiveness of the area. 3) safety - danger from shot-put and discus activities. This is an unusual and busy intersection and also a state highway. She suggested two other possible locations that would satisfy the criteria and not be on busy streets: 1) Bukolt Park - the grassy area on the right side of the road as you enter on Bukolt Ave. There are restrooms nearby and it is a visible site. 2) Iverson Park - enter off Hwy. 10, go through the parking lot, follow the curve to the right and

look at the flat open area on the left. There are restrooms available and other family activities.

Rich Spreda, 2709 Prais St., stated he is very much against this request. Goerke Park is a living, breathing complex that is full and the residents enjoy it as it is.

Scott Winn, 907 Minnesota Ave., stated he is a neighbor and is on the Skate Board Committee. If we are able to put a skate board park within the central part of the city, it would be a valuable asset for the youth of this community. There is research that shows that skate boarding is one of the top unstructured recreation opportunities for youth and adults throughout the country. The intersection is complex, however it is organized and safe.

Ald. Stroik questioned whether the hockey rink has to be that big or could it be turned.

Ald. Robinson noted relocating the hockey rink 90 degrees would put the skate board park about 400' away from home plate. The cost of moving the rink would be tremendous with the perimeter lighting.

Tom Schrader, Parks & Rec Dir., noted several years ago, the Park Commission agreed to remove the fence from the former softball complex, install perimeter lighting, and make it one large athletic area. The current two football fields are used heavily. Turning the hockey rink would make the ice skating rink smaller and wreck the football area that we opened up.

Liz McDonald, 1760 Strongs Ave., stated this 92' x 120' location was chosen from 30 others. It is supported by the Police Dept. It would be another use within a sports complex. It would be close to the junior high school and university, both of which have groups that do a lot of skateboarding. Most young people that use skate board parks would not be driving to the park. The skate board park would infringe about 5' into the ice skating rink which is only used maybe two months out of the year when the skate board park would be used 3/4 of the year. This is an under-served group of our population and she urged support from the commission.

Cathy Dugan, 615 Sommers St., felt the proposed skate board park would take away open green space and replace it with concrete. The skate park would not be compatible with surrounding residential land use. Neighborhood concerns are safety, noise, and lights. She suggested the Wisconsin Public Service site which would encourage more people downtown. She would like to see more thought given to the neighbors.

Ald. Barber thinks the skate board park is a great idea, but what would happen if they had to expand. With regard to the 5' encroachment of the ice skating rink, he measured and it would be about 15'. He expressed concern with the safety factor with shot put and discus, and the shoe horn effect trying to fill in a lot of things.

Scott Winn responded if we had to expand, we would need another site.

Sasha Vieth, 2127 Ellis St., stated she went around and talked with neighbors as well as community listening sessions. At least 75% of the neighbors were supportive. It seems the neighbors in the immediate neighborhood and right across the street do not have the concerns that neighbors that live further away seem to be bringing up. Please support this park and our youth.

Ald. Walther stated he talked with a lot of the neighbors and the reaction has been 50-50. They seemed to feel that with the skate board park, Goerke Park would get to the point of being over used. One of his concerns is if the skate board park would be infringing upon some of the current users. He questioned if anything has been worked out with the track coach.

Ald. Robinson responded they have not identified a plan for the relocation of shot put and discus at this point. The design is not what we are discussing today. We are simply asking if the committee will allow us to change the use of the park to construct a skate park with the detailed design to be worked out later. We are looking for support from city staff also in helping to facilitate that process to ensure that all parties are represented and all interested are brought to the table. We are looking at anywhere between 5'-15' infringement on the ice skating rink and the ice rink could be shifted closer to the Parker Building to make up that space.

Fritz Kollman, 741 Franklin St., noted there is another ice skating rink at Pffnner Park with a lovely river view.

Kevin Streveler, Track and Field Coach at the High School, stated he and Mike Olson have gone on record that they would not want the skate park in Goerke Park for safety and liability reasons. We have kids that have thrown the discus 165'-200' and shot at 70' which could hit the skate park. There are problems that need to be worked out. If the city decides to put the skate park there, we would prefer that the discus be moved.

Dan Coble, 2901 Channel Dr., urged the committee to not just accept this and work out the details later. The devil is in the details. People do not seem to object to the park, the question is where.

Jami Gebert, 2941 Kozy St., questioned what is stopping people from getting hit in the head from the shot put and discus now. Why is it not an issue currently, but becomes an issue because of the skate park.

Cathy Dugan, 516 Sommers St., stated there are at least four neighbors that spoke out very clearly against the skate board park at this location and how it would affect them. She expressed displeasure with some of the young people on the skate board committee for what seems like emotional manipulation. The implication is that we don't want a skate board park or to help these people. Everybody wants to find one or two good places in Stevens Point for a skate board park.

Ald. Wiza agreed that there were some people at the Parks Commission meeting that were vocally opposed to the idea. He has talked with some of those neighbors and they have since warmed to up the idea.

Ald. Robinson stated he has watched the shot and discus area and noted several students walking through the area. There is nothing to deter them from walking through there now. We are not including lighting in our program because we don't want the park open after dark. He has heard the saying "if your community does not have a skate park, your community is a skate park". We are just asking if it is okay to change the use so that we can proceed with the needed fund raising.

Chm. Wescott stated we wanted to take sufficient time to allow for public input. The Plan Commission can formulate whatever recommendation you wish. This matter is on the Common Council agenda two weeks from today at 7:00 p.m.

Fred Steffen moved, seconded by Ann Shannon, to affirm the Park Commission recommendation of approving the concept of developing a skate

board park in Goerke Park as presented with site plans to be approved at a later time and forward the recommendation to the Common Council. Ayes all; Nays none; Motion carried.

7. Conditional Use - Apartments - 3616B Doolittle Drive

Chm. Wescott stated the request is to construct one 6-unit building with 3 bedrooms in each unit for a total of 18 occupants. The project is consistent with the adopted Land Use Plan, complies with the density standards, the drainage plan has been approved by the Director of Public Works, and is identical with the existing building already located on the site.

Roland Hawk, Engineer with Point of Beginning representing the owner, stated they provided grading, construction, utility and drainage plans and submitted them to city staff for review and recommendation. He is here to field any questions.

Fred Steffen moved, seconded by Lois Feldman, to approve with the conditions listed.

Debra Oksuita, owner of the property at 3609 Stanley St., stated she is opposed to this request. It is multiple family and she thinks it should be two unrelated people and is concerned about the parking. Her property is a residential home rented out on one acre which is very private. What are the dimensions of the parcel. It appears there will be more buildings.

Roland Hawk responded the request meets the zoning requirements set up by the city. The parking will be situated between the two structures. There is a landscaped area around the structure, we will be handling the stormwater as well as accommodating the green space that is required. The trees will remain between the two sites. We created a stormwater analysis which allows us to accommodate any future use. We show that the proposed structure is slightly smaller than the existing structure.

Mary Ann Laszewski questioned how deep the wooded area will be.

John Gardner responded by the time you get done with construction, it appears there will be very little left of the wooded area on this site.

Roland Hawk responded there will be some tree line left on her property.

Mary Ann Laszewski noted often a narrow strip looks like screening, but it doesn't usually solve the problem of noise or intrusion of some kind. If there is any way to create a better buffering between these two properties, it would be helpful.

Roland Hawk responded he doesn't disagree, however, we need to meet some requirements for codes and parking spaces so we have positioned this structure to meet that and it brings the majority of the traffic away from that site. They will be entering and exiting from the south which is opposite the Stanley Street property.

John Gardner stated the request meets the parking requirements, one for each licensed occupant, and the setback requirements.

MOTION: Fred Steffen moved, seconded by Lois Feldman, to recommend approval of the conditional use request to construct a 6-unit apartment building at 3616B Doolittle Drive based on compliance with the fourteen Conditional Use Standards and to include the following conditions: 1) the project is constructed according to the submitted plans, 2) screening to be added adjacent to parking lots according to city ordinances, 3) occupancy is limited to one family per unit or not more than one person per bedroom for a total of 18 unrelated people in the proposed building, 4) approval is granted to construct the 6-unit building as shown until December 31, 2008 with no further permits issued after that date unless the project receives approval from the Common Council. Ayes all; Nays none; Motion carried.

8. Conditional Use - Apartments - 1701 Riverview Drive

Chm. Wescott reviewed the attached staff memo and noted staff recommends approval with the conditions as outlined in the memorandum.

Roland Hawk stated we have prepared the plans in accordance with city zoning.

John Gardner noted they have included additional landscaping.

Roland Hawk stated the owner has spoken with the neighbor and they will work something out.

Jerry Moore questioned if the street layouts have been looked at by the Fire Chief.

John Gardner responded he will talk with the Fire Chief.

Ann Shannon questioned if there will be brick on the building.

Roland Hawk responded there will be brick on the face of the building.

Ann Shannon moved, seconded by Jerry Moore, to recommend approval with the conditions.

Reid Rocheleau stated he reviewed the background and found that the "owner" is Todd Reilly, F. A. Steffen and H. Eskritt. There may be a conflict on this committee. The parcel has been clear cut in the last two weeks which is pretty presumptive on the owners part. The exit for this property is on HH which is a four-lane road with a median. The conditional uses deal with safe access and egress. Do we need more apartments and do we have to grant this conditional use when we have apartments that are vacant. You have to find that they meet all of the conditional use standards and he sees 7 or 8 standards that this project does not meet because they are plugging too many in here. He recommends this committee not approve this or only approve 3 units with access onto Whiting Ave.

John Gardner noted the county controls access along HH. The engineer representing the owner met with the county to review the site plan and the access issue. The county approved the access. The portion fronting onto Whiting Ave. is so narrow, 120', that an easement is being reserved for utilities.

Fred Steffen stated on July 11, 2006, Mr. Reilly was bought out by myself. I have nothing to do with Mr. Reilly other than he is an agent in my

office. I have nothing to do with this property. Harry Eskritt and Mr. Reilly have dealt with this project. I have nothing to do with this development at all.

Chm. Wescott asked Fred if he stands to gain any monetary.....Fred Steffen interrupted and said "not a thing".

Warren Colby, 3264 Whiting Ave., stated he has lived across from this development. since 1989. At one time, he requested permission to rezone one of his lots to duplex. It was a hard sell. In those days, they wanted a pleasant mixture of multi family and single family to anchor the neighborhood. Since that time, over 40-50 buildings have been put up within a half mile radius that will hold four families. There are too many people in this area that only live here a short time and trash the neighborhood. They are turning this end of town into the projects in Chicago only on a smaller scale.

Mary Ann Laszewski stated this is the third development on one agenda with crowding concerns with efforts to try to fit something in. This plan is one more awkward piece of property that someone is trying to force in as many apartments as possible. If the two lower buildings were eliminated, it would provide normal backyards for the top three buildings with a normal driveway onto Whiting Ave. and eliminate the possibility of storage in the back yard facing Whiting Ave. Conditional Use Standards 1, 2, 4, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13 & 14 address concerns that are involved in this development.

Roland Hawk noted they did get the permit from the county for the access along River View Ave. We discussed access off Whiting Ave. and found it would require a huge cut through the embankment. We would have been discharging excess runoff down onto Whiting Ave. We are proposing balsam firs in the landscaping which are not a delicacy to deer. The units are designed for folks who are looking for low maintenance.

MOTION: Ann Shannon moved, seconded by Jerry Moore, to recommend approval of the conditional use request to construct five 2-family units at 1701 River View Avenue based on compliance with the fourteen Conditional Use Standards and to include the following conditions: 1) the building is constructed according to the attached plan including elevations and screening and screening, 2) the occupancy shall be limited to one family per unit or nor more than two unrelated persons per unit, 3) the conditional use shall entitle the owner to construct the 10 living unit as shown until December 31, 2008 with no further permits issued after that date unless the project receives approval from the Common Council. Ayes all; Nays none; Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

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