

Meeting Minutes

CITY PLAN COMMISSION

(Comprehensive Planning)

Monday, March 24, 2003 PRESENT: Plan Commission Members: Chairman Mayor Wescott; Elbert Rackow; Lois Feldman; Fred Steffen; Karen Aldinger; Jeff Zabel; (Bud Flood, excused)

Other Committee Members: Ald. Sevenich, Barr, Walther, Seiser, Sowieja, Molski, & Phillips; Liz McDonald; Carl Rasmussen; Bob Freckman; Bill Meyer

ALSO PRESENT: Comm. Dev. Dir. John Gardner; City Clerk Victoria Zdroik; Jeff Schuler, Po. Co. Planning; Sarah Wimmer, Po. Co. Planning; John Ford; Bill Bayba; Dan Bowers, Po. Co. Planning; Ken Shibilski; Cathy Dugan; Anton Anday; Kate Garsombke, Stevens Point Journal

1. Comprehensive Planning

Chairman Mayor Wescott welcomed the new committee members and introduced those in attendance. He noted John Gardner and staff have spent a considerable amount of time on a very impressive collection of data and information that is being presented today.

John Gardner noted the attachment (Draft #2) from Jeff Schuler and County Planning staff includes the issues and concerns (in italics) from the previous plan. The sheets on the wall include information from the housing work group, issues and concerns of the alderpersons, and just to show we are not unique in our problems, issues that relate to housing from the City of LaCrosse. Everything included to date in the binders provided has been prepared by the County Planning Office and he expressed appreciation for the work they have done.

He provided a slide presentation on housing issues and included handouts of the slides for those present to follow along. He reviewed the nine elements and conditions that must be included in the plan. The law states that after the plan is completed in 2010, every act that we do has to be consistent with that plan. One of the things we want to accomplish today is to begin the process of providing new information, but also solicit input from the committee members on issues relating to the nine chapters of the plan. He presented slides which compared the city and surrounding townships with regard to: 1) population changes and projections, 2) single family building permits issued, 3) owner-renter status of housing units, and 4) comparisons by census tracts for various sections of the city with regard to race, household types, and school enrollment. He pointed out that the city's growth rate has been uneven; not much growth from 1970 to 1990 and then reasonably fast growth from 1990 - 2000. **He wants the committee to review the population projections. Should the city project the slower rate from 70 - 90 or the faster rate from - 00? Those projections will be used to project future city growth needs.**

Ald. Sowieja questioned whether Item #9 of the grant condition goals is based on making certain zoning ordinance that only apply to certain housing?

Jeff Schuler responded they explained in their 10-page application how they will approach all of the different goals, and there isn't one specific answer that relates to specific zoning districts. We didn't want to be involved in a situation that mandated certain types of things in every community. Our approach was to talk in general terms about how housing needs to be affordable for all people to live in the community.

Bill Meyer questioned what assumptions are driving these population projections?

Jeff Schuler responded that every 10 years the State Dept. Of Admin. does population projections for every county and municipality in the state. The county, previous to him, looked at the growth rates of each municipality and created formulas that averaged them and used those averages to project future growth.

Ald. Sowieja noted the assumption he is getting, is that when you ask what we want, you are asking government to mandate what is going to happen to the population and not leaving it up to the marketplace.

John Gardner responded these population projections will determine how much land is included in the sewer service area. If we don't include adequate growth potential, the marketplace cannot build. Government can't make housing happen, but we can prevent it from happening. When we say we want to grow in a certain direction, we are actually talking to that township because they are involved in this planning process too. One of the questions is if the city increases our population projection, do we increase the whole county population or does our increase come out of someone else's decrease. We need to balance that out.

Lois Feldman noted with regard to the chart on land availability, do the figures indicate that the Village of Plover has 2 ½ more times more land available than we have?

John Gardner responded that they may. Those numbers would be used to translate into acres for housing and that would result in 2 ½ - 3 ½ times the number of acres that we have.

Dan Bowers, Po. Co. Planning, responded maybe you don't want to say that number would be 3 ½ times the amount of acres. It will depend on lot size. The Village would have larger lots.

John Gardner noted the Portage County Extension Office is doing a Cost of Community Services analysis to see what it costs to serve a single family vs. multiple, etc. We want to look at benefits and costs before we commit to a population growth projection. We haven't spent a lot of time talking about tax rates and dollar values, and he wants to include them in this plan.

Ald. Phillips noted the city can get bigger, but the county cannot. What about publicly-owned property such as property owned by the school district on HH.

Ald. Sevenich noted most of the comments she hears from people moving out of the inner city area deal with homes not being maintained, noise issues, parking in back yards, and dense population. She wants to see these issues addressed.

Carl Rasmussen, UWSP, noted if student housing is distant from the university, over one mile, there is more pressure on the university to provide off-street parking.

Hans Walther noted the people in his district express concern with people that do not live in the area parking on the street for 10-12 hours.

Cathy Dugan noted one solution used in other communities has been to allow parking on the street, over-night as well. It slows down the traffic.

Liz McDonald felt the city has limited opportunity for growth by expansion. We need to look at different uses for space within the city. We have

retail space and industrial space that is not being used and maybe that could be made available for apartment development.

Ald. Molski noted when the area in the 8th district was cleared to allow for the new apartments, it created more concerns with the deer population.

Jo Seiser noted maybe we need to look at more schools in the city. That is one thing that could make it more desirable to live in town.

Ald. Sowieja felt elementary schools within walking distance are a neighborhood benefit.

Elbert Rackow noted another concern is the lack of curb & gutter and sidewalks in the area on 4th Ave. east of Michigan Ave. where the apartments are. It's hard to tell where people are parking - in the street or on the property.

Staff will compile the concerns expressed this afternoon.

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

CONCERNS/ISSUES EXPRESSED:

THE CITY OF LA CROSSE:

1. Property Maintenance
2. Reinvestment
3. Land Use and Zoning
4. Amenities
5. Crime

ALDERPERSONS CONCERNS:

1. Broken/Cracked sidewalks should be checked more often.
2. Maintenance of rental housing
3. Building maintenance in Historical District
4. Enforcement of housing ordinances
5. Preservation of green space in the older areas of the city
6. Deer management problems
7. Storm sewer concerns

HOUSING WORK GROUP ISSUES:

1. Contradiction between large lot developments and affordable housing in urban and rural areas
2. Affordable housing is an issue in urban and rural areas
3. Need for an adequate supply of affordable lots within the city
4. Need for a more positive vision for rental properties
5. Existing housing is hard to make accessible
6. Existing minimum lot size is large
7. Preserve older homes through the use of incentives
8. Environmental hazards - lead paint
9. Not enough money in rehab programs
10. Absentee landowners
11. Lack of incentives for redevelopment of blighted properties
12. Conflict between minimum standards and affordability

CONCERNS EXPRESSED AT THE MARCH 24, 2003 PLAN COMMISSION MEETING:

1. School property for sale/develop.
2. Build up, NOT OUT
3. Yard Maintenance
4. Housing density
5. On-street Parking (Problem or solution) Overnight Parking
6. Park Space (Enough?)
7. Walk distance to schools (More schools)
8. Curbs by apartments - sidewalk systems
9. Renew and Reinvest
10. Housing ? Efforts

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