

PLAN COMMISSION Minutes

August 16, 2023 Regular Meeting



The meeting was called to order by Chair Paine at 4:00 pm on August 16, 2023 in Government Center Room 270.

1 ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Jim Paine, Brent Fennessey, Lindsey Graskey, Garner Moffat, Laura Gapske,
VIRTUAL:

ABSENT:

CITY STAFF PRESENT: Director Serck, Tech Becken

OTHERS PRESENT: Shelly Nelson, Angela Watt, Ben Anderson, Laura Cuhel, John Ramos, Aftin Hughes (online), Jeramie and Melissa Olson (online)

2 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2.1 Plan Commission Minutes from July 19, 2023

MOTION to approve July 19, 2023 Plan Commission minutes by Commissioner Fennessey, seconded by Commissioner Gapske, carried.

3 OLD BUSINESS

3.1 Amendment II to Eddie's Small Business Grant

Director Serck explained the contents of the development agreement amendment reflecting the July 19, 2023 Plan Commission discussion.

MOTION to approve Development Agreement Amendment II to Eddie's Small Business Grant by Commissioner Moffat, seconded by Commissioner Fennessey, carried.

4 NEW BUSINESS

4.1 Public Hearing for Special Use Permit SUP 23-01 Jeramie and Melissa Olson

Director Serck explained the permit is the first of the new special use permit passed earlier in 2023 by Plan Commission. Serck noted the application was complete, met the requirements, and that the Olsons had already begun with initial work on the planning part of the project, working through the wetlands permitting process. Chair Paine opened the Public Hearing for Public Comment.

Laura Cuhel, owner of property nearby, asked about septic and water use. Director Serck explained the lot is far enough from existing structures to allow the Olsons to use a well and septic. Cuhel asked about the installation of more fire hydrants. Director Serck explained that was out of the City's purview, but that he would put her in contact with Superior Water Light and Power.

Commissioner Gapske asked about that process and cost. Director Serck explained it would be done by Superior Water Light and Power at most likely a substantial cost.

Citizen Angela Watt asked about future sale of the property. Director Serck explained the permit goes along with the property and that the house must be built to the specs of the application. If the property

were to be sold mid-project, the new owner would also be bound to following the initial application or they would have to attain their own plan approval.

Neither citizen shared opposition, citing the need for more housing in the city and to have continuity in process. Cuhel also added a desire in the future to have their community area more connected to City utilities.

Commissioner Gapske asked about the process by which the citizens learned of the Planning Meeting and public hearing. Director Serck explained the public hearing requirement of the Special Use Permit and noted that notice would be appropriate only when a special use is proposed, and not zoned use is proposed. Commissioner Gapske thanked the citizens for their input.

Commissioner Fennessey asked about the cost of hooking into City utilities. Director Serck explained the distance between the proposed home and the existing infrastructure would increase the cost significantly. Commissioner Fennessey asked about the possibility of rezoning and if it made sense. Director Serck explained it would be significant to consider a rezoning prospect and increasing housing density would present challenges on infrastructure, wetlands, and the local manufacturing.

Angela Watt asked if there were future projects planned. Director Serck shared he wasn't aware of any, but interest had been increased lately as Douglas County has listed several in the area for sale.

Commissioner Moffat added the City is committed to a zoning code update, and at that time it would be good to look more closely at the situation.

MOTION to close the Public Hearing by Commissioner Fennessey, seconded by Commissioner Graskey, carried.

MOTION to approve the Special Use Permit by Commissioner Gapske, seconded by Commissioner Finstad. Discussion.

Commissioner Moffat shared concern about sprawl and adding housing where utilities don't exist—doesn't seem like infill housing as it is not inherently filling in where housing had been used. Commissioner Gapske noted the area looked rather sparse and not forest. Chair Paine added that housing is a priority and he'd be open to individuals choosing to live in manufacturing as long as they know what they're getting into with the neighbors.

Commissioner Finstad noted the area is platted and designed for residential. Commissioner Moffat added that it had changed over time and the plat reflects a different time and that there should either be more density or less density to be more efficient. Commissioner Fennessey said that while manufacturing and industrial, there is residential in surrounding areas. Commissioner Finstad said he thought this area didn't seem like bad sprawl, but questioned if the use was the highest and best in respect to the land use in the community. Chair Paine noted three options for land use: do nothing, manufacturing if reasonable expectation it could be developed, housing as proposed, or unclear. Chair Paine asked if there was a hurry or if they could take more time. ***Director Serck reminded the group that State Statute dictates that if an application for a numbered Special Use Permit meets all the noted requirements it must be passed if there is not some other noted contradiction—see Wisconsin State Statute 2017 Wisconsin Act 67 Section 16.***

Commissioner Fennessey asked about protecting manufacturing use. Director Serck shared there is little likelihood of manufacturing going to the area due to the water and sewer limitations. Commissioner Moffat asked if the Comprehensive Plan could be invoked in order to refute the State Statute requiring approval of special use permits, as he saw in his experience in Minnesota. Chair Paine offered holding the application or recommend to council to approve to allow for the Council to dig in and decide. Commissioner Gapske asked if a straw poll would be appropriate. Chair Paine said those tended to be out of order and the motion on the floor was to approve. Commissioner Fennessey clarified that this special use wasn't rezoning but allowing housing within the existing zone. Director Serck noted housing is a large component of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Chair Paine said if the commission were to deny, then they needed a very clear reason. Commissioner Gapske stated she felt the application met the requirements, noted it was not in wetland, it met the comprehensive plan's call for housing, and noted the area's short building season and added her support. Commissioner Fennessey added he thought the application was also viable and housing would add to the neighborhood. Chair Paine said he would be digging into information in the next weeks but would be comfortable sending it to council. Commissioner Moffat shared his uncertainty. Chair Paine requested the applicants speak if they had anything to add. Jeramie Olson shared he appreciated the conversation and shared that the plan in front of the commission was the plan and would be what they planned to follow.

Chair Paine called the question of the motion on the table. MOTION to approve the Special Use Permit by Commissioner Gapske, seconded by Commissioner Finstad. Carried.

4.2 Review and approval of Vacant to Value: New Construction application for 2920 N 21st St. V2VNC23-01

Director Serck introduced Aftin Hughes, applicant online and explained the vacant to value program as one that provides lots at no cost for in-fill housing. He described the lot as small but buildable that would allow the house to complement the neighborhood and allow for a garage in the future. Aftin Hughes thanked the commission and offered to answer any questions. Commissioner Gapske shared the missing of the local store that used to inhabit the lot.

MOTION to approve Vacant to Value: New Construction application by Commissioner Fennessey, seconded by Commissioner Graskey. Discussion:

Commissioner Fennessey asked for the distinction in manufactured homes. Director Serck said it was an allowed use—noting that single wide manufactured homes needed to be in mobile home parks.

MOTION to approve Vacant to Value: New Construction application by Commissioner Fennessey, seconded by Commissioner Graskey. Carried.

5 ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 4:53

Respectfully submitted by Stephanie Becken.