

March 3, 2009

The Scandia Planning Commission held their regular monthly meeting on the above date. The following were in attendance: Chairman Chris Ness, Commissioners Tom Krinke, Christine Maefsky, Susan Rodsjo, Peter Schwarz and City Planner Sherri Buss. Chairman Ness called the meeting to order at 7:31p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA, MINUTES

Schwarz, seconded by Krinke, moved to approve the agenda as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Rodsjo stated a correction to the February 3, 2009 meeting minutes. **Rodsjo, seconded by Krinke, moved to approve the February 3, 2009 minutes as corrected. The motion passed unanimously.**

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET (EAW), TILLER CORPORATION'S ZAVORAL MINING AND RECLAMATION PROJECT

City Planner Sherri Buss presented an overview of the process for Tiller Corporation's application to operate a gravel mine and processing operation on a dormant site located east of the Highway 95/97 intersection. The City received 49 comments at the end of the 30-day comment period on the EAW, which ended February 11. After reviewing the comments, the proposer, city staff and consultants concluded that the City does not have sufficient information to address a number of issues identified in the comments, including noise, rare and endangered species, groundwater, surface water, future reclamation and visual impacts. Planner Buss identified two options for proceeding given the need for additional information: either make a positive declaration for an Environmental Impact Study (EIS); or postpone a decision on the need for an EIS and allow Tiller to perform the additional studies before making a decision sometime later this year.

Commissioners discussed the details of evaluating and proceeding with the information as presented so far. By choosing Option A, to make a positive declaration of the need for an EIS, the City determines the scope of the EIS. A public scoping meeting would be held to determine which appropriate studies should be addressed to obtain the lacking information. Planner Buss explained that this process puts the City in charge of addressing the studies and allows for the City to choose the consultants to conduct the studies. Tiller Corporation would be asked to pay a scoping fee upfront to cover the anticipated costs of this process. The EIS process is likely to last one year or longer. The City's decision to order an EIS can be appealed by the applicant in the county district court within 30 days.

Option B, to postpone a decision on the need for an EIS, would allow Tiller additional time to provide the lacking information. Tiller has agreed to a date of November 30, 2009 as the deadline to determine the need for an EIS. Planner Buss explained that if at that time, the City still finds that the information is not adequate to make a reasoned decision about the potential for possible environmental impacts, additional analyses may be requested or an EIS ordered.

Kirsten Pauley, Sunde Engineering representing Tiller Corporation, explained that Tiller is at an early step in the EAW process. Ms. Pauley identified the lacking information as “data gaps” that will be filled in as a part of the continuation of the EAW. This was expected once the responses to the initial EAW were received. In-depth studies on the issues raised during the comment period will be conducted during the growing season. This allows time for the reports to be analyzed and reported on by November 2009. Ms. Pauley stated that a more efficient EIS study may be chosen, if necessary, once all the additional analyses are presented.

Schwarz made a motion to recommend to the City Council to pursue Option B, delaying a decision to proceed with an EIS (draft Resolution 03-03-09-02). This motion received a second from Chairman Ness for the purpose of discussion.

Commissioner Schwarz felt that there was not enough information in Tiller’s EAW to make an informed decision. Chairman Ness stated his disagreement with this recommendation, as the location of the gravel pit lies within a very sensitive part of the City. It appears likely that an EIS will be ordered at some point and the City can have more control over the evaluations by beginning this process now. Commissioners Krinke, Maefsky and Rodsjo all validated the reasons to call for an EIS due to the control that the City has in guiding the impact studies.

Voting in favor of the above motion: Schwarz. Voting opposed: Rodsjo, Maefsky, Krinke, and Ness. Motion failed.

Krinke, seconded by Maefsky, moved to recommend to the City Council to approve draft Resolution 03-03-09-02 Option A, Declaring a Positive Need for an Environmental Impact Statement for the Zavoral Mining and Reclamation Project. Mayor Seefeldt stated that the draft Resolution should be amended to include the issue of asphalt and concrete recycling as a received written comment addressing potential environmental impacts (Section 8). The amended motion passed unanimously.

STATUS OF NEW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

Administrator Hurlburt reported that the Metropolitan Council recently approved Scandia’s 2030 Comprehensive Plan Update with no modifications. The City Council will formally adopt the plan by resolution at their March 17 meeting. The City will then begin the implementation tasks as outlined in the plan’s timeline.

The Design Standards Committee, chaired by Commissioner Rodsjo, plans to begin meeting this month.

Maefsky, seconded by Rodsjo, moved to adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Eklund
Deputy Clerk