

**September 18, 2008**

**Special Joint Meeting—Scandia Planning Commission and City Council**

The Scandia Planning Commission and the Scandia City Council met in a joint special meeting on the above date. The following were in attendance: Planning Commission Chairman Chris Ness and Commissioners Tom Krinke, Christine Maefsky, Susan Rodsjo and Peter Schwarz; Mayor Dennis Seefeldt and Council Members Michael Harnetty, Donnette Yehle, Peter Crum and Dolores Peterson. Staff present: Administrator Anne Hurlburt.

Chairman Ness called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Planning Commissioners, City Council members, staff, Planning Consultant Jean Coleman and members of the Comprehensive Plan Committee in attendance (James Malmquist, Michele McNulty, Mike White and Karen Schik were introduced. He stated the purpose of the meeting, which is to hold a public hearing on the proposed 2008-2030 Comprehensive Plan for the City of Scandia. The hearing will be continued to the October 7, 2008 regular Planning Commission meeting.

Jean Coleman of C.R. Planning presented an overview of the proposed comprehensive plan.

Chairman Ness called for questions from the Planning Commission and City Council.

Councilmember Crum asked how much of the proposed “VN” (Village Neighborhood) is currently undeveloped. Coleman answered that the map on page 118 and the chart on page 121 show that a maximum of 170 new dwellings could be built, including potential resubdivision of parcels larger than the minimum size.

Councilmember Peterson asked if the former Trails End site at Highways 95 and 97 could be developed for commercial use. Coleman answered that it is not shown as commercial by the future land use areas map.

Councilmember Crum asked if an open space parcels in existing developments were assumed to be potentially developed by the build-out analysis. Coleman answered that they were not counted as buildable land.

Councilmember Peterson asked why 2/40 density was proposed for the Agricultural Core area? Coleman responded that a lower density was needed so that overall density in the city would meet the Metropolitan Council policy of 1/10 acres maximum density. It also supports the goal to protect agricultural areas, a goal more strongly articulated in this plan compared to the last plan. Not all areas could be designated 1/10, as some will be developed at greater densities where clustering is encouraged. Ag Core areas could be developed at 4/40 using density bonuses for protecting agricultural land.

Comprehensive Plan Committee member Schik stated that the density also helps protect rural character.

Councilmember Peterson stated that she believes that Scandia’s rural character has already been lost.

Comprehensive Plan Committee member Malmquist asked about the nature of the Metro Council's involvement and how much clout they have. Coleman explained that the Met Council provides guidance and will review city plans to make sure they conform. They will look at the city's calculations to see that the 1/10 maximum density is maintained. They have the authority to hold up plan approval and to ask for changes, or take more forceful action if necessary to gain compliance.

Councilmember Crum asked Coleman to clarify whether 1/10 is a minimum or a maximum. Coleman said it was an average, maximum density for the entire city at build-out.

Commissioner Schwarz commented that the Met Council decided years ago that Scandia will not be connected to the Metropolitan Sewer System, which has desirable consequences for the city's rural character. Big box stores and similar development cannot occur in this area. They do have jurisdiction to decide those things.

Chairman Ness opened the hearing to the public.

Charlie Ellis, 19860 Olinda Trail, asked if the previous comprehensive plan met the 1/10 density standard. When will the zoning map catch up to the Comprehensive Plan map? Hurlburt responded that the city will have 9 months after formal adoption to bring zoning regulations into conformance with the plan.

Ellis stated his objection to reducing density in the Ag Core areas to increase density in the Village Neighborhood area. This will cause hardship to people who have farmed their whole lives and force them to farm if they cannot sell their land.

Jeff Fusco, Stillwater, said he owns the former Trails End site at Highways 95 and 97. He purchased the site because it was zoned commercial, operated a successful business there, and is still paying taxes. He said it was a positive benefit to the community asked why the land use map would be changed from commercial to General Rural.

Commissioner Rodsjo commented that this corner is a critical entrance to Scandia, and there was a concern that it could become something that would not reflect the city's rural character. The owner could ask that the plan be changed for a specific project that would reflect rural character.

Fusco asked if the city could just say no to any project, such as a gas station. Mayor Seefeldt responded that the city would have to allow uses such as a gas station if they are allowed in the other rural commercial nodes.

Fusco said that the plan change would take quite a bit away from him and the property would be worthless. He said he currently has no plans to develop the property.

Councilmember Harnetty asked when the Trails End restaurant had burned down. Fusco responded that it was five years ago.

Karla Krick, 12620 181<sup>st</sup> St. N. asked who was changing the zoning, is it the Met Council? Ness responded that if there is a zoning change it would be made by the City. Krick asked who drew the map. Krinke responded that the Comprehensive Plan Committee worked with the consultant to prepare the map.

Krick said the City should consider the age of the population, and that the school is the biggest draw to the community. She asked how many people with school-age children could live here if the city requires 10-acre lots. Ness said that the city allows smaller (2.5 acre) lots in cluster developments. She asked what is allowed in the general rural area. Krinke read the description from the plan.

Dan Booren, 11522 Mayberry Trail, said that he likes the higher density in the Village Center. He said the Trails End map change seems like a “taking”.

Booren said that traditional agriculture will not continue to exist due to the economic environment. No farms have been sold for traditional agriculture in the last 20 years. Before the previous comprehensive plan was written, his land was planned for 8 units per 40 acres. When the plan was changed to 4/40, he lost half of his development rights. He would lose half again with the proposed 2/40 plan. He said this is unacceptable.

Linda Capra, Forest Lake, said she used to live in Scandia and questioned how long the Planning Commissioners have been a part of Scandia. She said most people do not know what Scandia was and why people came here. Planning Commission members responded by explaining how long they have been connected with Scandia.

Councilmember Harnetty said that the Committee worked hard to define rural character, and recognize that we can't turn back the clock. The common idea was open space. Density needs to be controlled to keep open space.

Boreen said that people who did not subdivide, or had a stewardship philosophy, would be punished financially to provide the desired viewscapes. He asked if the high priority natural resources areas were defined by the resources or the desire to protect views.

Coleman explained that the Committee did not explicitly consider views as a criterion for the natural resources overlay. Some natural resources will compete with each other for priority for protection. The plan identifies the resources so the city can make well-informed choices.

Commission Rodsjo said that the map will be used as a tool when people develop their land. Coleman said the plan will raise a “red flag” to think about sensitive resources.

Committee member Malmquist said that the public was very involved in the plan. Housing for lifecycle needs was considered, and that housing is needed so that young couples are able to live here.

Capra said that she is happy that the commission members are connected to Scandia.

Fusco asked what the process is next. Can the plan be changed?

Coleman explained that the hearing will be continued on October 7. The consultants will summarize all the issues for that meeting. The Planning Commission can include specific changes in their recommendation to the Council, who has the final say on the plan. Mayor Seefeldt stated that there may likely be a work session with the Planning Commission and Council to finalize the plan in mid-October, before it is approved.

Ellis asked if the old plan met the Metropolitan Council's density goals, why the massive change in the core agricultural density, which will hit the big landowners hard?

Seefeldt said that as an agriculturalist for the last 40 years, he agrees that agriculture has changed but there is still a future for alternative or specialty agriculture.

Coleman said that the Metropolitan Council is reviewing plans differently than they did 10 years ago, and that density calculations must assume full build-out at the maximum density including all possible bonuses. They used to consider a range, and market realities; now they just consider the maximum even though it may not be logical.

Seefeldt said that the current plan did not meet the Met Council's density in many areas, and some areas were retained in 5-acre densities.

Committee member McNulty pointed out that 4/40 is still allowed in the Ag Core area if policies to further the long-term vision of the plan are met. Ness pointed out that the conservation design criteria became much stricter since the last plan, and it is much harder to get 100% of the density bonus. Seefeldt pointed out the density bonus is not an entitlement since the city adopted more detailed criteria. However, no new developments have been reviewed under the new criteria.

Krick asked what is the Met Council. Hurlburt explained that the Metropolitan Council is a regional government with members appointed by the governor, and explained their role in local comprehensive plans.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Hurlburt  
Administrator/ Clerk