

February 13, 2018

The Scandia Planning Commission held their regular monthly meeting on the above date. The following were in attendance: Commissioners Greg Amundson, Jan Hogle, Travis Loeffler, Tom Noyes and Chair Dan Squyres. Staff present: City Administrator Neil Soltis, City Planner Sherri Buss, City Engineer Ryan Goodman and Deputy Clerk Brenda Eklund.

Chair Squyres called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ANNUAL APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

Hogle, seconded by Loeffler, moved to nominate Dan Squyres as Chair of the Planning Commission for a one-year term. There were no further nominations. The motion carried 5-0.

Loffler, seconded by Amundson, moved to nominate Jan Hogle as Vice-Chair of the Planning Commission for a one-year term. There were no further nominations. The motion carried 5-0.

The recommendations will be presented to the City Council at their February 20, 2018 meeting.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA, MINUTES

Chair Squyres added a discussion of a letter from Pam Arnold as Agenda Item 6.c). Loeffler, seconded by Noyes, moved to approve the agenda as amended. The motion carried 5-0.

Commissioner Hogle noted a correction to a typographical error in last month's minutes. Noyes, seconded by Loeffler, moved to approve the January 2, 2018 meeting minutes as corrected. The motion carried 5-0.

PUBLIC HEARING: VARIANCES FOR A GARAGE AT 19235 LARKSPUR AVENUE NORTH. SHANNON MULVEHILL, APPLICANT

Shannon Mulvehill has applied for a variance for construction of a 16'x20' garage at 19235 Larkspur Avenue. Planner Buss presented her staff report that described the request for variances from the required setbacks from the side lot lines, road right-of-way, and the bluff impact zone. The property is 0.27 acres in size and located within the Shoreland Overlay District of Big Marine Lake. The property includes steep slopes that occupy the eastern half of the property and an existing retaining wall and large trees. The applicant is proposing to build the garage 2' from the southern property boundary and 36' from the right-of-way to avoid slopes on the property; however, this places the building adjacent to the bluff line and within the 20' bluffline setback. The existing home is located 31.4' from the front property line and inside the 40' front setback. Buss stated that in 2015, the adjacent property was granted a variance to build a garage 15' from the ROW and 4' from the side property line.

Buss recommended placing the garage closer to the roadway to maintain at least a 20' setback from the bluffline and to be out of the bluff impact zone, and at least 5' from the side property line. The Carnelian-Marine Watershed District replied that no permit would be needed from

their agency. The City Engineer commented that gutters and roof leaders should be installed to direct drainage away from the bluffline and to the street.

Buss summarized the recommendation to approve the variance request with findings that the physical nature of the property makes it difficult to locate a garage that meets the setbacks, it matches similar setbacks of other structures in the neighborhood, and it is the minimum action required to keep the structure outside the bluff impact zone. A resolution was prepared with these findings and 6 conditions of approval, including the combination of the two separate parcels into one.

Chair Squyres opened the public hearing at 7:13 p.m. There were no comments and the hearing was closed.

Chair Squyres explained the observations made at the site visit to the property. To locate the garage in the recommended location would require removal of mature trees, extensive soil removal and grading, and potential encroachment on the wellhead setback. There already exists a paved driveway and retaining wall at the bluffline; constructing the garage here that would have a shed roofline to direct runoff away from the bluffline would not increase impervious surface within the bluff impact area and would direct the stormwater flow away from the bluff. Commissioner Loeffler noted that the applicant is proposing to remove an impervious walkway from the driveway to the house, to be replaced with a more natural area. The Commissioners concluded that 5' from the bluffline and 4' from the side property line would be an acceptable location for a small garage, and allow preservation of one of the mature oak trees.

Noyes, seconded by Amundson, moved to recommend approval of a variance for construction of a garage with a 5' bluffline setback from the east edge of the garage, a 4' side yard setback from the south property line, removal of the existing bituminous surface from the walkway to the house to be replaced with pervious material, use of the roofline, gutters and leaders to direct runoff away from the bluff and towards the street, marking the south property line to verify the setback distance, and combining the two separate lots into one parcel. The motion carried 5-0.

The recommendation for approval will be presented to the City Council at their February 20, 2018 meeting.

DISCUSSION ON AMENDING SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS REGARDING PARK DEDICATION REQUIREMENTS

The City Council requested the Planning Commission review the subdivision regulations for park dedication requirements for a potential ordinance amendment. The Council questioned why the City granted certain exemptions for lots created in some recent subdivisions. Planner Buss explained the City Attorney's memo which described legal exemptions for outlots and lots created with an existing house from payment of park dedication fees. However, the comments suggested that the City may consider a change to the ordinance's statement that exempts lots 20-acres and greater. Buss said nothing in state law exempts collection of park dedication fees from subdivision of large lots that may be exempt from the subdivision process. Chair Squyres said

that this would be fair, and that subdivision should be the trigger to collect the park fee and not at the time of a building permit for construction on the lot.

Another statement in the ordinance allows for flexibility for developers to request exemptions from park fees under unique circumstances. Commissioners recommended a change to the flexibility statement, but to add consideration for assistive living situations.

A comparison of park fees, currently \$3,000 per new lot, was found to be in line with surrounding communities and no adjustment to the park fee was recommended.

Buss will prepare an ordinance amendment to the subdivision regulations with these recommendations for review at the next meeting.

REVIEW OF DRAFT CHAPTERS OF THE 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Transportation Chapter

City Engineer Goodman presented an overview of the draft transportation chapter that will be adopted as part of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan to provide guidance for implementation of effective traffic facilities and programs through the 2040 planning timeframe. He explained that traffic projections are done through Washington County based on the Met Council projections of expected population and job growth in each traffic impact area. Analysis showed that none of the roadways within Scandia are projected to be at capacity, and no capacity expansion projects were identified in the plan.

Goodman explained the map, Exhibit T-4, that identifies existing gaps in the roadway network that could guide developers where connections can be improved. Commissioner Hogle noted the area at Meadowbrook Avenue should be shifted east, as a headwater exists here that will never allow for a connection.

Chair Squyres recommended the addition of a goal to discourage massive excavation for roadway development and to allow new roads to follow the natural contours and alignments of the land. This would have less impacts to the environment and encourage a natural flow of roads with more curvature. Administrator Soltis noted the goal of “establishing context-sensitive roadway design standards” is stated and this appears to cover Squyres’ concern. Planner Buss agreed that this is already taken care of in the policy, but could be made clearer using the MnDOT definition.

Planner Buss said her experience with the Met Council review should be a reference to bike trails, identified in the 2011 Trails Plan. Soltis said that this is included in the Parks and Trails chapter. The bike trail along Highway 95 that runs into William O’Brien Park should be identified. Commissioner Hogle asked how the 2006 Park and Trail Plan fits in. Soltis explained that the Parks and Recreation Committee reviewed the 2006 Plan for the Comp Plan update, identified no changes to this plan, and will be continuing the plan as is. Goodman said it’s considered a moving document in which revisions can be made over the years, and will be referenced to in the 2040 Comp Plan.

Water Resources Chapter

Engineer Goodman explained that the Water Resources chapter is divided into Surface Water, Water Supply, and Wastewater sections. He led a review of the surface water section, and explained that the City's Surface Water Management Plan is the meaty document behind this section and referenced throughout. As well, the section briefly describes the water management plans of the 3 watershed districts within Scandia and compares the goals and policies of each plan.

Detailed maps and a public waterways inventory were reviewed. Commissioner Hogle noted that Sylvan Lake has been officially renamed Keewahtin Lake and should be corrected in the document.

Chair Squyres addressed Pam Arnold's letter to the Commissioners regarding her concerns for prioritizing water protection as a basis for the Comp Plan. Arnold asked if mapping existing environmental challenges could be included in which to plan for development, such as areas of failed septic systems, areas of erosion concern, or areas where previous construction has created costly fixes. Staff concluded that some information could be mapped, such as existing scenic and conservation easements, but other data may not exist or take significant effort to pull together.

The Commissioners recognized Arnold's concern for water sensitivity protection and recommended additional discussion in this area. Squyres stated that policies should support protection of water quality, and goals with a focus on this would give the Comp Plan more teeth. Buss explained the implementation chapter would have the measures outlined, such as a recommendation that property owners get their wells regularly tested, and that the development code and zoning map are updated to implement the policies. Commissioner Amundson said that there are layers of protection for wells, septic systems and wetlands in place now with the County and State agencies.

Arnold said that the County has a flawed system in septic regulations with low standards that are contributing to water contamination, that has long-term detrimental effects to lakes, streams and rivers. She would like the Comp Plan to acknowledge that we live in a water sensitive area and it should guide development with more stringent measures – how we add density has future consequences. Administrator Soltis noted that protection of water quality is the watershed's jurisdiction and these concerns could be directed to their area of planning.

Commissioner Loeffler said that Arnold made solid points and agreed that awareness of water quality should be raised; we lean on agencies and trust that they are doing what is best, but their regulations are not always good enough. The City could promote water awareness with articles in the newsletter and website. Squyres noted that discussion will continue with the implementation chapter.

Goodman will present the draft water supply and wastewater sections at a future meeting.

FUTURE AGENDAS

Commissioner Amundson asked if there would be any interest to invite a solar developer to a meeting who has offered to discuss the reimplementation of the solar farm ordinance, and could offer a perspective on changes in the development of solar farms. Consensus was not to act on a future solar farm ordinance at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

Loeffler, seconded by Noyes, moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Eklund
Deputy Clerk