

November 4, 2015

The Scandia Planning Commission held their regular monthly meeting on the above date. The following were in attendance: Chair Christine Maefsky, Commissioners Walt Anderson, Jan Hogle and Travis Loeffler. Commissioner Dan Squyres arrived at 7:20 p.m. Staff present: City Planner Sherri Buss, City Administrator Kristina Handt and Deputy Clerk Brenda Eklund. Council member Ness was also in attendance. Chair Maefsky called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA, MINUTES

Chair Maefsky added Item #7) Reminder on etiquette, to the agenda. **Loeffler, seconded by Hogle, moved to approve the agenda as amended. The motion carried unanimously by those present.**

Commissioner Anderson questioned amendments to a motion from the October 6, 2015 meeting, and pointed out that a vote should be taken on amendments to motions before they become part of the final motion.

Hogle, seconded by Loeffler, moved to approve the October 6, 2015 minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously by those present.

PUBLIC HEARING: 2016-2020 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Administrator Handt presented the 2016-2020 Capital Improvement Plan and explained that the Capital Improvement Committee has recommended 22 separate projects related to equipment, vehicles, buildings and infrastructure.

Street projects include funding \$330,000 each year for road maintenance from the General Fund and a more extensive reconstruction project every other year at a cost of over \$1,000,000 to be funded from the Local Road Improvement Fund. Reconstruction of 236th, 237th, Novak and a portion of Oldfield Avenue is planned for 2016.

The Park and Rec Committee identified Lilleskogen Park Restoration as the top priority in the Plan with much of the funding coming from grants and donations. Equipment replacements in the Public Works Department were identified, as were equipment and building needs for the Fire Department. Control panel upgrades for the Bliss Lift Station are planned for 2017, to be funded from the Sewer Fund.

Brad Borg, Capital Improvement Committee Chair, asked the Commission to consider reinstating \$2,000 towards wetland restoration at Lilleskogen Park in 2016, which the Committee recommended but was removed by the Council at their August 11 budget meeting. Borg noted that the Comprehensive Plan emphasizes parks, trails and open space but he sees no vision of the Comp Plan within the CIP, as only 3% of the CIP funding is going towards Parks. Administrator Handt explained that the Council was not willing to fund this project from the general tax levy at this time but changes can be made that do not affect the general levy, such as reducing spending in another area in order to fund the Lilleskogen project.

Administrator Handt concluded the presentation with recognition to the CIP Committee for their great input and suggestion for the survey that was included in the City's fall newsletter. Handt will provide the survey results at the December 2 budget hearing.

Chair Maefsky opened the public hearing at 7:42 p.m.

Kirsten Clark, 14140 Scandia Trail: Ms. Clark described the conditions at the Log House Landing as a dangerous road for people to use due to ruts and washouts and recommended that there be something in the Plan to address improvements to the roadway. Administrator Handt explained that a project was attempted using grants and cost sharing, but due to differences of opinion on surface types and design, the partnerships fell apart and the project is no longer in the Plan. Improvements to the boat launch area are proposed for 2016 and currently in the works.

There were no further comments and the hearing was closed at 7:52 p.m.

Commissioner Squyres commented on the resident survey request from the fall newsletter and stated that there should have been a footnote to guide residents to the website for more information on the proposed projects in the CIP. He felt uninformed to make any decisions on the validity of the listed projects.

Commissioner Anderson recommended that the road improvements at the Log House Landing be reinstated at the \$400,000 funding level and scheduled for 2016 or 2017. Anderson stated that Scandia should have an affiliation with the river and this would be a prime area for a park.

Chair Maefsky said she agreed that improvements to the road need to be done, but this is an environmentally sensitive site and should not be treated like any other road in the city. Considerable effort went into Log House Landing Committee's final proposal and knowledge of an alternative surface known as bound aggregate was gained. Re-grading and appropriate use of BMP's to control drainage and runoff should also be attempted.

Maefsky, seconded by Hogle, moved to include the Log House Landing Road Improvements in the 2016-2020 Capital Improvement Plan. The motion carried 5-0.

Maefsky, seconded by Hogle, moved to add the LHL Improvements in 2017 with \$200,000 funding from the Capital Improvement Fund and/or split 50/50 with grants or cost-sharing. Maefsky clarified that this does not include improvements to the boat launch ramp being proposed for 2016.

Commissioner Loeffler questioned if the improvements would be done through improved maintenance, bound aggregate or pavement. Chair Maefsky explained that this does not include a decision on surface type, but just puts the project in the CIP. She stated her rationale that in 2016 the Public Works Department should attempt to properly maintain the roadway with grading techniques to direct runoff and to add catch basins, as grading is showing positive effects.

Maefsky stated the above motion with the funding level of \$100,000 from the Capital Improvement Fund and \$100,000 from grants. The motion carried 4-1 with Anderson opposed.

Anderson, seconded by Loeffler, moved to add the Log House Landing Improvement Project in 2017 at the previous funding of \$400,000 -- \$100,000 from the City, \$200,000 from the DNR and \$100,000 from the Watershed, designed with curb and gutter, asphalt and erosion control measures.

Anderson stated that his proposal is more in line to get the job done right as \$200,000 would be underfunding the project.

Chair Maefsky called for a vote on the above motion. Yes – Anderson, Loeffler. No – Hogle, Squyres, Maefsky. The motion failed 2-3.

Administrator Handt recommended that the ramp project being proposed for 2016 be added to the CIP.

Maefsky, seconded by Hogle, moved to include the improvements to the boat launch and ramp to address erosion control in 2016 with a funding level of \$40,000, split 50/50 from the Capital Improvement Fund and cost-sharing with the Watershed. The motion carried 4-1 with Anderson opposed.

Hogle, seconded by Squyres, moved to recommend to the City Council approval of the 2016-2020 Capital Improvement Plan as amended:

- **Log House Landing Improvements in 2017 with \$200,000 funding, split as \$100,000 from the Capital Improvement Fund and \$100,000 grant from the Watershed**
- **Improvements to the LHL boat launch and ramp to address erosion control in 2016 with a funding level of \$40,000, split 50/50 from the Capital Improvement Fund and a grant with the Watershed**

The motion carried 4-1 with Anderson opposed.

The Council will receive this recommendation at their December 15 meeting.

ORDINANCE NO. 165: ORDINANCE AMENDING THE DEVELOPMENT CODE, CHAPTER 1, SECTION 4.2 AND CHAPTER 2, SECTION 4.30 REGARDING DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS FOR SIGNS; INCLUDING AN UPDATE TO THE CITY'S ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on Ordinance No. 165 on proposed amendments to the sign ordinance and the sign sections of the Architectural Design Guidelines. Planner Buss provided additional information as requested by the Commissioners. Temporary signs may be permitted with content that includes time, place and manner, but the ordinance cannot regulate to allow only for community events, advertising or similar content. Off-premise signs cannot be

limited to local businesses, a specific number or purpose, but may be regulated for the location, size or other physical characteristics.

Planner Buss also clarified that the lighting section of the development code doesn't address signs in particular, but to lighting for parking areas and structures.

Chair Maefsky began a presentation on the Comp Plan vision statement, the principles of scenic conservation and prevention of sign intrusion. She included examples of signage around Scandia that reflect the desired qualities and explained that downward lighting is an effective way to illuminate signs and that backlit signs should be excluded from the standards. Maefsky stated that the big issues within the sign ordinance update appear to be backlit, temporary and off-premise signs.

Commissioner Anderson stated that businesses depend on signage to attract customers and that backlit signs do a much better job of being visible.

Planner Buss began a review of the ordinance through each section. No changes were made to the existing definitions in Section 1. Buss explained that political signs (noncommercial) are referenced to the state statute in Section 2, 3.13(2)(B). Chair Maefsky recommended that "may be" is removed from the language in Section 2(C) and (D).

Planner Buss stated that under (4) General Standards, backlit signs are allowed in (D) with language that controls the amount of light onto the roadways.

Squyres, seconded by Maefsky, moved to remove (4)(D) to not allow backlit signs.

A lengthy discussion followed on the aesthetics and purposes of backlit signs. Any existing backlit signs in Scandia would be grandfathered in and allowed to remain unless abandoned for at least one year. Commissioner Loeffler stated that if the lumens, style and color can be controlled, they could be nostalgic and pleasing. Chair Maefsky noted that once allowed, the total number of backlit signs could be a problem. Commissioner Squyres stated that the Plaza businesses seem to be thriving without the use of backlit signs.

Chair Maefsky called for a vote on the above motion. The motion carried 3-1, with Anderson opposed and Loeffler abstaining.

Commissioner Hogle recommended that "stone" be removed from (4)(G) which lists the surfaces that signs may not be painted on, and noted the Tii Gavø development sign that uses a stone entrance sign.

It was the consensus to change language in (5)(A) to clarify that there may be a maximum of three signs per parcel in the Ag-Core, AP, GR and VN districts. It was agreed that portable signs remain on the list as not permitted in these districts.

Commissioner Squyres questioned the allowed height of 15 feet for a monument sign in (6)(D) and stated that a sign this wide and tall would look like a wall, and that 6 feet should be adequate. Planner Buss explained that it may be more desirable to have multiple businesses on

one sign rather than more individual business signs. Commissioner Loeffler noted that a sign may need this height to be visible from a roadway, especially with multiple tenants.

Loeffler, seconded by Maefsky, moved to lower the allowed height of monument signs in (6)(D) to 8 feet above grade. Anderson stated that this is not high enough. The motion carried 3-1, with Squyres opposed and Anderson abstaining.

The standards for off-premises signs, described as directional signs on major roadways, were then discussed. Buss explained that content cannot be controlled but their location can be regulated. Commissioner Squyres suggested this section be removed and have the EDA propose what the businesses want to do.

Anderson moved to table this topic until the EDA and businesses are invited for a discussion. There was no second and the motion failed.

Planner Buss suggested that the allowed intersections be identified, in which the Commissioners listed Highway 97/Oakhill Road, Highway 97/Olinda Trail, Highway 97/Highway 95 and Highway 95/Oakhill Road. Chair Maefsky recommended that “Signs must conform to the Architectural Design Guidelines” be added to this section.

Loeffler, seconded by Squyres, moved to add Highway 97/Manning Avenue to the above list of allowed locations for off-premises signs (totaling 5 locations) and to allow them on both sides of the road.

Commissioner Hogle stated that this appears to fulfill the businesses’ request to attract traffic into Scandia. Chair Maefsky stated that she can’t support the 97/Manning site as this is a farm scene at the entrance into Scandia and 2 monument signs here would not fit into the scenic view.

Maefsky called for a vote on the above motion. The motion carried 3-2 with Hogle and Maefsky opposed.

Commissioner Loeffler asked if Ms. Rodsjo’s earlier request to not permit portable signs was addressed. It was explained that a compromise was offered in the ordinance so that they are allowed only in certain districts (Mixed Use, R-Comm and IP).

A review of the Architectural Guidelines concluded that Planner Buss will make sure it is in agreement with the amended sign ordinance. The word “board” was missing from sentence 2 on page 51.

Loeffler, seconded by Squyres, moved to recommend to the City Council approval of Ordinance No. 165 and the Architectural Design Guidelines as amended. The motion carried 4-1 with Anderson opposed.

The Council will receive this recommendation at their November 17 meeting.

RURAL EVENT FACILITY ORDINANCE DISCUSSION

Planner Buss explained that there is a potential application from a non-profit that is proposing to operate a hobby farm with an educational experience to children several days a week. Buss asked if this should be considered as an Agritourism Enterprise, but that this is defined for commercial operations, not non-profits. The option is to have them apply for a Rural Event Facility, but this also applies to commercial or for-profit enterprises.

The Commissioners were in consensus to remove the term “commercial” from the agritourism definition as no particular reason could be identified that it could not apply to non-profits. Commissioner Loeffler stated that this type of use should be encouraged and that agritourism is the best fit.

Since there are no performance standards in the ordinance for Agritourism Enterprise uses, Buss suggested that the criteria for Rural Event Facilities be a starting point defining performance standards for further discussion at the December meeting.

MEETING ETIQUETTE – MAEFSKY

Chair Maefsky explained that she had gotten comments from participants at the October meeting that they were not treated with respect and felt uncomfortable with some of the actions of the Planning Commission. Maefsky reminded the members to listen respectfully and make good judgements during the meetings.

ADJOURNEMENT

Anderson, seconded by Squyres, moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Eklund
Deputy Clerk

