

MINUTES
CITY OF БЕЛОIT BOARD OF APPEALS
Special Meeting of August 15, 2017

A Special Meeting of the City of Beloit Board of Appeals was held on Tuesday, August 15, 2017, in The Forum of Beloit City Hall, 100 State Street. Chairperson John Schroer called the meeting to order at 6:25 PM.

1. **Roll Call**

Director of Planning & Building Services Drew Pennington called the roll. Present were: John Schroer, Merlin Bussan, Carolyn Hansen, Willis Zick, and John Petersen. Dustin Gronau was absent.

2. **Approval of the Minutes of the July 11, 2017 Meeting**

Ms. Hansen made a motion to approve the July 11, 2017 Minutes as submitted. Mr. Zick seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0), voice vote.

3. **Erick Johnson – 2386 Tara Court**

BOA-2017-03 Public Hearing and Review of a Land Management Plan to allow a natural lawn exceeding eight (8) inches in height for the single-family residential property located at 2386 Tara Court.

Mr. Pennington reviewed the staff report.

Mr. Johnson identified himself as the applicant, and summarized his intent to grow oak saplings and to increase the privacy of his property. Mr. Johnson provided the Board members with numerous photos of his property, and stated that his project was similar to natural landscaping projects being done by Beloit College and the City.

Mr. Bussan asked Mr. Johnson when he started the project, and Mr. Johnson stated that he started the project two years ago. Mr. Bussan asked Mr. Johnson why he waited to file an application (for a Land Management Plan), and he stated that he had discussed his project with neighbors but learned of the Land Management Plan requirement through a conversation with City Engineer Mike Flesch. Mr. Bussan stated that the petition and hearing could have been avoided by following the process, and Mr. Johnson agreed.

Ms. Hansen asked Mr. Johnson if his neighbors are OK with the lawn now that it has been partially mowed, and Mr. Johnson stated that he had not spoken with them since the lawn was mowed earlier in the day.

Mr. Peterson asked Mr. Johnson if he was concerned that animals and rodents would be attracted to the landscape. Mr. Johnson stated that there are already coyotes and foxes in the vicinity, and that the wildflowers have been attracting butterflies this summer.

Mr. Zick asked for clarification on the extent of the natural landscape. Mr. Johnson estimated that slightly less than half of the lot was involved.

Nancy Mayhew, 2368 Tara Court, identified herself as a neighbor. Ms. Mayhew stated that she objects because the natural landscape was grown without prior approval. Ms. Mayhew stated that the ferns and hosta look fine, but that she is concerned about the appearance of the grasses. Ms. Mayhew stated that the neighbors met with Mr. Johnson when he began the project and asked him to start small.

Brent Schneider, 3557 Oak Lane Drive, identified himself as a neighbor. Mr. Schneider asked if future owners of the applicant's property would be required keep the grass under 8 inches, and whether compliance would be guaranteed. Mr. Schroer stated that any approval would be tied to a specific Land Management Plan.

Mr. Pennington stated that the Board could request additional information from the applicant including maintenance details, and that they could lay the item over until the next meeting.

Mr. Schroer stated that he was in favor of laying the item over so that the applicant could present the Board with an updated plan and maintenance details.

Ms. Hansen made a motion to lay over the application until the September 12, 2017 meeting. Mr. Bussan seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0), voice vote.

4. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Drew Pennington, AICP