



Meeting Minutes
Beloit City Plan Commission
Wednesday, October 18, 2017, 7:00 PM
The Forum
Beloit City Hall
100 State Street, Beloit

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairperson Faragher called the meeting to order at 7:05pm. Commissioner Haynes, Weeden, Johnson, Faragher, Finnegan and Tinder were present. Commissioner Ruster and City Councilor Leavy were absent.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the September 20, 2017 Meeting

Commissioner Tinder moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Weeden seconded the motion. The motion passed, voice vote.

3. Comprehensive Plan Update

Director of Planning and Building Services Drew Pennington began by providing the committee with an overview and background on Wisconsin Statutes related to the amendment of a Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Pennington introduced the resolution to initiate an update to the 2008 City of Beloit Comprehensive Plan without outsourcing to a consulting agency as this update and re-write will be done in-house.

Mr. Pennington gave an overview of the amendments that had been made over the last 10 years and the projects which had necessitated changes or would cause changes to be made in the future including Downtown Riverfront, rebranding of the Beloit Corporation campus and Beloit Mall, School District, Beloit College, YMCA, and the new plans to develop a Welcome Center for the School District at Maple Avenue and Fourth Street.

Mr. Pennington mentioned that despite the intense progress, some active and upcoming challenges have emerged. The City's housing stock is a decade older, and the City has not received a new supply of housing to keep up with increased demand. Mr. Pennington recalled a previously held housing conference in August of 2017 where realtors raised concerns with lack of supply of various housing types and specifically mentioned single-family and executive style larger lots, thus steering potential buyers to seek purchases in other nearby communities. Surveys conducted during the introduction of the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Areas (NRSA) have shown that poverty, crime and

housing deterioration remain as active concerns in certain neighborhoods of the city. Population in the city has not changed in 50 years and although demographics have changed, the city has experienced a slight population decrease. The plan also forecasted a slight population increase and should be reconciled with the update. Mr. Pennington discussed the adequacy in timing for updating the Comprehensive Plan and staff focusing mainly on housing and land use.

Mr. Pennington outlined an update process and a public participation plan that will require City Council approval at their next meeting on November of 2017. This will include the ensemble of a Steering Committee that will discuss the plan and its objectives, workshops and the engagement of social media that will aid in addressing land issues and to propose updates.

Mr. Pennington anticipates getting the Commission a revised plan for consideration on April 2018, followed by City Council consideration a month later. Mr. Pennington also provided the Commission with a brief description of the Comprehensive Plan, singling out two of the areas of focus, land use and housing.

Commissioner Johnson asked Mr. Pennington how extraterritorial factors such as the Town of Beloit could affect the comprehensive plan, its goals and outlook. Mr. Pennington agreed that if the Town of Beloit incorporates, the village could seek growth eastward and might end up with a boundary agreement with the Town of Turtle but it was hard to determine at this point.

Mr. Pennington wrapped up by inviting committee members to join the Steering Committee; focusing mainly on policies and how to develop more housing in the city, with in-fill development being a big part of the equation.

Commissioner Finnegan asked if it was appropriate to discuss the recent movement of micro-housing and if affordable housing will become an issue in the city. Mr. Pennington recalled the recent conference where a similar concern was addressed and gave an example of how the committee would have to add a policy to revise the zoning code that restricts new single family construction to a minimum floor area of 1,000 square feet. Ms. Julie Christensen, Community Development Director, added that there would be an assessment to determine whether the current housing supply would accommodate the micro-housing demand. Commissioner Johnson mentioned that homes that are less than 1,000 square feet are hard to sell.

Mr. Pennington talked about the City of Portland, Oregon where the movement has boomed and how the city would waive all permit fees to encourage construction of these "accessory dwellings units" (small houses). Ms. Christensen recalled that when the state required the City to do a traditional development district, secondary dwelling (mother-in-law quarters) were required to be included in the ordinance. At the time, the amount of rules and regulations discouraged the development of these types of structures.

Commissioner Johnson added that some of the lots on West Grand Avenue have two to three dwellings on the same lot and are not aesthetically pleasing. Commissioner Haynes added that investment and quality of the structure could make a dramatic difference in the way these homes look.

Commissioner Finnegan stated that there is currently a big demand for small homes for a specific population and those properties could be found scattered throughout the city.

Commissioner Weeden asked Mr. Pennington the reason behind not hiring a consultant or third party.

Mr. Pennington answered by saying that financial obstacles were the main reason behind not hiring a consultant and discussed the possibility of an entire new plan after the expiration of the boundary agreement.

Mr. Pennington mentioned that in four to five years, the interstate project would be completed and the boundary agreement would no longer exist. He also pointed out that there are substantial portions of the Town (showed in purple on map hand-out) that could be annexed to the City today, specifically around the Kettle Foods area.

Mr. Pennington commented that the interstate project will be pulling momentous energy into the gateway area due to traffic re-routing and asks the committee to consider re-visiting the portion of the business park (purple area on map) to be planned completely to I-43 or look at extending commercial along where the new Milwaukee Road would come down across the interstate.

Commissioner Johnson added that one of the issues in that area (Gateway) was the topography and added that in this area, land is being sold inexpensively for leveling but developers would rather invest in areas with less land adjustment costs and pay more money for the land.

Commissioner Weeden asked Mr. Pennington if other group's plans such as Beloit 2020 and Parks and Recreation would be going to be folded in the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Pennington commented that there could be a possibility of those plans merging, but only if those chapters were to be opened. Mr. Pennington also suggested that he would like to have a larger community park that will embrace the sport of soccer and could be arguable for consideration near the existing complex on Prairie Avenue.

Commissioner Faragher asked if there was an existing list of individuals who would volunteer to participate on the Steering committee. Mr. Pennington answered that he has a list of volunteers that came out of the housing conference and the list will be presented to council on November 6th 2017. Commissioner Faragher, Commissioner Haynes and Commissioner Johnson volunteered for the Steering Committee.

Commissioner Faragher recommended changing the wording on part of the resolution document from a Steering Committee should be established to a Steering Committee shall be established . . .

Commission Faragher moved to approve the Resolution for the update, Commission Hayes seconded. The motion passed, voice vote.

4. **Status Report in Prior Commission Items**

Ms. Julie Christensen stated that the Conditional Use for 800 Wisconsin Ave was approved by City Council.

Commissioner Faragher asked for a status on the Sign Ordinance. Ms. Christensen commented that they met with the Assistant City Attorney who recommended updating the ordinance to comply with the most recent case law. The Sign Ordinance for the Village of Oregon meets that standard, so we are considering using that ordinance as a template.

5. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:50pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Frank Fuerte.