

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wednesday, March 13, 2013

Chairman Mike Jay called the meeting of the Brainerd Planning Commission to order at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers.

Noted present were Commissioners Pritschet, Plantenberg, Hayden, Jay, Lambert, Norwood and Cole. Also present was City Planner Ostgarden.

#2 Welcome New Member Sarah Hayden

Chairman Jay welcomed new Planning Commission member Sarah Hayden.

#3 Approval/Amendment of Agenda

MOTION AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONERS LAMBERT AND NORWOOD, DULY CARRIED, TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED.

#4 Approve minutes of the regular meeting of February 13, 2013

MOTION AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONERS LAMBERT AND PRITSCHET, DULY CARRIED, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR THE REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 13, 2013.

#5 NEW BUSINESS

a. Interpretation Request – Use Allowed in a B-4 (General Business) District

City Planner Ostgarden explained that the proposed use was not listed as permitted in a B-4 (General Commercial) District. He was not able to determine that it was a use that could be interpreted as meeting the Intent and Purpose for a B-4 District. Based on his understanding of the activity and use for the building, it would be used as a warehouse, a use not permitted in the B-4 District. Nor could he establish that the activity was similar to other uses permitted in the District. Therefore he suggested that inquiry be submitted for the Planning Commission's interpretation as to whether the use is permitted.

Mr. Patrick Selter, Vice President of PLM Lake and Land Management Corp, stated PLM is an environmental management firm with a current location in Pequot Lakes. The primary business of PLM is the sale of, application of, and installation of vegetation management products. He noted 75% of the calendar the business would primarily be office use but the majority of their revenue is through retail sales of herbicide, algacides, and mechanical tools and devices for management of vegetation and noted there would be no outdoor storage.

Mr. Selter stated in looking for a new business location, a location was found in south Brainerd. The property is appealing for its location and building size and he feels it will allow PLM to generate additional revenue, decrease logistical costs, provide a good labor pool, and provide opportunities to capitalize on market growth.

Commissioner Pritschet asked if during the 7-8 months the building is being used for office work, would product be stored in the warehouse.

Mr. Selter stated there would be minimal storage as sale of the product decreases significantly in the winter months. He noted there is also maintenance of their equipment that also occurs during the winter months.

Commissioner Norwood asked if the primary customer is the end user of the product. Mr. Selter stated the biggest customer are lakefront property owners.

Commissioner Pritschet asked for some background on the business. Mr. Selter stated the headquarters are in Michigan but the business started in Minnesota in 2001. Commissioner Pritschet asked if the company primary deals with invasive species with the retail sales as secondary. Mr. Selter stated the biggest revenue is the management of invasive species. He stated the core of the business is to make habitats better.

Commissioner Cole asked if the business would be classified as sale of product or service. Mr. Selter stated the majority is sale of product with the management service being secondary.

Additional discussion was held regarding the retail portion of the business specifically customers.

City Planner Ostgarden stated he wanted to specify that Mr. Selter noted there is more equipment than product which may change the direction of the discussion.

Commissioner Hayden asked how much of the building would be used for storage of product versus storage of equipment. Mr. Selter noted there is approximately 1500 square feet for office usage, 2500 square feet for equipment storage, and approximately 1000 for workbenches and storage of product.

Commissioner Cole asked if this would be the only location to store the equipment or would there be other options for storage of equipment. Mr. Selter stated wants to have a location where everything can be stored in an indoor secured location. He noted there may be up to three trucks in the parking lot but all other equipment will be stored inside.

City Planner Ostgarden stated the question has been asked if the dynamic of the businesses changes if it is less storage of product and more to storage of equipment, it can but this is all conditioned on what the Commission thinks is the primary use of the business.

Discussion was held regarding the primary use of the business. The Commission agreed it does not fit into the category of warehouse/storage but more as retail sales and service with storage of equipment for that service.

Discussion was held regarding if this should be interpreted as an allowed use or a conditional use. The Commission agreed the business does not approach a level that would require a conditional use permit.

MOTION AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONERS LAMBERT AND PRITSCHET, DULY CARRIED, THAT THE INTERPRETATION WOULD BE TO ALLOW THIS BUSINESS

BECAUSE IT WILL HAVE A LARGE AMOUNT OF AREA FOR VEHICLE STORAGE, THE BUILDING WILL HAVE AN OFFICE AREA, AND RETAIL SALES CAN OCCUR ON SITE. THE USE IS NOT WAREHOUSE AS MOST OF THE BUILDING IS VEHICLE STORAGE ASSOCIATED WITH THE BUSINESS.

b. Review Zoning – Brook Street Area

The Commission reviewed the area of Brook Street that needed rezoning to correct an error when the zoning map was adopted in September 2011.

Brief discussion was held regarding a buffer zone around the industrial area. It was agreed to discuss this at a later date.

c. Whittier School Repurposing – Zoning Discussion

City Planner Ostgarden stated in January 2012 a Whittier School Repurposing Task Force was established to recommend to the School District a repurposing use of the building and grounds. The Task Force received four proposals for the reuse of the building and after evaluating those proposals voted to recommend to the School Board the proposal from Northern Pines Mental Health facility. The next step is for the School Facilities Committee to review the proposal and take further action. If this reuse is approved by the School Board, the property will then be transferred and those activities that will occur at the facility will have to meet the requirements of the zoning. There will need to be meetings and discussions in the future with possible rezoning or changing of the conditional uses in an R-1 (Single Family Residential) District.

d. Mobile Food Units – Discussion

City Planner Ostgarden stated the City met with the City of Baxter and whether or not we as two communities could come together and have one ordinance to regulate mobile food units, but it was agreed there are too many differences between the cities to create one ordinance such as the central business district and walkability.

City Planner Ostgarden stated there have been meetings with local restaurant owners to get their perspective and feedback. The consensus of the group is the current issue is food trucks which should be the focus. Draft language will be presented to this group for their input. He stated if ordinance changes will be needed that will be brought to the Planning Commission to amend the zoning ordinance to allow this to take place. He stated currently they can sell to private businesses and employees only which is defined as catering. The discussion is to allow sales to the public and setting up on public property, but not public right-of-way.

Discussion was held regarding how this will be regulated.

#6 OLD BUSINESS

a. Variance History Review

City Planner Ostgarden provided the Commission with information on the number of variances over the last several years noting there has been a small decrease, but not major fluctuations.

b. The (micro) City Beautiful – Barrett Steenrod Community Design Plan - Discussion

City Planner Ostgarden stated this was a presentation from Mr. Barrett Steenrod which had recommendation that may have merit that should not be overlooked. He stated he would like to put together a committee with a Commission member, a Council member, City Engineer, and myself to discuss the recommendation and whether or not there is something that can be done about them.

Commissioner Jay asked for a volunteer from the Planning Commission. Commissioner Plantenberg volunteered.

c. Riverside School Parking Lot Project

Commissioner Jay stated he would like to make a recommendation to the City Council and School District on the Riverside School parking lot project. He stated off NW 4th Street there should be a right in only alleviate congestion. He stated there should be sidewalk on NW 4th Street and Williams Street.

Discussion was held regarding possible recommendations to the City Council and School District.

City Planner Ostgarden stated the approval process does not include the Planning Commission. He noted all of these items have been discussed with the School District. He stated we will be firm that the sidewalk on NW 4th Street will not go away, but Williams Street, Charles Street and NW 3rd Street may lose sidewalk and the Commission can make a recommendation.

Discussion was held regarding where sidewalks should be placed.

Commission agreed to make a recommendation for a right in only on NW 4th Street, keeping the sidewalk on NW 4th Street, and adding sidewalk to Williams Street.

#7 Commissioners' Questions/Comments

Commissioner Pritschet stated the City Council had a Strategic Planning Session during which a mission statement and vision statement were discussed. The next step will be to look at strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities. He read the vision and mission statements. The goal is to get a comprehensive three year plan with achievement benchmarks and regular review of the plan.

#8 City Planner's Comments

City Planner Ostgarden stated presented the Commission the updated trail map for south Brainerd and reviewed the map. He stated the Spur Line Trail name would go away and would then be called the Buffalo Hills Trail. The signs will be funded by the Jaycees and constructed on each end of the trail. He then gave a review of the status of the project. The goal is to start as soon as possible this spring.

City Planner Ostgarden gave a quick review of the extension of the Cuyuna Lakes Trail.

#9 **Adjournment**

As there was no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Ostgarden AICP
City Planner

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