

PLANNING COMMISSION
Tuesday, November 20, 2018

#1 Call to Order

Planning Commission Chair Headley 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 Burslie, Headley, Gorham, and Marohn; and Council Liaison Lambert. City Planner Ostgarden and Commissioner Wussow were noted as absent. Also present was Administrative Specialist Bestul.

#2 Approval of Agenda

MOTION AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONERS LAMBERT AND BURSLIE, DULY CARRIED, TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.

#3 Approval of Minutes of the Regular Meeting held on October 17, 2018

MOTION AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONERS LAMBERT AND GORHAM, DULY CARRIED, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING HELD ON OCTOBER 17, 2018.

#4 New Business

A. Review of the ISD181 School Board/City Council Meeting Held on Tuesday, November 13, 2018

Commissioner Marohn attended the joint meeting as a spectator in the audience. He agreed that the discussion went very well between the Council and the school board. He does not agree with the concept that parking lots increase safety.

Commissioner Lambert stated after she heard the testimony from the joint meeting and the City Council meeting last night made her value both sides. The dialog that took place was very good and is confident that an agreement can be reached without taking the moratorium approach. The suggestion was to separate the high school project from the elementary schools, as the safety needs are different.

Commission Chair Headley asked Commissioner Marohn if parking lots are not the answer, then what is the answer?

Commissioner Marohn stated some of the talking points to the question from Headley about what the solution could be as shown below:

- Right-size the streets and intersections around the neighborhood to slow vehicle traffic
- Identify areas for buses to load/unload and eliminate turning movements
- Identify parent pick up and drop off with design approaches to slow speeds

- Reduce the number of vehicles accessing the site during school hours i.e. Encourage carpooling, walking
- Implement Safe Routes to Schools and encourage walking

City Administrator Torstenson indicated many of Commissioner Marohn's points are facts as she has had her children walk to school for several years in other cities she has resided. She explained some of the positions in other states she has held and these are facts regarding traffic studies.

Commissioner Marohn is encouraged that the conversation continue with the Council and school district as communication is a great thing.

Commission discussion took place.

Commissioner Burslie indicated if he and Commissioner Marohn are to draft new language regarding the parking lot design standards for the next meeting, which was approved.

Commissioner Lambert suggested to start the December meeting at 5:30 p.m. due to the speaker coming in.

#5 Public Forum

The Chair opened the public forum at 6:33 p.m.

The Chair recognized Ms. Laine Larson and Ms. Ruth Nelson, ISD 181 Chair and Superintendent who both attended the joint meeting on November 13th with the City Council. They stated it was great to have the dialog between the city and the school district. The district also wants to slow down traffic. Ms. Nelson stressed that the schools are also expanding so the acquisition of homes are not just for the construction of parking lots – it will be for expansion of the building as well. The project will entail several traffic calming efforts, and separate pick up and drop off sites.

Ms. Laine Larson clarified that about a year ago the district changed the policy of no bussing within a mile from the school to 3/10th of a mile to the school. The district is planning to go back to the drawing board to compromise with the city regarding the parking. The school board is proud of the schools and proud of the work that was done and it's not just about parking lots. It is about other safety methods such as more sidewalks, slower traffic and narrower streets.

The Chair closed the public forum at 6:41 p.m.

#6 Commissioners' Questions/Comments

Commissioner Marohn asked City Administrator Torstenson about the background of the community development director that has been hired to start December 31st, 2018. Commissioner Marohn inquired if there will be urban planning training in the budget for the new position.

City Administrator Torstenson stated she has faith in the new hire and will make sure he has the skill set that is needed to perform the position.

#7 City Planner's Report

None

#8 Adjourn

The Chair adjourned at 6:44 p.m.

Donald Gorham
Planning Commission Chair