

PLANNING COMMISSION
Wednesday, October 20, 2021

#1 Call to Order

Planning Commission Chair Duval called the meeting of the Brainerd Planning Commission to order at 6:00 pm in the City Hall Council Chambers.

#2 Roll Call

Noted present were Commissioners Woodward, Erickson, Gorham, and Duval. Commissioners Yeager, Kallroos, and Foley were noted as absent. Community Development Director Chanski, City Engineer Sandy, and Assistant Planner Kramvik were also noted as present.

#3 Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Duval opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

#4 Approval/Change of Agenda

MOVED AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONERS GORHAM AND ERICKSON, DULY CARRIED, TO AMEND THE AGENDA AND MOVE NEW BUSINESS BEFORE OLD BUSINESS.

#5 Approval of Minutes

MOVED AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONERS GORHAM AND WOODARD, DULY CARRIED, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE SEPTEMBER 15, 2021 MEETING, AND THE SEPTEMBER 22nd AND OCTOBER 13th, 2021 WORKSHOPS.

#6 New Business

6a. Warming Shelter Ordinance Amendment Request

Community Development Director Chanski explained a group of partners in the community are interested in the concept of starting a warming shelter for the homeless. Currently, this use is not identified in any district within the Zoning Code. He indicated the request has been made to consider amending the Zoning Code to allow for such a use.

He introduced Ms. Jana Shogren, executive director of Bridges of Hope, who explained the history and the details of the project that includes a collaboration of fifteen community partners. She described the potential facility as an overnight warming house that will be secure, professionally staffed, and operated between the hours of 8:00 pm to 8:00 am for those needing a place to sleep. The building at 1919 South 6th Street has been identified as a possible location. She said they have contacted a similar shelter in Bemidji to get input on the operations of their facility.

Ms. Shogren introduced Ms. Ann Hunnicutt, who has been hired to operate the facility. Ms. Hunnicutt indicated with her background in law enforcement and mental health, she will be able to provide the leadership that is needed in this type of facility.

Commissioners asked questions of the applicants.

The Chair stated there is no public hearing scheduled but invited those who have a comment to approach the podium and speak.

Ms. Heidi Kane, no address but a longtime resident of Brainerd, said she is recently experiencing homelessness. She spoke highly of the program and the dire need for a resource such as this in the area.

Mr. Doug Arndt, 22830 Old Government Trail, Nisswa is the CEO of Quinstar Investment Partners. Quinstar Investment Partners owns the building that houses the Common Goods Thrift store. He stated Common Goods is very well operated and believes the proposed warming house would be also.

Mr. Troy Macfarland, 416 12th St. SE Brainerd, urged the Commission to implement this program as soon as possible for those in need.

Community Development Director Chanski explained the timeline options of proposing the ordinance to the Council. He will send a doodle poll to the Commission of available dates for a meeting to draft ordinance language.

Mr. Chuck Marohn, 616 N 4th St. Brainerd, asked the Commission about possibly defining the use as a “hotel” in this situation, as hotels are a permitted use in the zoning code.

Commission discussion took place.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONERS ERICKSON AND GORHAM, DULY CARRIED, TO DIRECT STAFF TO DRAFT AN INTERIM USE ORDINANCE AMENDMENT AND SCHEDULE A PLANNING COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING TO REVIEW THE DRAFT ORDINANCE PRIOR TO THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING PACKET DEADLINE OF OCTOBER 28TH.

6b. Request to Amend Tiny Home Regulations to Accommodate Supportive Housing Village

Community Development Director Chanski gave a brief update of the request from My Neighbor to Love Coalition (MNTLC) to consider amending the Zoning Code to allow for tiny homes. Currently, the City Code restricts dwelling units to a minimum of 750 square feet, with some smaller homes allowed by Conditional Use Permit on nonconforming lots that existed prior to 1989.

He introduced Ms. Vicky Kinney, representative of the non-profit, who explained the proposed project. She indicated MNTLC is wanting to develop a supportive housing village of homes that are 400 square feet or less and may find appropriate property in the City of Brainerd.

Commissioners asked questions, which were answered.

Community Development Director Chanski indicated the regulations of tiny homes will be addressed as a separate topic from the idea of a supportive housing village.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONERS GORHAM AND WOODWARD, DULY CARRIED, TO DIRECT STAFF TO WORK WITH SWANSON HASKAMP ON DRAFT LANGUAGE FOR TINY HOMES THAT COULD BE IMPLEMENTED INTO THE NEW ZONING CODE REVISION PROCESS.

#7 Old Business

7a. Hwy 210 Discussion with MnDOT

Community Development Director Chanski indicated the Commission requested a representative from MnDOT attend a meeting to address various concerns regarding the Highway 210 project. He introduced Mr. Luke Wehseler, project manager for MnDOT, who attended the meeting virtually.

Community Development Director Chanski indicated one high concern is the Mill Avenue, Highway 210, and Highway 25 intersection. There needs to be a balance of pedestrian safety with traffic flows in crossing that intersection with the potential trail system being implemented along that route.

Mr. Wehseler gave a brief update to the status of the project. He stated the second round of engagement has been closed out, and the results are being reviewed as the project develops. He indicated the third round of engagement will include more details and is tentatively aimed for January 2022. He said all comments are being considered and reviewed for the best possible results. There has been preliminary discussion regarding a pedestrian crossing be routed under the Washington Street bridge. Community Development Director Chanski indicated there was an updated bridge concept discussed using barrier walls and asked Mr. Wehseler to give a brief update.

City Engineer Sandy stated the importance of the layout is a large portion of the project; pedestrian movements, traffic flow and how they interact. He said there's also the visual aesthetics of traveling along Washington Street through the City, which could be significantly improved to make it more inviting. Commissioner Woodward suggested reaching out to the local art community for aesthetics that could withstand harsh weather and road salts that green space would not, such as sculptures.

Commission discussion took place with Mr. Wehseler and Engineer Sandy.

#8 Public Forum

The Chair opened the public forum at 8:13 p.m.

The Chair recognized Mr. Chuck Marohn, who stated the definition of hotel in the City code is no different than what the applicant is requesting for the warming house.

The Chair closed the public forum at 8:15 p.m.

#9 Community Development Director's Report

Community Development Director Chanski made the following announcements:

- The City Council adopted the Commissions' recommendations for Sober Homes
- The City Council reviewed the residential standards for the Zoning Code rewrite
- The commercial standards will be considered at the November 8, 2021 Council meeting
- The City Council is holding a workshop on Monday, October 25, 2021 to discuss the Parking Commission recommendations
- A doodle poll will go out to the Commission regarding a potential special meeting date to consider the warming house ordinance language
- The City Council will be invited to attend the December 15, 2021 Planning Commission meeting to discuss the "other" district standards and overall design standards
- He will be taking paternity leave once his new baby is born, and Assistant Planner Kramvik will be handling daily tasks

#10 Commissioner's Questions/Comments

Commissioner Duval spoke about the Sober Home topic and thanked everyone for the detailed and in-depth work that was done.

#11 Adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONERS WOODWARD AND GORHAM, DULY CARRIED, TO ADJORN TO THE CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP ON OCTOBER 25, 2021 AT 6:00 PM.

Michael Duval, Planning Commission Chair