

**WALKER PLANNING COMMISSION
BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
January 30th, 2017
6:00 p.m. 701 Elm Avenue Walker Fire Hall Meeting Room**

- 1. Call to Order** 6:00 p.m. by Chair Wilkening.

Roll Call-

Members Present: Gary Wilkening, Annie McMurrin, Rich Hansen

Public: Terry Freeman

Staff: Terri Bjorklund, Pamela Smith

Absent:

- 2. Additions or deletions to agenda.**

None.

- 3. Announcements by Chair.**

None.

- 4. M/S McMurrin/Hansen to recommend approval of Minutes for November 28th, 2016.**

Motion passed (3-0)

- 5. Planning/Zoning –Report for November and December 2016.**

Smith noted that the building permit valuation totaled \$808,112.12 and two sign permits in December.

- 6. M/S McMurrin/Wilkening to recommend appointment of Randy Carlson and Sue Ostlund to the open Planning Commission Board of Adjustment seat vacations.**

Bjorklund announced that two applications were received for the open board positions. The applicants are Randy Carlson and Sue Ostlund. Carlson has had previous experience serving on the Planning Commission. She read that Ostlund stated her previous experience as working as a City Auditor has provided her insight into how communities are built and how growth is planned. The Board discusses the applications briefly noting that there are two open Board seats; deciding to recommend approval for both applicants.
Motion passed (3-0)

- 7. M/S McMurrin/Hansen to recommend approval of the Land Survey No. 74 regarding the exchange between Hawkinson Construction Company Inc. and the City of Walker to establish a County State Aid Highway system within the City limits.**

Freeman gives a brief overview of the history of this project that has been in the works for the last several years. He explains that when Ah-Gwah-Ching, a State Facility was around, there was a State Highway into the Ah-Gwah-Ching site. When that was eliminated the State turned it over to the County. He notes that they will be given County/State Aid Funds; however a County State/Aid Highway cannot dead-end. It either

has to connect to another State Highway or another County/State Aid Highway. The current alignment of the Ah-Gwah-Ching road that goes through the ponds and down the hill and pass the Hawkinson pit and out to Highway 34; cannot be made to County/State Aid standards because of the curve in the hill just west of the ponds. He states where the pink highlighted area of the colored map is the City limits. He points out the location of the old drip irrigation system was for the ponds. With the alignment going through that area it made the land to the west of that useless to the City. But if the City were to ever expand their ponds you could do that with this exchange. Dave Emblom negotiated with Hawkinson Construction, that they would give the City about a 395 foot strip of land. Terry points out the areas on the Registered Land Survey No. 74 that Hawkinson would be trading about a 395 foot strip of land in Tract D for the City's Tract B. Freeman explains that they did a 100 foot right-of-way Plat for that and that is now recorded. He explained the right-of-ways that were given through that area. Because this land is Torrens we had the option of doing a sub-division Plat or registered land survey. What they have done is the registered land survey. They take the City's land description and the Hawkinson description and make four Tracts; Tract A, B, C and D. Hawkinson will Deed Tract D over to the City of Walker and the City of Walker will Deed over Tract B to Hawkinson and the right-of-way will get recorded.

Wilkening states there is also an agreement within Tract D; in that if the City ever chooses to do something with Tract D, Hawkinson has the right do mineral extraction in that location so they can take out the gravel prior to us putting it to our use. Ironically we would use it for a pond and need to have some extraction done. There is a time limit-I believe it is a year.

Freeman adds that planning out four years from now and if the City ever decides they would need to expand the ponds. Three years from that point you would let Hawkinson know that you plan on expanding your ponds in one year. Hawkinson has the right to say that they want the gravel or no they don't want the gravel.

Motion passed (3-0)

8. Discussion on valuation based fees that are collected for the building permits.

Bjorklund explains how the discrepancies in the building permit valuations. What we were doing was if someone was building it themselves we were putting no value on that person's time that would be actually doing the work themselves. Also scrap lumber or free material with very little value put into building materials. We believe there is a value of someone's time that needs to be added to the building permits. The attached building valuation data is what the State puts out there as values so we could make sure that the different entities that are building fall within that or somewhat close to that in order to ensure that everyone is treated fairly.

The Board discusses how this chart is figured that it is a cost per square foot and is dependent upon what exactly they are doing. Bjorklund reads that types I and II are building elements of non-combustible materials, type III are exterior walls are of non-combustible materials in the interior building element or of any material permitted by code, type IV is heavy timber exterior walls are of non-combustible materials in the interior building and the building elements are of solid wood without concealed spaces.

Hansen requested possibly getting a body of data before it goes into enforcement; to see how this would compare to actual cost. He added that these costs could be based on union wage or prevailing wage.

The Board requested that City staff put together a cost analysis of the last years to review how building permit revenues compare to building permit expenditures.

9. Consider strategies for implementation of the 2017-2018 Tasks from the Comprehensive Plan.

- Continue to support expansion of the Cass County offices on its current site.

Wilkening suggested dedicating at least half of the next meeting to discussing the possibility of Cass County expansion. What limitations if any does our zoning ordinance place on the County? Ask ourselves what restrictions we are placing on them as a City that would prevent them from expansion. And if it is found that there isn't. Then we could direct the Council to write to the Cass County Board of Commissioners and encourage them to maintain their facilities within the City and request prior notification to any plans for replacement of that facility.

- Continue to evaluate the needs of the Community Center and determine whether public involvement in the project is warranted.

Bjorklund and Wilkening stated that that is currently being worked on.

- Consider the adoption of a resolution of support for operating levies that are recommended by the School Board.

Bjorklund stated, 'if and when'. She indicated to the Board that the next time that the comprehensive plan is drafted they would need to take a better look at the implementation tasks to see what is no longer relevant.

- Monitor and amend local regulations and policies that may impair Cass County from maximizing use of their existing site. Modify the regulations and policies, where possible, to provide the county with greater flexibility.

The Board discussed this as to include in the first bullet point.

- Create a plan for establishing wayfinding (signs and other devices) throughout the city that are modestly scaled, target pedestrians and direct people to key locations throughout the community.

Wilkening stated that this is something that we have been working on. Bjorklund notes that there is a trails committee that is very active in that as of now. She adds that we will be seeing a lot more signage this spring, not only in the community but as well as the trails to bring visitors into town.

- Continue to emphasize the maintenance of sidewalks and curbs so as to ensure an attractive appearance.

This is currently being worked on. The Board discusses the ongoing nature of this. Bjorklund brings up a discussion with the Chamber regarding a complaint received from a visitor had they had commented that the Circle of Time was not accessible because of the snow mounded up around it. Bjorklund adds the promise of the Circle of Time group was to maintain that; to provide walkable snow removal. This is an example of how the City has allowed something to happen on City property and now that it has been a couple

years down the road it has gone by the wayside. And once again the City is being blamed for something that they wanted nothing to do with.

- Conduct and maintain a business inventory so as to promote local businesses and identify gaps in the local economy.

The Board discusses the sign inventory that was done with the previous zoning administrator could act as one.

- Regularly meet with the Leech Lake Band to discuss ways in which members of the City Council can listen to and learn more about the tribal government so as to improve relations and understanding between the City and the tribal government.

Wilkening stated that the natural gas pipeline is tied to the Tribal Government; until they can figure out a way to address that, we will suffer because of that. The Board discusses the construction that is underway on Shingobee Island is proposed to offer gaming as well as liquor sales and convenience store. Wilkening reminded the board that the septic system would not support everything they are wanting. At some point they will exceed their flow. The Board believes that it is important that any time they have the opportunity to work with the Tribe they should.

- Find a solution to the infrastructure problems in the industrial park that meets the needs to existing tenants and limits the City's long-term financial obligations.

Wilkening stated that is completed. We developed a plan on which we could expand with the current system that we have out there. We wouldn't have a fire sprinkler system capable water supply. If the time comes when there is a large industrial entity that wants to be located there, they would have to put in a holding tank.

10. Chair Wilkening adjourned the meeting at 7:11p.m.