

OWATONNA PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES FOR AUGUST 13, 2024

The Owatonna Planning Commission met in regular session at 5:30 p.m. in the Crandall Center – Chambers with Chairperson Kelly Rooks conducting the meeting. Present at roll call were Commissioners Mark Meier, Kelly Rooks, Rachel Springer-Gasner, John Eickhoff, Nick Peake, and Mark Wilson. Commissioner Dave Effertz was absent. Community Development Manager Greg Kruschke, Planning Specialist Ashley Zidon, and Senior Administrative Technician Kristen Kopp were also present.

A motion was made by Eickhoff and seconded by Meier to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of August 13, 2024. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion carried.

Vine Street Parking Lot – Hour Designation was presented by Community Development Manager Greg Kruschke. (Refer to report on file.) He said the City is currently out to bid on the Vine Street Parking Lot. Overall, they will be reconstructing the parking lot, adding stormwater, adding lighting, adding landscaping similar to Cedar Avenue, as well as a trail along Vine Street with parking on the street. When the new lot is constructed, there will be 160 parking stalls as well as 15 parallel stalls on Vine Street, which is a 25 stall increase in this area. At this time, staff is recommending two different designations for this parking lot. They are recommending two hours for the east half of the parking lot and 24 hours for the west half. It will keep it roughly the same as what is there now, but adding stalls. The parallel parking stalls will stay the same designation—two hours on the street. One of the concerns has been allowing for maintenance. Generally, 24 hour lots have no parking one night a week with no parking from 2 to 6 am. The City is recommending that they post when they are clearing the lot, but are trying to make it more user friendly for this lot. The two-hour parking is no parking any night, so that will be left as is. The lights will be similar to what is on Cedar Avenue. There will be a greenway along the west side US Bank that will be a public access to Broadway Street. Staff is recommending these changes become effective post construction. Eickhoff asked if the alleyway next to US Bank will have lighting. Kruschke said yes, there will be two lights. Eickhoff asked if there would be grass along the narrow strip between the trail and the street. Kruschke said the trail will be right behind the curb. Eickhoff said he would like wider stalls but noted that it was probably too late. He asked if they were adding any EV charging stations. Kruschke said they are not physically constructing any EV stations with this, but the conduit is being laid so they can easily install it if they want to. Eickhoff asked how they would prevent someone parking in the 24-hour lot indefinitely and asked if there were any restrictions on how long someone could park there. Kruschke said that they will mark cars. There are ramifications through the police department—they are able to ticket and tow as needed. Eickhoff asked how they would prevent people who live across the street from parking in those stalls overnight. Kruschke said that this is a public parking lot and there is a need for a 24-hour parking lot in this area. There are a lot of apartment units on Broadway and Bridge Street. Those residents use this lot and we need to accommodate them. We can't regulate who parks there. It's a public lot, so first come, first served. If it becomes an issue, it's something they can look at. At this point, the City is not charging for any public parking. Wilson questioned the maintenance in the 24 hour lots and said that typically that one night a week is when they catch the people who park there multiple days. Kruschke said they're not recommending one night a week on this lot, but they will be marking tires and checking that daily. We're relying on enforcement. Springer-Gasner recommended changing two-hour to four-hour. There are a lot of businesses that have clientele who use the current four-hour lot. Peake said that was his question as well. What is the justification for going to two-hour? Kruschke said he doesn't have a strong opinion either way but recommended the two hour as that is what the majority was. Springer-Gasner said if we went with four-hour, that will make the downtown businesses happier. When you go over four hours, that changes the scope as employees might park there all day long. Rooks said they've talked in the past how they want people to spend time downtown. Two hours is not a lot of time, so she likes the four-hour change to allow

people to spend more time downtown. Springer-Gasner said they could keep some two-hour stalls. Kruschke said they would prefer just two designations in the entire lot because they want less signage overall. A motion was made by Springer-Gasner and seconded by Peake to recommend City Council approval to amend the Vine Street parking lot designation to a four-hour designation on the east half of the lot and a 24-hour designation on the west half of the lot noting that the Street Department will notify when they are shutting the lot down for maintenance. Eickhoff clarified that the street parking would remain at two hours. Kruschke said that was correct—the time limit for street parking would not be changing with this request. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion carried.

Comprehensive Plan Implementation Review was presented by Planning Specialist Ashley Zidon. (Refer to report on file.) She said that we have reached an important milestone in the Comprehensive Plan process—not only is up for draft comment, but it includes an implementation chapter. This is the back bookend to the Comprehensive Plan. The front bookend is the vision and the back bookend is the roadmap of how to reach the vision. The implementation chapter includes all of the strategies and all of the chapters. They have charted them and assigned them a timeline, a priority, and an owner, which is all importation information for staff and commissions. Staff has held numerous meetings with Department Heads to help appropriately prioritize and assign owners so that staff is confident and comfortable with the level of study that has been applied to each strategy. The timelines are short-term (5 years), medium-term (5-10 years), long-term (10+ years), and ongoing. They have also assigned priorities: high, medium, and low. The implementation matrix will help staff and board support going forward. An annual review by the Planning Commission is the most typical way to check in on the Comprehensive Plan. That review is important because it helps us assess our needs; Comprehensive Plans can be amended and should be updated on a regular basis. She said if it's fair to summarize the next five years, it will look like ordinance changes, infill development, and planning for node creations (focus areas). There are some environmental changes and practices. The Draft Comprehensive Plan is open for public comment. People can email comments to Greg or submit them online at www.owatonna.gov/imagine2050. There will be an open house on September 24 from 3:30 – 5:15 pm in the Council Chambers, before the Planning Commission meeting where they will be making a recommendation to City Council. She asked the Commissioners for their reactions. Eickhoff said he really likes it. It will be a lot of work, but he likes that it keeps people accountable. He asked about the budget. Zidon said often times Comprehensive Plans don't account for budget. Kruschke said they have put in a budget request for the ordinance amendment next year. Department Heads will take this into account. This helps with setting priorities. We've never really had anything like this before. Some are things we're already doing, some of it is brand new. Some of these things open up grant funding opportunities as well. Zidon said that a painless way to do this is to assign \$, \$\$, or \$\$\$\$. We might not have the ability to fund the project in a five-year time frame. It might mean we can't hire a consultant for a project. Kruschke said that there are some immediate goals. He said he wanted to introduce this framework to them today. Springer-Gasner said she likes it. It's thorough and easy to follow. Rooks asked how the Planning Commission would be involved. Zidon said that they could have an annual report, or quarterly report. Folks could get creative with a dashboard. It can be really creative. She asked the Commissioners to think about what would be useful for them to stay involved and keep tracking progress. Kruschke said he would envision them easing into it. We'll probably have more of an annual meeting in the April / May timeline. He's not expecting the Planning Commission to be volunteering eight hours a week on this. They can help hold staff accountable. Some of it will take partnerships and City Council will have to be on board as well. We can iron it out going forward. Zidon said it's important to take time to celebrate the milestone—we're close to the end. Eickhoff asked how the online input would be communicated. Kruschke said that there will be an engagement summary at the September 24 Planning Commission meeting. We have time to look at the comments. As we go through this process, a member will change X in the plan to a Y, and the Commission will vote on it. We'll have a public hearing that night as well. If there are certain items that you wish to be

changed, we'll go through that. He recommended going through the document prior to the meeting. It's not a lot of new information. He said that the Draft Comprehensive Plan has been sent to the Commissioners digitally, but if they would like a printed copy, let staff know and we will take care of that.

Final Plat of Oak Hill Addition, which is a 2.05± acre tract of land requested to be rezoned PUD by Jolayne Mohs / Owatonna Hope Center Inc. and located at 134 Southview Street SW, was presented by Community Development Manager Greg Kruschke. (Refer to report on file.) A motion was made by Meier and seconded by Springer-Gasner to recommend City Council approval of the Final Plat of Oak Hill Addition with the following conditions:

- 1) The final plat shall be recorded within 60 days of the approval.
- 2) The title opinion shall be approved by the City Attorney prior to recording of the final plat.

All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion carried.

Kruschke said that City Council approved both of the items at the last meeting.

The next Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for September 10. There are currently no items for that meeting, so that may be cancelled. The September 24 meeting is scheduled for the public hearing for the Comprehensive Plan with an Open House run by Stantec before the meeting (3:30 to 5:15 p.m. with a presentation by Stantec at 4:00 p.m.). Commissioners are not expected to be at the entire Open House, but are welcome to come if they are able and willing. Stantec will be running the open house and staff will be available.

Kruschke said that, unfortunately for us, Planning Specialist Ashley Zidon has discovered her dream job and will be leaving us next week. He thanked her for all of her work on the Comprehensive Plan, saying that it would not have been possible to make it to this point without her.

A motion was made by Meier to adjourn and seconded by Meier at 6:08 p.m. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Greg Kruschke
Community Development Manager