

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ST. CLOUD PLANNING COMMISSION

A meeting of the St. Cloud Planning Commission was held on January 12, 2010, at 7 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers. Members present were Anderson, Andzenge, Chirhart, DeVine, Goerger, Holtberg, Radaich, and Council representative Pederson.

Open Forum: No one was present to speak at the open public forum.

Consent Agenda: Holtberg moved approval of the consent agenda as follows:

Acceptance of staff reports for January 12, 2010, as part of the official record.

Approval of minutes from the December 8, 2009, Planning Commission meeting.

The motion was seconded by Radaich. Goerger announced that he will abstain on approval of the minutes as he was not in attendance at the December meeting. The motion to approve carried by a vote of 6-0-1 (Goerger abstaining).

Recommendation Regarding the Heritage Park Skate Plaza at 265 33rd Avenue South:

Matt Glaesman, Planning Director, explained that a skate plaza project has been supported in the Comprehensive Plan (CP), which guides future land use decisions in the community. Also, the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) has included a skate plaza since 2003. From 2004-2006, there has been a renewed effort to find a permanent location for a significant skate plaza. A citizen based committee has been working for a number of years on siting and funding solutions for the skate plaza. There is a long term desire for a skate plaza size of 1 acre; however, the initial phase would be about 1/2 acre. Glaesman stated that the general criteria for the skate plaza site are: the site be located within the urban core that would have both a pedestrian and vehicular base; have amenities such as restrooms and off-street parking; and the site be an amenity for the neighborhood as a whole. The project budget is \$500,000, consists of both private and public dollars. A number of sites have been considered through public debate and some through debate by City staff and Administration. Through the process of elimination, the site under consideration is Heritage Park. The skate plaza is proposed at the eastern edge of the property abutting 33rd Ave. at the entrance to the park. Also, sidewalk

would be installed on 2nd St. and 33rd Ave. to accommodate pedestrian movement. Glaesman explained that City Charter requires a recommendation by the Planning Commission for construction on city property; a recommendation on the financial terms is optional. Chirhart stated that it was mentioned that funding will come from Park Improvement funds and donations as well as an amount of \$50,000 which he questioned. Glaesman clarified that the \$50,000 would come from the Public Improvement Fund for the sidewalk work. Chirhart asked if the Public Improvement Fund is funded by City property tax dollars. Glaesman explained that the Public Improvement Fund is state dollars dedicated to vehicular and pedestrian transportation improvements. Radaich asked if a favorable Planning Commission – January 12, 2010

recommendation for the skate plaza in Heritage Park would be for a specific location (A or B). Glaesman answered that the Commission may recommend a specific location within Heritage Park; however, design work will be done for both sites. Chairperson Andzenge opened the public hearing and invited testimony on the siting of a skate plaza at Heritage Park. The following persons testified:

Carolyn Garven
624 Riverside Dr. NE

She expressed concern on her own behalf and her neighborhood association's behalf regarding the process. The appropriate meetings and public hearings were held. However, no one has seemed to pay attention and listen to her or her neighborhood in this process. Since she has been a City Council member, a goal of the Council has been for the City to provide outstanding customer service. She explained the Wilson Park/Northeast Neighborhood Association's experience in attempting to help the City find a suitable site for the skate plaza. About a year and a half ago, as the representative for the neighborhood association, she brought to City Administration the suggestion that they look at Wilson Park. She suggested a location along the river where the poorly maintained tennis court is located. The neighborhood believed there would be no noise issue or conflict with other activities in that location. There was no response by Administration to either her or the neighborhood association. In November of 2009, the skate plaza issue resurfaced. The neighborhood association again contacted City Administration about the Wilson Park location, and no response was given by the City. She stated there are two ways to make an idea go away. The first is to ignore it which she feels is what the City did. The second way is to make the idea as untenable as possible to its supporters. She wrote a letter to the Park Board, and the City promised to take soil borings and give the neighborhood association factual explanation as to why Wilson Park was not being considered. In Monday's St. Cloud Times, the

article said the soil boring tests indicated that the soil was unsuitable. When she contacted the Park Dept., she learned that no new soil borings were taken. Instead, soil borings from a number of years ago were again reviewed. Those particular soil borings were from the south end of the park where SCSU was looking at putting in a boathouse. They were not from the north end of the park which was the skate plaza location suggested by the neighborhood association. The newspaper article also stated that the plaza would displace existing uses which is not the case. She reiterated that she believes someone from the City should have contacted either her or the neighborhood.

Dennis Dunphy
101 Riverside Dr. SE

Heritage Park is a wonderful asset in St. Cloud that preserves nature. He believes the Heritage Park location is already a “done deal”, and that the City Council will endorse Heritage Park. Heritage Park makes the least sense as a location for the skate park. The Nature Center at Heritage Park is closed due to the economy. When the economy improves, the Nature Center could be reopened. He asked that an alternative location be thoughtfully considered.

Jim Schiffler
555 Edgemont Dr.

He has been observing this process for 10 years, and it is time to take action. He visits Heritage Park monthly, and it is underutilized. This site would be centrally located and supported the location.

Austin Lee
1002 11th Ave. No.

He is a member of the Park & Rec. Board. There have been stereotypes of skateboarders that he wanted to clear up. He has received the comment that if all skateboarders were like him, they would support the skate plaza at Heritage Park. He said he is no different than others present who have an interest in skateboarding. Skateboarders have received a reputation as being drug using, music playing, vandalizing menaces to society. It is discriminatory to stereotype all skateboarders. Skateboarders will respect the Heritage Park site. Skateboarding is not only a teen sport; the ages of skateboarders ranges from approximately 5 to 35. He offered the following names of

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some of the many skateboarders that contribute to the community: Mike Thienes, successful business owner of a production company; Justin Engelmeyer, a full time SCSU student majoring in business and foreign language; Mike Pettit, former SCSU student and owner of a successful skate and snow shop; Mike Chau, professor at the MN School of Business; Tennessee Scott-Lumbar, 9 yrs. old and December student ambassador of the 3rd grade; Daniel Hicks who works full time at two jobs; Jon Theis, who has created fundraisers called Hip Hop Helping Others and has worked for years to make a skate plaza become a reality. Every skateboarder present has something to be proud of and want an outlet to stay out of trouble. Heritage Park is centrally located.

Kaye Schirnich
1109 7th Ave. No.

She commended Austin for all his work on this project, and she asked that people not stereotype skateboarders, but only address the issues. However, she does not believe that Heritage Park is a good location for

a skate plaza because it is a nature park which offers serenity. A skate plaza would change the character of the natural haven. It should be located in a more recreational oriented park such as Wilson, Centennial or Whitney. Heritage Park offers something that no other City park offers. The size of Heritage Park is irrelevant as its appropriateness for a skate plaza. She circulated a petition of opposition to the Heritage Park location. Not all of the signatures are from St. Cloud's registered voters, which was intentional. It is appropriate to get signatures from the users of the park that are not St. Cloud residents. Prior to the December meeting, she submitted a petition with 116 signatures and forwarded an additional 228 on January 6, for a total of 344 signatures (222 were St. Cloud residents; 16 from Sartell, 15 from Waite Park, 11 from Sauk Rapids, 8 from St. Joe; 8 from Rice, and others). The park draws people from the surrounding area. She questioned why Whitney Park is not a good location. The usual response has been that Whitney already has so many recreational activities, and activities should be spread throughout the City parks. She questioned if that is a good enough reason to discount it and instead, infringe on a nature park. The minutes of the October 10 Park Board meeting indicated that someone from the Centennial Park neighborhood asked someone to come and speak to them. The person from the Park Board who reported back to the Park Board indicated 4 adults spoke, and it was split – 2 for Centennial Park and 4 against. That was the extent of the discussion about the skate plaza at Centennial Park at that Park Board meeting. When she asked the Mayor at a Town Hall meeting why Centennial Park was dismissed so quickly, he responded that there was neighborhood opposition. At that same Town Hall meeting, someone asked the Mayor if Centennial Park was dismissed as a possible location due to opposition, why wasn't the opposition to Heritage Park not heard? The Mayor then stated that parking at Centennial is an issue. Schimnich stated that the south parking lot at Centennial Park is not significantly smaller than the parking lot at Heritage Park. There is also a small parking lot at the north end of Centennial Park as well as overflow parking at St. Paul's and on-street parking. Centennial would be more centrally located with easy access to the bus line. She asked when the soil borings were done at Wilson Park and what locations within the park were considered.

Trina Sturlaugson
1319 Poppy Rd.

Everyone that is against the Heritage Park location seems to have the attitude of "Not In My Back Yard". The location must be what is best for the City. She is President of the St. Cloud Youth Commission, and the skateboarder stereotype is not fair and inaccurate. Austin Lee is a great example for teenagers. The Youth Commission is a student facilitated group that aims to teach kids about government and encourages them to become involved in their community. The City has tennis courts, soccer fields, basketball courts, and racquetball courts for people interested in those sports and thinks people who want to skate should have a facility. The skate park would be historic as St. Cloud's first skate plaza. The skate plaza is less than 1% of the total acreage of Heritage Park. She is an advocate of youth, and Austin Lee is trying to

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do something for the good of the community. Skateboarders wish to skate in a designated area which shows respect for others.

Glenda Burgeson
1114 7th Ave. No.

She spoke in opposition to the Heritage Park location as there is a more suitable area for the project. This is a unique area in the City, and she does not want to see it destroyed.

Tennessee Scott-Lumbar
1003 7th Ave. No.

Skateboarding has been a positive activity for him. It has taught him to be respectful of people. Heritage Park is a good site; it is clean and has a positive atmosphere. It is located across from businesses that have good prices on snacks. His friends could carpool with him to the park.

Margaret Scott-Lumbar
1003 7th Ave. No.

Skateboarding is her son's passion. In traveling with her son to skate parks, she has witnessed small to medium size group of people ages 7-25 skating together peacefully. Many times parents will be in the vicinity reading a book and watching their children. It is not a noisy sport. She noted a park in Glenwood located by a lake that has many things to offer – skate plaza, playground, dirt bike track, trails, history museum, and campground. This park is heavily used, and the skate park within it has not presented a problem for the other uses or the neighbors. Heritage Park is underutilized. She has personally used this park many times. Parents with small children can walk on the trails and/or visit the museum while the older children are skateboarding. City parks need to provide activities for all of its residents who have varied interests.

Ryan Roarty
SCSU campus

He is a skateboarder, and there is currently no designated place to skate.

Maureen McCarter
1931 17th St. So.

This should not be an issue of Heritage Park supporters against skate park supporters. St. Cloud is large enough to have both a nature park and a skateboard park. Fewer dollars are being invested in that park than in the past which may be one of the reasons that the park is underutilized. Children are missing out on an opportunity with the closing of the Nature Center. She believes there are 3 issues with Heritage Park: 1) appropriateness of location which has been addressed by a number of people. She added that the skate plaza should be located in a park that has swing sets nearby. 2) Safety – skate plaza should be in a location that is easier to access by pedestrians; it is not in a residential neighborhood. Also, it is very difficult to turn left out of that park; and, 3) the flawed process should be addressed. She referred to Garven's comments about the Wilson Park site and that dishonest comments were made about conducting soil boring tests.

Jeff Goerger
Commission member

He asked that the audience show respect for the process and not clap as it slows the process, and everyone should have the opportunity to speak.

Jeffrey Lee
1002 11th Ave. No.

People have expressed concern that a skate plaza in Heritage Park will destroy the peace and serenity of the park. The two alternative sites would not encroach on the woods or trails and are far away from nature anything nature oriented in the park. The proposed plaza is adjacent to a busy and noisy retail complex. Cement based skate plazas do not generate the same noise as a wood ramp. Skaters do not use boom boxes anymore; they use their I-Pods with headphones. Traffic noise would exceed any noise generated from a skate plaza. Skaters prefer a peaceful environment. A very small percentage of the park would be occupied by the skate plaza. He has a petition with names of over 1,000 people in support of the site.

Brandon Lee
1002 11th Ave. No.

He is not a skateboarder; but because his brother is a skateboarder, he has visited many cities with skate plazas. His observation is that skateboarders are polite, respectful, and supportive of other skateboarders. Skateboarding is the most popular individual sport. Skateboarders need a designated place to skateboard. Skateboarding is

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a quiet sport compared to other sports. Any noise would be drowned out by the traffic surrounding the site. There are really no substantial negatives for a skate park in any location in St. Cloud. He asked that the Commission support a skate plaza at Heritage Park.

Cindy O'Konek
1534 CR 137

She believes skateboarding is supported, but Heritage Park should stay a nature park. She asked if there are plans for expansion of the plaza. She is an 18-yr. employee of the Stearns History Museum, and the Park is not underutilized.

Tom Tieven (?)
Homeless

There are 8 or more trees that would be removed in the skate plaza area. Vegetation should not be destroyed. It is unsafe for children as they will probably not walk to cross over to the lights to go to Wal-Mart. It is quite a distance to walk to that park from any neighborhood. Centennial Park would be a good location because neighbors can watch what is happening in the park. That is an advantage for both the neighborhood and the people using the skate plaza and other park amenities.

Jon Theis
528 5th Ave. NE

He was a former chair of the St. Cloud Youth Commission. He has been heavily involved with siting of a skate park plaza since 1998. Concerns about ruining the nature center and park seem to be unfounded. The skate plaza won't be any more of a distraction than the traffic on 33rd Ave. He was offended that people believe that skateboarders don't enjoy nature. Skateboarders come from all walks of life. Relative to the safety issue, it makes more sense for skateboarders to have a designated place to skateboard rather than in the downtown or in areas that are not safe. There will be opposition to the skate plaza regardless of which park is considered. Heritage Park is a great location and has other things to offer as well.

Scott Foster
1330 15th St. No.

He is a member of the skateboard plaza committee, a nature lover and also a member of the Stearns History Museum. He addressed other parks that have been considered for the skateboard plaza. The Committee's first choice was Eastman Park (Lake George). They proposed building the plaza north of the parking lot, but nearby residents were opposed, and soil samples indicated the ground is too soft. Centennial Park does not have an existing restroom facility, one ball diamond would have to be removed to construct the plaza, and it would probably meet with neighborhood opposition. Wilson Park would raise concerns about the safety of skateboarders who may be tempted to ride their skateboards down the steep access road and could collide with vehicles. Due to the soft soil in Wilson Park, the ground would have to be raised making it cost prohibitive. Also, Wilson Park is not highly visible. McKinley Park, located on University Dr. across from the new Coborn's, would consume a large percentage of that park. There is ample room for a skate plaza in Whitney Park; however, the Park Dept. would like to spread facilities throughout the city parks. Heritage Park is ideal because of the location, high visibility for supervision, easily accessible, restrooms are in place, and there are alternate activities available for parents and younger siblings.

Tama Theis
7414 245th St.

The process to build a skate plaza has been ongoing for approximately 17 years. Some of the people in the audience have been involved in that process since the beginning while others are relative newcomers. Many of these people are St. Cloud taxpayers and their children. She does not want to lose these future leaders to other cities that have skateboard facilities. She is proud to be a part of the group supporting the skateboarding community. The skateboarders are passionate about their sport and have never given up on their goal to have a skate plaza. There won't ever be a perfect location. She believes the skate plaza would be an asset in Heritage Park. She asked that the Planning Commission support the skateboarding community and approve this location. The changing needs of the community should be met.

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Charlene Akers
Director
Stearns History Museum

She heard about the skate park about 2 1/2 mos. ago and has attended several meetings relating to it. The person that used to own the farm where the park and museum are located came to the museum recently and expressed concern about the future usage of Heritage Park. Several weeks ago, some of the skateboarders and their families helped dismantle the international exhibit at the History Museum. Over 24,000 people visited the exhibit, and those people said that Heritage Park was an enjoyable setting, and many walked the trails and enjoyed the natural setting. She pointed out that history is what happened the very last second.

Adam Logeman
6936 Kenwood Rd.

He is Vice-President of the Youth Commission. He has many passions and uses the city parks often. Skateboarders are passionate about their sport, and their voices should be heard.

Tanner Walsh
415 Pondview Ln. E.
St. Joseph, MN

He is a student at Apollo. He is discouraged about the lack of areas to skate. There are very few good features anywhere for skateboarding.

Donna Schaefer
6037 85th St.
Foley, MN

She has seen a fantastic example of a group that is trying to accomplish their goal. She asked them not to take away the only opportunity for children of all ages the opportunity to learn about nature. She fears that the Heritage Park Nature Center will be turned into a restroom instead of a learning center.

Damian Fiedlerd
8069 Hwy. 23 NE

His family likes skateboarding. He thinks Heritage Park would be a good place to put the skate plaza.

Gabe Jarnot
333 33rd Ave. So.

There have been questions about the process. It was his understanding that there would be a public hearing at the Advisory Board meeting in December, but there was no opportunity to speak prior to the Board making their recommendation. At that meeting, 5 criteria were presented for an ideal skate park; however, Heritage Park does not qualify for 3 of them. One criteria was that the site be located in the urban core, and Heritage Park is on the outermost fringe of the options. Another criteria was for the location to have pedestrian access. He works next to the park, and he is concerned about kids crossing the 4-lane roadway from both directions. Safety is a big concern. The third criteria that is not met by Heritage Park is site proximity to an existing neighborhood. That is an uncontrolled intersection with high speed traffic surrounded by commercial property. The location should be reconsidered.

Peter Nyblom
631 5th Ave. SE

He works at Regent Broadcasting. He has traveled across the country with his son to skateboard parks. He believes Heritage Park is a perfect choice for a skate plaza. Those in the audience are the caretakers of St. Cloud's history because they have had wonderful experiences in St. Cloud, but the future of St. Cloud is also in the audience. He asked that the Commission not deny the future of those people to have a wonderful past. The skate park will be healthy for families and will boost the economy.

Mike Thienes
71 3rd St. NE

He is part owner of Youth Shelter Supply and has been selling skateboards in the St. Cloud area for over 16 yrs. He has also been attending meetings to push for a skateboard plaza for over 16 yrs., and he believes this is the best location. He is also a nature lover and appreciates the park, but believes the skateboard plaza will only bring more attention to the park. He has visited all the other parks that were considered initially and does not believe those locations are as appropriate as Heritage Park.

Dex Miller
1345 Bittersweet Ln.

He recently moved from Eden Prairie which had a skate park. That skate park did not receive complaints from anyone. He thinks Heritage Park is a good location for the skate park.

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There being no one else wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed. Andzenge asked staff for a description of a skate park. Glaesman stated that the character and use of parks vary based upon their features and setting; there have been poor examples in St. Cloud because they have not had adequate features. Andzenge inquired what age group would be served by the skateboard plaza, and Glaesman said the public testimony suggested the users would range from the very young to 30's or older. He added that more than 50% of the City's population is under 35 yrs. old. Goerger said that based on the testimony, it is obvious that a skate park is needed in St. Cloud. However, he questioned whether a skate park in Heritage Park is the best and highest use of the property. His biggest concern is financing for the project and the City's current economic condition and its budget constraints. He noted that the skate park improvements have been included in the CIP for several years and asked Scott Zlotnik, Parks Director, if there are other park projects that have been included in the CIP for a number of years. Zlotnik stated that the CIP has changed over the years with budget cuts. At one time there were additional funding sources such as Park Improvement Fund, Development Fund, and outside sources, but has since developed into a local option sales tax CIP which only applies to regional parks. The skate park plaza has been in the CIP since 2003, and the funding source was local option sales tax. One of the limiting factors was that sites outside of the regional parks were not considered based on funding criteria. An adjustment was done to allow them to use Park Improvement Funds which would allow consideration of local parks for the skate plaza as well as regional parks. Goerger asked if some of the other park projects in the CIP are being pushed back because of funding issues. Zlotnik answered that he is not aware of any that are being delayed due solely to the skate plaza. Usually projects are taken out of the CIP based on insufficient collection of funds. Goerger inquired if there are City park properties in neighborhoods that are undeveloped. Zlotnik responded that the City has 92 parks encompassing 1,500 acres, 900 acres of which are undeveloped. Goerger questioned if warming shelters will remain unopened this winter and wading

pools closed in the summer due to lack of funds. Zlotnik stated that warming shelters are closed with the exception of Wilson Park, and a decision has not yet been made by the Park Board relative to closing of wading pools. Those are funded by the General Fund. Park Improvement Funds are governed by a different set of rules and regulations and are intended only for improvements, not operations. Goerger asked if Park Improvement Funds could be used to purchase swing sets in undeveloped parks, and Zlotnik answered that they could. Goerger questioned how the City can justify spending \$500,000 to construct a skate plaza while neighborhood parks continue to be undeveloped and therefore, underutilized. Zlotnik stated that there is a need to fulfill goals of the

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Comprehensive Plan and to provide non-traditional opportunities. He pointed out that other funding sources may exist for other park needs, such as CDBG funding for neighborhood park improvements. Chirhart asked how much money has been raised by the skateboard park group. Zlotnik said it is his understanding that the Early Morning Optimist Club has offered a \$50,000 match and believes the skateboard supporters probably have funds in at least that amount. Chirhart asked what would happen if they don't have the \$50,000, and Zlotnik answered that the project may have to be downsized. Chirhart questioned how much money has been allocated for sidewalk along 2nd St. and where that sidewalk will go. Zlotnik stated Engineering has indicated that sidewalk will be installed even if the skate plaza is not constructed in the park. Zlotnik added that \$50,000 has been allocated for street lighting and sidewalks. Chirhart asked if the lighting is at the 33rd Ave. and 2nd St. signal. Zlotnik answered that is correct. Chirhart stated that the City Traffic Engineer has stated that if the plaza is located adjacent to 33rd Ave., fencing may be required to prevent pedestrian crossing anywhere but at the signalized intersection. Zlotnik said cost of fencing may be covered through the Park Improvement Funds. Chirhart said he believes the projected cost of the sidewalk is optimistic and believes it would be more costly. Zlotnik stated that internal City staff would install the sidewalk.

Chirhart then asked the cost to remodel the nature center for exterior bathrooms. Zlotnik explained that those improvements are currently in the concept design phase, but guesses the cost would be minimal. Anderson asked why Whitney Park is not an acceptable location for the skate plaza. Zlotnik explained that in 2008, the Park Board approved a plan for a miracle field which would be a baseball field for people of all abilities. That would consume a significant amount of open space. Also, Whitney Park may also be the future site of a regional aquatic facilities center. Whitney Park gets many of the major improvements for regional activities. Zlotnik stated that 1.5 is the suggested square footage per skateboarder. Andzenge asked the skateboard plaza's impact on traffic. Zlotnik answered that there have been special events at Heritage Park, and he has never received a complaint about overuse or conflict of users. There will probably be more skate park facilities constructed in the future. Andzenge inquired if the skate plaza design accommodates a particular number of users. Zlotnik stated that census data indicates that in St. Cloud, there are probably 20,000 people in the 5 to 24 year old age category. His calculation indicates there could be approximately 3,200 users in St. Cloud which would need a total of 48,000 sq. ft. Radaich asked if the skate plaza would not be constructed if the Skate Board Committee can't come up with their portion of the funding. Zlotnik replied that the skate plaza would probably be scaled down to a neighborhood model rather than a regional model. Holtberg asked if there are any plans for signal lights or caution lights at the park's entrance/exit. Glaesman stated that pedestrian activated lights

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could be installed; however, it is not in the best interest to stop vehicular traffic unnecessarily. Holtberg commented that Heritage Park is located in a high traffic area. He asked if the City would consider selling this site. Glaesman stated this is a very attractive site for commercial development, and the City has received many calls expressing interest in the property. However, at this point, the City has no intention of selling the property for development. Devine noted that people repeatedly expressed concern that other parks were not given enough consideration. Zlotnik stated that some of

the criteria used were visibility, pedestrian activity, proximity to residential neighborhoods, existing park activities, and availability of public transit. He stated that users were asked to prioritize the parks. Eastman was the first preference with Heritage second. The three key issues for the users were location within an urban setting, proximity to amenities and additional services, and on-site activities, utilities and restrooms. Zlotnik explained that from a user standpoint, Wilson Park scored very low due to the safety issue with the steep grade of the access and because it was down by the river. Heritage Park was attractive to the users because it is more exposed. Centennial Park has no restroom facilities, and there was neighborhood opposition. Neighborhood parks aren't ideal based on noise, traffic concerns, etc. DeVine asked where skate parks are located in other cities. Zlotnik answered that they are usually located in areas that have a balance of active and natural environments. Glaesman noted that citizens consistently raise the issue that the City does a poor job of planning for the future and are reminded that City projects should plan for future expansion. Glaesman indicated that although Centennial Park is one of the City's larger neighborhood parks, it would be challenging to accommodate expansion of the initial skate plaza of ½ acre and the additional bathrooms and additional parking. In addition, the City has few neighborhood parks that have greater than 10 acres of buildable land. Therefore, it is difficult to place a skate park plaza in a neighborhood park. DeVine stated that some interest has been expressed for BMX bike use and asked if the skate plaza would draw BMX bikes to the site. Zlotnik responded that currently the plan is to accommodate skateboards only. DeVine asked about maintenance of the skate plaza, and Zlotnik responded that concrete is more sustainable than wood or metal ramps. Maintenance would be provided by the City Parks Dept. Chirhart inquired where expansion of the skate plaza would occur if the plaza were constructed along the eastern edge of the park along 33rd Ave. Zlotnik stated that if the plaza were built at 25,000 sq. ft., it would not be a best management practice to expand that model. Chirhart asked Zlotnik if he would recommend against the site closest to 33rd Ave. because it cannot be expanded. Zlotnik stated the site along 33rd Ave. would be his choice, but the expansion would have

to be to the north and south. Glaesman stated that the hindrance to the expansion would be the parking lot; there would be ample space to relocate the parking lot and not infringe on the woods or Planning Commission – January 12, 2010

prairie. Chirhart noted that the information he received stated that there is an attendant at Wilson Park during the summer. Zlotnik responded that there is an attendant for special events. Chirhart asked if supervision is intended at Heritage Park, and Zlotnik answered that supervision is not required. Goerger thanked those who testified and said it is unusual for a City Council member to testify which indicates that she was deeply concerned about the process which, in turn, concerns him. He said he hopes if any mistakes were made in the process, that they aren't repeated in the future.

Radaich moved to approve the skate park plaza on the most easterly edge of Heritage Park along 33rd Ave. So. The motion was seconded by Holtberg. Chirhart disclosed that when he was the Planning Commission liaison to the Park Board, he supported a skate park, both in concept and with a monetary donation. He stated that he is a new member of the Board of Directors of the Stearns History Museum. He said he cannot support the motion because he believes Heritage Park is the wrong location for the skateboard park. It presents a safety issue for pedestrians who need to cross 4 lanes of traffic; there are no bike paths in the area, and the City Engineering Dept. would not recommend a bike path in that area because of the congestion; it involves an expenditure of funds for a sidewalk which does not really go anywhere; and he is concerned about the process that was followed. Chirhart stated that Mr. Glaesman came to the History Center in November to say that the City wanted to put a skateboard park in Heritage Park. He attended both the open house and the Park Board meeting at which no public testimony was taken. Chirhart stated that he has not seen a rational justification for selecting Heritage Park because there was no comparison of the features for each park. He was troubled by Garven's comments. DeVine asked the consequences if the Planning Commission tabled the issue to obtain more information and allow additional time to consider other locations. Glaesman answered that the Land Development Code gives the City Council the right to

take action if the Planning Commission does not make a recommendation within 60 days. However, this is not a zoning issue. The City Council may allow the Planning Commission additional time if they believed the Commission was giving the issue thoughtful consideration. However, they may act on it prior to that time. Glaesman pointed out that the Planning Commission should specify what information is lacking if the decision is to table. Council representative Pederson said he values the opinion of the Park Board and the Planning Commission, and he would like the Planning Commission to make a recommendation to the City Council. Holtberg said he will vote in favor as there will not be a perfect location. He assumes most people will drive to Heritage Park to skateboard and believes multiple uses can co-exist on this site. Anderson will vote in favor as it is time to make a recommendation to the Council but pointed out that he has some concerns about the process. Chairperson Andzenge thanked the audience for their testimony. He said he would like to see the Planning Commission – January 12, 2010

skate plaza move forward and will therefore, support the motion. He asked that the City Council address concerns that have been raised. Adults can use the facility while children are skateboarding. The motion to approve siting of a skate plaza in Heritage Park carried by a vote of 4-3 (Radaich, Anderson, Holtberg and Andzenge in favor; Goerger, Chirhart and Devine opposed).

Amendment to West Prairie Point PUD General Development Plan/Aho Northwest, LLC:

Matt Glaesman, Planning Director, explained that this General Development Plan (GDP) amendment addresses the third type of housing product in the West Prairie Point development. The Comprehensive Plan (CP) and this GDP require three different housing types for those developments over 20 acres. The CP requires the split to be 20%; 20%; and 60%. West Prairie Point had three housing types: single family detached, row house, and two-unit single family attached product (townhouse). Several years ago, the developer asked for a GDP amendment to change the two-unit single family attached product to a cottage style single family product with the front porch pushed forward from the garage and detailed architectural standards. The current proposed GDP

amendment would allow continuation of the cottage style house but with several style options and omission of the architectural detail. Holtberg asked if the amendment would affect water and sewer hookups; Glaesman answered that it would not.

Chairperson Andzenge opened the public hearing and invited testimony on a request from Aho Northwest, LLC to amend the West Prairie Point Planned Unit Development (PUD) General Development Plan to permit a greater variety of home styles along Northwood Lane (Location: 6738, 6740, 6748, 6750, 6756, 6758, 6802, 6806, 6813, 6814, 6817, 6818, 6903, 6904, 6907, 6908, 6922, 6923, 6926, 6927, 7002, 7006, 7009, 7013, 7020, 7024, 7102, 7106, 7114, and 7118 Northwood Lane) (DPA-2010-01). The following persons testified:

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| Kari Koob
6921 22 nd St. No. | She wants to be assured that the existing home values do not decrease with this proposal. They chose to live in this neighborhood because of the architectural interest of the homes. |
| Bob Herges | He is representing Aho Northwest. There are 9 empty lots on 22 nd St. No. where the same style cottage homes will be built that were required prior to this amendment request. The only lots that may have a variety of homes is on Northwood Lane. He said the buyers will dictate which style they prefer. Although the current housing market is very difficult, he has been successful in selling homes in the Aho development. The cottage style homes that they have built are not in great demand and have had a difficult time selling them. |
| Tim Chirhart
Commission member | He asked if the proposed homes would be larger than the previously approved homes. |
| Bob Herges | They will be similar in square footage to what is currently being built. |
| Chairperson Andzenge | He inquired if Ms. Koob's property values will be affected by the proposed change. |

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| Bob Herges | It should have no impact on surrounding property values. |
| Jeff Goerger
Commission member | He asked if the price point of the homes allowed with this amendment request would be higher or lower than has been built in the past. |
| Bob Herges | They are only focusing on changing housing style options on Northwood Lane. The cost to build a cottage home with more architectural detail is higher than what is currently being constructed. |

Jeff Goerger	He asked if a more expensive home would raise surrounding property values.
Bob Herges	He responded that is difficult to determine in this market. Buyers are more concerned about the price of the home than the architectural design.
Jake Anderson Commission member	He asked the current price of those homes as opposed to a year ago.
Bob Herges	The houses that are for sale have gone down in price.
Matthew Koob 6921 22 nd St. No.	He lives on the street just north of Northwood Lane. There were two cottage style homes on 22 nd St. that were sold, one of which is his house. There are some empty lots next to his property, and he has formally offered to purchase the lot next to him to enhance the size of his lot. He expressed concern about the value of his home decreasing. The model in which he lives is not being offered as an option on the website. He is concerned about his property retaining its value.
Karen Glein 6933 No. 22nd St.	Her primary concern is that her home may lose value if the new style homes are allowed. Aho is one of the only construction companies in the City that has sold homes in this market and would oppose the GDP amendment.
Gerri Petty 6725 22nd St. No. Loop	Since April Aho has built between 25 and 30 homes. She asked if the three new housing styles will have upgrades available. She was concerned about the value of her house decreasing.
Loren Seppanen 15297 CR 30 Cokato, MN	He is the project manager for Aho Northwest in the West Prairie Point development. Upgrades are available to anyone who wants them. He asked if the request is only for three housing styles on Northwood Lane.
Matt Glaesman	The request for additional options is only for specific lots on Northwood Ln. Those on 22nd St. would have to meet cottage style with enhanced architectural features. Of the 42 lots, 30 would have the option to be changed to a different style.
Sheila DeVine Commission member	The new housing types offered would not necessarily be smaller or have no enhanced architectural features. The purpose of the amendment is to offer another housing type. She asked if the price of the homes would be lower.
Bob Herges	The new style home would probably be a little less expensive to build because the roof lines aren't quite as steep, and they have less architectural detail. An attempt will be made to bring the front of the home forward and set the garage back to take the focus away from the garage door. They are hoping that will offset the lack of architectural detail.

Kristin Winters
7007 22nd St. No. Her biggest concern is that her property not decrease in value because of the new housing types.

Marge Skelton
6774 22nd St. No. Loop They moved to their house 2 yrs. ago, and they erected a privacy fence. A tall house right was built behind them that looks down on their property. They have no privacy in their back yard now, and it is difficult

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to enjoy their property. She is very disappointed because she likes to spend a lot of time in her yard.

Chairperson Andzenge Homeowners want to be assured that the proposed change in housing would not decrease their property values. Due to the current housing market, many homes have lost value. He believes the question is if the housing that is being proposed is comparable to what currently exists.

Matt Glaesman He reiterated that the hatched lots on the map are the lots that must differ; the remaining lots may have houses of any type. The houses on lots proposed for change may even be larger in size than other homes in the area. He does not believe there would be a negative impact by the change in housing product.

There being no one else wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed. Goerger moved to recommend to the City Council approval of the West Prairie Point PUD GDP to allow more housing styles on Northwood Lane. The motion was seconded by DeVine. Goerger asked if any of the proposed housing styles would not have met the original criteria of the single family home. Glaesman answered that they would meet the 60% product requirement. Goerger stated that stipulations may be appropriate in a thriving housing market; however, the current situation calls for a change in what requirements are placed on builders and developers. He noted that Section 15 of the GDP refers to life cycle housing requirements, and it was his understanding that the City no longer requires affordable housing within new developments. Glaesman stated that the City Council has released this development from providing affordable housing, and the resolution should be revised to remove the reference to life cycle housing. The motion carried unanimously.

Amendment to City of St. Cloud, VA Hospital, ISD 742, MNDOT PUD General Development Plan/Michael Hormann on Behalf of the St. Cloud Municipal Athletic Complex

(MAC): Matt Glaesman, Planning Director, stated that this request would allow for a WECS test site

on City owned property near a residential neighborhood which may offer insight into any detrimental effects of WECS. There was also an interest in placing a WECS on top of or near the MAC building itself to help offset the electrical load increase as a result of the installation of a geothermal system. The smaller system would be near the clubhouse, and the larger system would be attached to the back side of the MAC. If this property were zoned industrial (property to the south is industrial), this would be allowed by right. Glaesman pointed out that the VA will be erecting a very large WECS (probably at least 350' tall with a 100+' of blade diameter) on its property. As a federal property, the VA is exempt from local zoning control. Chairperson Andzenge opened the public hearing on a request from Michael Hormann on behalf of the St. Cloud Municipal Athletic Complex (MAC) to amend the Planned Unit Development (PUD) Number 28 General Development Plan to permit the installation of one free standing and one building mounted Wind Energy Conversion Systems (WECS)

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at the MAC. (Location: 5001 8th Street North/Veterans Drive) (DPA-2010-02). The following persons testified:

Bill Brinkman
1063 CR 134

He said he asked Mr. Broxmeyer about the size of the systems and how much noise would be generated; but at the time, he stated he did not have that information. Brinkman questioned how the Planning Commission can approve this request without having access to information about the height of the systems, the noise they will generate, etc. The City and County are erecting a big bridge across the street from him which will devalue his property; the WECS will probably further decrease his property value. He had several potential buyers for his property until they learned about the new bridge. The WECS will make it even less saleable.

Todd Foster
1020 CR 134

He doesn't have an issue with it, but asked that the GDP be amended to require that the WECSs be located on the east half of the property as far away from residences as possible. He noted the article in yesterday's Star Tribune newspaper about wind turbines and their impacts.

Mike Hormann
5515 West Oakes Dr.

He is proposing to install for display purposes a working model of a WECS on the northeast corner of the MAC building which would extend about 12' above the roof line. The diameter of the turbine blades is approximately 4'. The unit is 1 kw. It is a stand alone unit with no

connection to the facility's electrical currents or controls. The control panel for the system will be mounted in the Zamboni machine storage area. A 4' x 8' display sign for public viewing will be attached to the adjacent walls with LED lighting to indicate that the unit is operating. Hours of operation will be coordinated with the MAC staff. He stated that none of the MAC staff could attend this meeting, but they support the request.

Jeff Goerger
Commission member

He asked the size of the larger unit.

Mike Hormann

The larger unit would be 5' x 5' and 40' high and would be a cylindrical unit.

Jeff Goerger

He asked if there is a time limit on the test WECSs on this property.

Matt Glaesman
Planning Director

Staff did not recommend a limitation because the WECSs would be located on public property. He added that the City Council can work with the operator if they present a problem. The distance from the WECS near the clubhouse to the western bank of the river is 550'. Flicker and noise should not be a concern for residents at that distance. He explained that information on the size of the systems was not included because he assumed the Commission recalled the discussions that occurred just a few months ago when considering amending the LDC to include provisions for WECS. Because this is essentially an industrial property, some flexibility with size is being requested. A 20k system would be allowed by right on the industrial property across Veterans Dr. He added that the West Metro Corridor project will change the nature of this area.

Pat Morin
917 13th Ave. SE

She supports wind energy. The article in the Minneapolis paper regarding WECSs indicated many problems, but is not sure if the problems are real or perceived. She believes that the City needs to give WECSs a chance.

There being no one else wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed. Anderson moved to approve the GDP for PUD #28 to allow installation of wind energy conversion systems on the City property. The motion was seconded by Goerger. Goerger asked if the Planning Commission will be
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informed of the test results for the systems. Glaesman said the results will be forwarded to the Planning Commission when they are available. The motion carried unanimously.

Recommendation Regarding Mississippi River Renaissance's "Vision for the Future of the Mississippi River in Central Minnesota": Matt Glaesman, Planning Director, stated that the

City has been participating in the Mississippi River Renaissance initiative with the purpose of making people aware of the river and its significance to the community and to build on the vision statement for the Mississippi River. Kimberly Cremers, Stearns County Soil and Water Conservation District, stated that the Mississippi River Renaissance focuses on a 31-mile stretch of the river from Royalton through St. Cloud. An event in 2007 prompted the coordination of the effort to bring awareness to this national river and provide protection of the river. The State Demographer has identified this stretch of the river as an area that will experience significant pressure. The vision statement for this portion of the river was a result of community input. A community meeting was held in November 2009 asking for input on the vision statement. The next step was bringing that vision statement forward to the local jurisdictions and asking them for their endorsement. She asked that a Planning Commission member be part of a working group that will have three scheduled meetings in 2010. The first meeting will be held in April working with the NEMO (Non-Point Education for Municipal Officials) program to discuss barriers to meeting the vision. The second meeting will be a land/water based session held during the summer. The third meeting in the fall will focus on goals and objectives to meet the vision. Cremers stated that this vision needs to be considered in future Comprehensive Plan updates. Goerger said that the vision statement lacks recognition of owners/developers of riverfront property who will be directly affected. Cremers explained that public outreach was done to collect community input to create the vision. Some of that public input came from property owners along the river. Goerger asked if property owners were specifically notified. Cremers responded that a mass mailing to property owners was not done; however, they worked through cities, counties and townships. Goerger inquired if the final product will impact a property owner's development rights. Cremers answered that is the purpose of the upcoming meetings; at this time, the vision is broad. Holtberg acknowledged that the river is an underutilized asset and encouraged any efforts that will help utilize the river. Radaich asked if the organization's primary goal is to enhance the river or preserve it. He understands protecting the river because water quality is very important. Cremers explained that she is an employee of the Soil & Water Conservation District which views the river as a high quality

resource. The goal is to protect the river for the future and make long term planning goals to assure that future development will still maintain the high quality of the river. Radaich questioned if the goal is to restrict development and limit access to the river. Cremers stated this stretch of the river has Planning Commission – January 12, 2010

been identified because there has been no plan for it. This needs to be a collaborative effort. Chirhart questioned why Morrison Co. was not involved in discussion as Blanchard Dam is located in that county, and it is in the wild part of the river. Cremers explained that Blanchard Dam was used as a landmark, but the discussions are with the river communities in Stearns and Benton Counties. She stated that she has contacted the townships in Morrison Co. on both sides of the river to discuss the Mississippi River Renaissance and has also contacted Sherburne Co. Glaesman stated that although the vision is for a 31-mi. stretch of the river, the City will be planning for the 10-mile urban stretch of the metro area, considering both preservation and development perspectives. The urban plan will define involvement of property owners. Goerger asked if language can be added to the draft vision statement. Cremers answered that changes to the vision statement were allowed until December 1. She asked if he had specific amending language that he would like included. Goerger suggested inclusion of an acknowledgement that property owners have a voice. Cremers stated that the vision is in final form; the resolution in support of the vision is a draft. Goerger reiterated that the vision does not acknowledge that property owner rights could be affected. Cremers stated that language in the first paragraph could be revised, but the revision to the vision statement would have to be presented to all the communities for their approval. Cremers stated that the next step is for the resolution to go to the City Council for its consideration. Chairperson Andzenge understood Goerger's concern and suggested that in addition to revising the wording, the owners of property along the river should be invited into the process. Glaesman suggested going forward to the City Council with the resolution with appropriate language being added to include a provision for property owner input. As the

process goes forward, a mailing can be sent to all property owners on the river and will work on outreach for their participation.

Goerger moved to recommend to the City Council approval of the vision statement including language that would acknowledge participation/existence of property owners along the river. Anderson seconded the motion. Radaich said he needs more information and detail on the organization's long range plan. The motion to approve the vision with the friendly amendment carried by a vote of 6-1 (Radaich opposed). Goerger volunteered to be the Planning Commission representative that will attend the meetings in 2010.

Amendment of the 2010 Development Fund Budget Regarding the St. Cloud Joint Planning District Sustainability Framework Plan and St. Cloud Urban Area Mississippi River Corridor Master Plan: Matt Glaesman, Planning Director, explained that during the 2010 budgeting process, \$10,000 was allocated for the river plan and \$10,000 for the sustainability plan, in anticipation of participation from other local government jurisdictions as well as from non-profit or Planning Commission – January 12, 2010

private entities. Although donations have been received, some of the government jurisdictions have indicated they cannot make a monetary contribution due to current budget conditions but are willing to donate in-kind services. The Sustainability Framework Plan is currently at an approximate \$70,000 shortfall. Relative to the river plan, the City has sufficient funding for the base-line consultant services; however, additional funding from the Development Fund would provide more consultant hours for the study. Glaesman explained that the request is for approval of an amendment to the Development Fund budget for additional funding for the sustainability plan and the river plan. Goerger asked Glaesman if the work that was to be accomplished on the river plan for the budgeted \$40,000 has been completed. Glaesman said that the consultant team is excellent, and additional dollars would allow for more of their expertise. Goerger questioned if the additional funds would be needed now rather than next year. Glaesman responded that both of the projects will be completed in 2010.

Chirhart inquired if St. Cloud is the only entity contributing to the Mississippi River Renaissance. Glaesman clarified that the contribution is not for the Mississippi River Renaissance initiative; it is for the St. Cloud Urban Area Mississippi River Corridor Plan. At this time, the City is the only entity contributing to the project. Chirhart stated that he would be willing to support additional funding for the river plan contingent on contributions from other entities. Glaesman stated that the sustainability plan is a priority on funding because money is needed to complete that process. Chirhart asked if other cities have contributed to the sustainability plan, and Glaesman answered that other cities have not contributed; however, Benton and Stearns Counties have each contributed \$10,000. DeVine asked if other cities have attempted to gain funding from any other sources. Glaesman stated that they have attended the meetings and have offered guidance on the RFPs. Holtberg asked if any other contributions are anticipated, and Glaesman answered there are not. Goerger asked if any comments have been made at the meetings that the City cannot afford to pursue this sustainability plan. Glaesman answered that those comments have been made, and it was initially envisioned that \$130,000 would accomplish the visioning and action planning. It was broken down into two contracts, one for \$53,000, and a second for the balance. The visioning portion can be completed with the available funding. Goerger asked if the project will be delayed if no additional funding is available. Glaesman stated that there may still be some funding dollars available for Phase 2 as the City has applied for four grants. If the City does not receive funding to complete the entire Phase 2, several best practice areas may be selected on which to focus. Chirhart questioned why the City should contribute more money if other jurisdictions are not contributing. Glaesman explained that the contribution from Stearns and Benton Counties and the City is \$30,000, with private foundations and other organizations contributing approximately \$30,000. Therefore, it may be in the City's best Planning Commission – January 12, 2010

interest to match any additional contribution that is requested. Chirhart said he finds it difficult to commit additional dollars when the City does not know if it will receive additional funds from other

sources. Glaesman responded that another source may be willing to make a donation if they are aware that the City will match it.

Goerger moved to increase the contribution from the Development Fund by \$15,000 for the Sustainability Framework Plan conditioned on matching contributions from other entities and that any offers come back to the Planning Commission for its approval. The motion was seconded by Holtberg and carried unanimously.

Recommendation Regarding the Phase 2 Improvements for the Community Project at Eastman Park (Lake George): Matt Glaesman, Planning Director, explained that the City Charter requires the Planning Commission to make a recommendation on physical improvements on public property. Phase 2 would include a trail around the west water feature, East Lake Boulevard street and parking lot improvements, changes to Little George as well as construction of the swan shelter at Little George. Goerger moved to approve the Phase 2 improvements at Eastman Park (Lake George), and Holtberg seconded the motion. Goerger asked if the water feature with the columns and fountains are part of Phase 2 improvements. Scott Zlotnik, City Parks Director, explained that the west water feature is a smaller water feature located near West Lake Blvd. near the west parking area. The granite fountain plaza is a larger improvement which is a circular feature with granite columns, etc., and is included in Phase 2. The motion carried unanimously.

Update Picture of St. Cloud Planning Commission Members: A picture of the Planning Commission was taken to update the picture on the City's website.

Adjournment: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:46 p.m.

Rick Holtberg, Secretary