

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ST. CLOUD PLANNING COMMISSION

A meeting of the St. Cloud Planning Commission was held on October 12, 2010, at 6 p.m. in the St. Cloud City Hall Council Chambers. Members present were Anderson, Andzenge, Chirhart, DeVine, Holtberg, and Radaich. Goerger was absent. Council representative Pederson was present.

Consent Agenda: Anderson moved to approve the consent agenda as follows:

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

Approval of minutes from the September 14, 2010, Planning Commission meeting.

The motion was seconded by Radaich and carried unanimously.

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

Discussion Regarding Complete Streets: Matt Glaesman, Planning Director, noted that two years ago several Planning Commission members and staff members attended the American Planning Assoc. (APA) National Conference in Minneapolis and saw a presentation on complete streets. As a result, the Planning Commission added a complete streets policy onto the Planning Department's work program. On September 20, the St. Cloud APO hosted the first of a series of meetings to talk about complete streets with approximately 50 people attending. These discussions will be continued with the intent of drafting a complete streets policy regionally and/or locally by cities and counties. One of the elements was a presentation by Ethan Fawley of Fresh Energy, a member of the MN Complete Streets Coalition. Complete streets are designed and operated to be safe and accessible for pedestrians, transit riders, bicyclists and drivers - all users. Complete streets vary by local context. Typically they include sidewalks and safe crossing points; bike lanes or paths; ramps for wheelchair users and accommodations for the visually impaired. Glaesman showed examples of "complete" and "incomplete" streets. The benefits of complete streets are safety, accessibility, health,

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family transportation cost savings, economic development/tourism, improved environment, quality of life and vibrancy. Glaesman stated that statistics support the fact that providing better systems of movement beyond those for the motor vehicle such as sidewalks and bike lanes encourage people to walk and bike which improves health. A policy is important because it demonstrates support, can change practices, creates a complete road network that serves all users, and saves money. Chirhart said he attended the 2008 conference and believes the complete streets concept is very viable for St. Cloud. Chirhart said sustainability is a good reason to have a complete streets policy, and he is very supportive of St. Cloud adopting a complete streets policy. He asked how the City can convince developers to incorporate these kinds of streets into their developments. Glaesman admitted there are cost issues involved and that discussions need to occur before development pressures recur. Radaich commented that the new streets in the downtown are very attractive. He asked if some complete street policies have been implemented in those streets even though an official policy has not yet been adopted. Glaesman responded that bumpouts were incorporated into the new construction on Hwy. 23 to narrow the crossing distance; and medians added to harbor pedestrians in between lanes, and countdown and audible crossing timers. He added discussions occurred during the Southside Neighborhood Master Plan process about removing parking from the 5th Ave. corridor, narrowing it to two lanes with a common turn lane, and allocating 4'-6' on the outside of the corridor to be marked and used as "Share the Road" to encourage bicycle traffic. Anderson said he attended the State Planning Conference in Mankato and attended a session which encouraged year-round non-motorized transportation. Many people perceive trails and complete streets as more recreational in nature. He said bikes should also be considered a mode of transportation. Holtberg asked if there is any way to incorporate complete streets policies into reconstruction of existing four lane roadways. Glaesman answered that the City could adopt a policy and make some regulatory changes to allow for what is needed. Also, the APO has added complete streets elements to the selection criteria for

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federal funding for local projects in recent years. Extra points are awarded in the scoring if the City can demonstrate more complete streets in the concept. DeVine attended the APA conference in 2008 which made her excited about complete streets. She questioned how a policy will be implemented if no provisions are set forth in the Land Development Code. Glaesman responded that the City will have to adopt the policy, and the Council will have to make difficult decisions relative to amendments to the LDC to make complete streets a reality. Andzenge asked where development of a complete street policy would start. Glaesman answered that the complete streets movement needs to start at the APO level; although each city will implement it differently. For example, St. Cloud has the largest share of the MTC network, while St. Joseph would not prioritize as highly the need to incorporate a significant transit element into their development regulations. Anderson said he strongly believes that having a complete streets policy and implementing it can give St. Cloud a competitive advantage within the region for businesses wishing to locate in the area.

Discussion of Northstar and Transit Orientated Development (TOD): Matt Glaesman, Planning Director, stated that discussions at a regional level began in October with the first phase Northstar Corridor communities that have developed Transit Orientated Development (TOD) sites. Their experiences will be beneficial as the Phase II communities begin their planning efforts. TOD improves accessibility to transit; increased transit ridership; mix of housing, jobs, shopping; public space opportunities; private development opportunities; and sense of community. The benefits of TOD include economic development, sustainability, reduced traffic, added property value, safer environment, and increased ridership. Glaesman stated that TODs emphasize connectivity. A mixture of uses is important, but it must be at an appropriate scale and density. Glaesman reviewed some of the lessons from cities that are already on the Northstar Phase I connection; particularly Fridley and Anoka. Glaesman pointed out that there is significant public cost associated with TOD sites. TIF law gives authority to collect private tax dollars on the gain received and spend it on public

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purpose, but the uses allowed by that legislation are very few. It can only be used when removing blight or creating affordable housing product. Action in the City of Fridley and the legislature allowed for a new use of tax increment dollars specifically for TOD. Therefore, other communities along the Northstar Corridor and the second phase communities should be interested in taking this from special legislation for the City of Fridley only to making TOD an ongoing use of TIF. Glaesman stated that TOD is already an element in St. Cloud's Comprehensive Plan (CP). The CP includes the primary location and satellite station sites. Chirhart asked the extent of the planning that has been done for St. Cloud and given the political climate, the funding for the extension to St. Cloud. Glaesman responded that all federal and state funding programs are now shifting focus from the typical transportation operations benefits to an economic development focus, e.g., job creation, increased property values, etc. Glaesman stated that the City will support lobbying for the TOD TIF change in the next legislative session.

Presentation of St. Cloud's LivCom Materials: Matt Glaesman, Planning Director, noted that the City has once again been named a finalist for the International Livcom Awards. This year the awards ceremony will be held in Chicago in November, and a delegation representing the City will be attending. Focus will be on cultural arts, sustainability, recycling, community involvement, and GIS. Following the LivCom Awards in Chicago, the materials presented will be used in local campaigns.

Status of the St. Cloud Geographic Information System (SCGIS): Tammy Campion, Senior Planner and GIS Coordinator, developed the system for use by all departments. The City's GIS was established in 2003, and Pro-West and staff have developed the system so that is usable by all City staff. She explained many of the applications, e.g. Gopher One Call Application; GIS Intranet - in-house application for staff; SCGIS Online Application for use by the public; Fire GIS; Hydrant Management Application; Pavement Management Application; Sign Management; Stormwater Management Application; Sanitary Sewer Inspection/Maintenance Application; and also explained

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future GIS initiatives. Campion stated that the Planning Commission has authorized approximately \$30,000 annually for GIS upgrades, maintenance and application development. The individual departments, i.e., Public Utilities and Fire, have used their own funds to develop their particular systems. Chirhart said he believes GIS is an application of technology that has saved the community a lot of money. DeVine stated that the City has come a long way in the last few years from a technology standpoint. Anderson asked if there is a plan to move to ARCGIS Server. Tammy answered that the process is slow to get applications transitioned to that server. Andzenge asked if loss of the GIS program at SCSU due to financial constraints will impact the City. Glaesman said that although it would be beneficial for SCSU's GIS program to continue to enhance the City's program, loss of SCSU's program should not functionally impact the City's program.

Change of November Meeting Date: Glaesman explained that he and Andzenge will be out of town at the LivCom awards on November 9 and asked the Commission if they would be agreeable to holding the November meeting on Wednesday, November 10. DeVine said she would not be available on the 10th. The remainder of the members agreed to meet on the 10th. Chirhart moved to change the November meeting date to Wednesday, November 10. The motion was seconded by Andzenge and carried unanimously.

Election of Planning Commission Officers: Matt Glaesman, Planning Director, informed the Commission that the current officers are eligible to be reappointed. In 2008, the Commission decided to remove the one year limit on officer's terms. Andzenge opened nominations. DeVine nominated Radaich for Chair, Anderson for Vice-Chair, and Andzenge for Secretary. There being no further nominations, the slate of officers was approved unanimously. Glaesman stated that currently Anderson and DeVine are serving on the APO Board, and Radaich is serving on the Park Board.

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Andzenge volunteered to serve on the APO Board and DeVine offered to remain on the APO Board. Anderson volunteered to serve on the Park Board. Radaich moved to appoint Andzenge and DeVine to serve on the APO Board and Anderson to serve on the Park Board. Holtberg seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously. These appointments will take effect in November. Holtberg asked staff if there were any major changes in the approval of the Haven Township Orderly Annexation Agreement. Glaesman stated that the only change was that Haven agreed to take on its own zoning authority and adopt an agricultural zoning district in the City's growth areas.

Anderson stated that he attended the MN Planning Conference in Mankato and felt it was very beneficial and gave him a new appreciation for planners. He stated that at last month's meeting, he made a comment about leaving things to staff's discretion, and he hoped that staff was not offended as he knows that they are very knowledgeable.

Chirhart thanked Andzenge for his service as Chair.

Pederson noted that tomorrow morning from 10 a.m. to noon, the Transportation Alliance will hold a voter forum at the Kelly Inn with the State Senate and House candidates in attendance.

Adjournment: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

Rick Holtberg, Secretary