

PLAN COMMISSION

Time and Date: The Plan Commission met on Tuesday, June 16, 2015, at 5:00 p.m. in the Common Council Chambers of Wausau City Hall.

Members Present: Lindman, Rosenberg, Gisselman, Oberbeck, Bohlken

Others Present: Lenz, Hebert, Groat, Flashinski, Gutknecht, Lawrence, Peiffer

In compliance with Chapter 19, Wisconsin Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and transmitted to the *Wausau Daily Herald* in the proper manner.

Lindman called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. noting that a quorum was present.

Approve the minutes of the May 19, 2015 and June 2, 2015 meetings.

Bohlken motioned to approve the minutes of the May 19, 2015 and June 2, 2015 meetings. Rosenberg seconded, and the motion carried unanimously 5-0.

PUBLIC HEARING: Discussion and possible action on rezoning 624 Washington Street from R4, General Residence District to B2, Community Service District. (REI Engineering Inc.)

Lindman said he received a call from REI Engineering and it was stated they would not be able to appear for the public hearing.

Lindman closed the public hearing.

Lenz said that the change is being requested for the Red Eye parking lot. There were some handouts that were provided at the beginning of the meeting. One was a letter of support from a property owner across the street from the parcel. There are plans to convert the lot into a parking lot. In the current zoning, a parking lot is allowed, but the new zoning would allow for some additional parking spaces. A letter from the DNR was also handed out as supplemental information for the record. B2 zoning is located across the street and behind the alley and there seems to be a trend toward commercial zoning in the area.

Rosenberg motioned to rezone 624 Washington Street from R4, General Residence District to B2, Community Service District. Oberbeck seconded and the motion carried unanimously 5-0. This item will go to Common Council on July 14, 2015.

PUBLIC HEARING: Discussion and possible action on rezoning 1205 Grand Avenue from R3, Two Family Residence District to R4, General Residence District and approve a conditional use to allow for a financial office. (Meverden)

Lindman said that this item was pulled from the agenda from a request from the petitioner.

PUBLIC HEARING: Discussion and possible action on approving plan for Amendment Number Four of Tax Incremental District Number Five.

Groat presented the commission with an introductory PowerPoint presentation. The Joint Review Board saw the plan during a June 11, 2015 meeting. Common Council will review, discuss, and may vote on the plan on June 22, 2015. The Joint Review Board will review the plan again on June 29, 2015 and an agreement would get signed on June 30, 2015, if all goes as planned. The district was created in 1997. 90 additional acres were added in 2001 and 100 additional acres were added in 2007. In 2012, the plan was amended so that money could be spent outside the district. The spending period will end July 8, 2015 and the termination date is 2020. In 1997, the value of the district was \$105,900 and is now valued at \$44,942,000. Groat showed a map of the district. Wausau Chemical is currently located on the Riverfront and has vested \$2 million into the property. The property currently appraises for \$1.02 million. The main business site on 2nd Street is a super fund site and would move the business into the business park. The reasons for the relocation include: relocating heavy industrial use that currently is located in a residential area, additional cleanup of the super fund site, secure developers for

housing/office use, build upon recent investment in an area, further the riverfront redevelopment to the north, relocate the chemical facility, construction that complies with the existing construction codes, increased tax base of \$7.8 million, provide growth for Wausau Chemical, and increase similar-use traffic on the riverfront for the future. The costs of the project include: donating the land in the business park, a development grant of \$6.5 million, total city investment of \$6.6 million and Wausau Chemical investment of \$4.5 million. Groat said that it is not normally done this way, but the city of Wausau went to Wausau Chemical and asked them to move. This is a friendly condemnation. This will generate \$158,000 in new taxes, as the district is near the closure. The city will provide a payment of \$6.5 million.

Rob Flashinski, Wausau Chemical, said that in January 2014, he met with city staff in the board room and was asked to consider moving to the Industrial Park. He said no immediately, but told them he would consider. Wausau Chemical was just beginning to update the current building and the project has been in limbo ever since. Flashinski said he emailed city staff the next morning and committed to finding out if the relocation would be feasible. This is a friendly, cooperative effort, as it should be. There is an inevitable conflict of use in the current area between retail, commercial, and heavy industrial. There were talks with 3 design firms and he received estimates between \$7.3 to 9 million. It is anticipated that the cost of the building will be \$7.8 million. There will be some height gains and general size increases, but if it is going to be undertaken, you might as well have a bigger and better functioning building. The building regulations, mandatory elevator, and costs to contain flammables and fire protection strategy make this project higher than someone would anticipate. Flashinski went over the costs of individual units including the HVAC system and wiring. The EPA and DNR reviewed the current site and no surprises were found. With the agreement, the taxes of \$150,000 for 5 years would be assessed, even if no building is located on the property. Flashinski added that the \$2.1 million investment in the existing facility has been lost in discussions and that these loans will still need to be paid. This project will cost an additional \$300,000 per year and that can only be made up with growth. There are strong arguments for the impact on future decision-making on the riverfront development. An accident could always happen and it is always a thought that in 10 years Wausau Chemical would become the sore spot on the riverfront, even though it has been there for 53 years. It is great to have a proactive strategy to address it now.

Lisa Gutknecht, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, said that she is not the project manager for this particular project but works with the city on different projects, including 2102 North 2nd Street. It is awesome that Wausau Chemical hasn't had a release in 53 years. Accidents do happen and you need to look at the receptors where they are currently located and in the Industrial park. The park is there for industries like Wausau Chemical. There is a municipal well close by the current facility that has already been impacted by the contamination that is out there. Vapor intrusion is a big problem when chlorinated chemicals move through the ground water and through the building and lead to health problems. The city has expended a lot of time and money on the acres and it is a step to clean up the use. There is a negative perception of the chemical industry because there it the potential for big problems.

Oberbeck asked if Gutknecht was aware of the proposed site. Gutknecht answered yes. Oberbeck said that the proposed site is adjacent to an environmental corridor leading to the wetlands feeding into the Rib River. Oberbeck said that right now, the site is zoned IP and does not allow this and is meant to be a transition zoning. A conditional use would be necessary. In a recent press release, a fertilizer chemical company leak of 3 million gallons of fire-fighting water into an unnamed creek and contaminated the river with nitrates and killed numerous fish. The fertilizer found the way into the system and continued for 15 miles and destroyed the ecosystem. Gutknecht said there are always concerns. There will be ways to contain the water on the property so no runoff is present. With new construction, there are different things to look at during the design process. Oberbeck said this is his main concern, as there is a lot of wildlife and a large amount of water going into the system. Gutknecht said it is better for Rob to answer with the construction. It would be something to better addressed now than later.

Lindman closed the public hearing.

Lenz clarified that the zoning of the parcel in the business park is IP and when staff looked at it, Hydrite Chemical received a conditional use permit in 1989 and again in 2007. A precedent has already been set that this use is okay for this district. Oberbeck said it is listed as a use under the M-zoning as a direct usage. Lenz said that some uses are permitted without a conditional use. Lenz said that he isn't sure if this business qualifies as chemical manufacturing, as it is listed in the zoning code. M2 zoning is the most lenient district and basically any sort of use is allowed. In an IP district, some industrial uses are permitted by right. The IP district allows for a variety of uses. In the Comprehensive Plan it's in the land use chapter to relocate industry off of the river downtown. Oberbeck said the IP district is to protect some businesses from moderate and high hazards. The types of hazards and adjustments need to be taken into consideration if a conditional use would be allowed. Lenz said that the precedent was set by the city and was reaffirmed in 2007 – the city should be careful if we are now not going to allow the same use in the same district. There hasn't been an incident or conflicts that staff is aware of with the previous chemical company. Oberbeck said that the definition of the IP zoning district should be reviewed. Lenz said that the conditional use and zoning issue would need a public hearing with the final decision to be made by Common Council. The focus of tonight's meeting is on the TIF amendment. Oberbeck said that the zoning directly affects the TIF as it is a direct project for the TIF district. There is no other reason to extend the TIF, other than this project. Lindman said that it is part of the process and the other items, such as zoning, will come into play at a later date. Today, the amendment of the TIF is being discussed. Groat said that Wausau Window & Wall donated some land, which will be next door, to help facilitate this project. The other neighbor is a medical waste facility, which also deals with hazardous waste material.

Rosenberg said this is a backhanded way to turn TIF 5 into a donor district for TIF 3. It takes public dollars and creates private equity with it. This is a bad precedent. The property is being overpaid for and he said he cannot support it. Rosenberg said he understands the other issues and this is a ton of money without the value. The site is already separated by the water plant and it is not a continuous corridor to the east riverfront district.

Bohlken said that this is an opportunity with a lot of money and now is the time to do it. Gisselman agreed.

Gisselman motioned to approve the plan for Amendment Number Four of Tax Incremental District Number Five. Bohlken seconded and the motion carried 3-2. Oberbeck and Rosenberg voted no. This item will go to Common Council on June 22, 2015.

Approve a one-year extension on the conditional use permit at 725 Woods Place for construction of a hangar on airport property.

Lenz said that a conditional use was approved last year for construction of a private hangar. The hangar has not built yet and a one-year extension can be given. Last year the hangar was approved and it wasn't a controversial item. Staff recommends approval of the extension.

Lindman added that the hangar relocation was used to accommodate the balloon rally and for future development. The necessary updates were completed in the past weeks.

Bohlken motioned to approve a one-year extension on the condition use permit at 725 Woods Place for construction of a hangar on airport property. Oberbeck seconded and the motion carried unanimously 5-0. This item does not need to go to Common Council.

Discussion and possible action on dedication of right-of-way and easement for 3385 Horseshoe

Spring Road.

Lindman said that this item went to CISM on June 11. This is for a private residence that would like to cut a hole and construct a door in the retaining wall for access to the river. This has been done before and requires an easement. The plans will be reviewed by the Engineering Department to ensure there aren't any structural issues.

Gisselman motioned to dedicate the right-of-way and easement for 3385 Horseshoe Spring Road. Rosenberg seconded, and the motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Discussion and possible action on Amendment to the Transportation Project Plat for South 52, Project ID 6999-03-28.

Lenz said that Allen Wesolowski had originally written the report and worked with the Department of Transportation. The plat was revised to make the taking a temporary limited easement. The amended plat was approved by CISM.

Rosenberg motioned to approve the Amendment to the Transportation Project Plat for South 52, Project ID 6999-03-28. Gisselman seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Discuss update to City of Wausau Comprehensive Plan.

Lenz said that Northcentral Wisconsin Regional Planning is working with staff to update the City of Wausau Comprehensive Plan. The plan is from 2005 and needs to be updated. Currently, some preliminary work is being done. At this meeting, the path to move forward, as Plan Commission is the governing body.

Dennis Lawrence said an update is needed for the 10-year old plan and the Plan Commission is the governing body. The plan overview uses the old plan, which the county had assisted in creating. The 1st plan was pretty basic and the update should be better. It is necessary to incorporate planning efforts. The purpose of the plan is for an overall guide for the city with a unified vision. It is also used to establish goals. There are 9 chapters in the plan which covers a variety of topics. Wisconsin requires Public Participation Plan (PPP) and will need to be developed with includes: public meetings, website creation, city newsletter, survey, open house, and a public hearing. It is anticipated that the total process will last 18 months.

Coleman Peiffer said he covers the demographics of the area. Demographics are the foundation for the plan to help make decision on which direction the city should go in the future. This looks at the population and the reasons for change. Peiffer went over the demographics of Wausau in compared to the metro area, countywide, and statewide.

Lawrence said that this sets the tone and trends will be seen and spoken about more specifically in the future. Gisselman asked a copy of the presentation could be provided. Lawrence said that could it be provided at the next meeting. Oberbeck asked if other communities are doing the same type of study and asked if the metro area could be compared. Lawrence said they like to look at the metro area to see how Wausau compares to the Wausau metro area. Each of the communities in the metro area relies on one another. Weston has adopted a plan, Rothschild is kicking off of their planning process, and Marathon County is one year into their plan.

Lenz said that the Northcentral Wisconsin Regional Planning is also working with the county and will be piggy-backing off that plan. The density figures and census tracks could be helpful. Lawrence said that each chapter will be discussed. Oberbeck asked if it upward growth has been discussed. There have been

a lot of nice buildings go down for the land. The central city will need to grow and the demand would increase. Lawrence said that this could be touched a bit, but not in detail. It could be identified as an issue.

Discussion and possible action on the East Riverfront Brownfields Area-Wide Plan.

Lenz said a draft of East Riverfront Brownfields Area-Wide Plan is in the packet. Stantec presented the plan to the Economic Development Committee. A variety of things were reviewed and environmental data were compiled. The plan rolls a lot of data into the plan and there is more planning that will need to be done after the plan is adopted. This is an outline of how to work to develop the area.

Gisselman motioned to approve the East Riverfront Brownfields Area-Wide Plan. Rosenberg seconded, and the motion carried unanimously 5-0. This item will go to Common Council on July 14, 2015.

Next meeting date and future agenda items for consideration.

The next meeting is scheduled for July 21, 2015.

Adjourn.

Rosenberg motioned to adjourn. Lindman seconded, motion carried unanimously 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

The Plan Commission is next scheduled to meet at 5:00 pm on July 21, 2015.