

Joint Meeting-Town Board/Planning Commission March 10th, 2010 6:00 pm

Attendees: Bill Sloan, Yvette Fleming, Chris Hudacek, Al Reedy, Mary Beth Tilmans, Ray Kiewit, Susan Keachie, Joni Brooks and Max Taubert.

No Members of the Public were present.

The purpose of this meeting is primarily to determine the roles and responsibilities of the Plan Commission and how it will cooperate with the Town Board.

A reference was made to a Plan Commission Handbook that should be available for Commission members. It can be found at:

<http://green.uwex.edu/cnred/documents/PlanCommissionHandbook.pdf>.

A question was asked about which issues would come to the Plan Commission and which to the Board. Chris referenced a State Statute that indicates that the Town Supervisor can refer items to the Plan Commission. The Town Board as a whole has to make a referral to a committee.

Ray reviewed the beginnings of work on criteria for permit and variance review. There was some discussion on how long the commission would be given to review an application before a Town Board meeting. It was generally agreed that the application should reach the Town 10 business days before the scheduled Commission meeting in order to be reviewed in the current month.

There was some discussion as to County notification requirements for permit application reviews and if they are “adjacent” or “within 300 ft.” It was suggested that the Commission check with Bayfield County to see what their requirements are and follow their lead.

There was a discussion about determining the duties of the Commission. The first criterion is if the matter relates to the Comprehensive Plan. The Commission should be involved in reviewing any applications for variances, special use and conditional use permits, other information that the Town Board may deem necessary, allowing that the Commission may respond that the request is “not their business”.

Chris suggested that we may want to consider more serious review of permits for construction on “forestry” zoned parcels. He made reference to the fact that in the past it has been fairly standard to grant approval to these permits, but that the result may be a bunch of small parcels cutting up forestry tracts and that it might be good to start reviewing these requests more critically.

With no history to refer to there is some uncertainty in the role of the Commission. Bill suggested that we keep an open mind during the process and maintain good dialogue between the Commission and the Town Board.

Two priorities identified by the Plan Commission were the Business Park and developing an Economic Development Committee that would report to the Town Board. It was suggested that these two projects are related and should be a joint effort between the Board and the Commission. Marian Vaughn from the Bayfield County Economic Development Corporation has agreed to attend the Plan Commission’s meeting on April 8th with information she has on both issues. The members of the Town Board were encouraged to attend.

During discussion about the Business Park suggestions were made as to resources that might be used by a committee formed to work on establishing the Park. Suggestions made for resource people were a Civil Engineer, UW Extension, Bruce Lindgren from Herbster, and a grant writer.

It was decided by the group to announce at the Annual Meeting that an Economic Development committee was going to be formed and ask for interested parties and resource people to come forward.

As we move forward it may be important to determine the roles of the Town Board and the Plan Commission and again, should be a matter of open and continual dialogue between the two groups.

The Town Board also suggested that Plan Commission members look for an area of expertise for each member on the Commission to distribute the work load and to set a precedent for incoming and changing commissioners.

In reviewing the list of the priorities of the Plan Commission there was more discussion:

- In regards to the Class Action rezone of identified parcels in the Comprehensive Plan we should thoroughly review zoning designations to make certain that zoning and current use are compatible.
- Scenic Byway: the effects of passing this legislation on signage, a pedestrian cross walk, Highway 13 and local business.
- Communication with neighboring communities re: planning issues: check web sites and minutes of Town Board meetings and Plan Commissions, talk with neighbors, community leaders, etc. to keep an informal grapevine going. There is no County Plan Commission so the County is trying to determine how to distribute information to and from the Town Commissions and the County.

Yvette suggested that the Northwestern Regional Planning Commission might be a resource for the Commission not only on current issues but on those that have been addressed in the past. Their records may have some value to work being proposed now.

Ray proposed that the Commission be able to meet downstairs and use some areas for storage and to display maps. The Board agreed and suggested that the Commission determine what it needs to furnish the room and get it done.

Mary Beth suggested that because of public meeting and record laws that all members of the commission put all Town Business on a separate portable hard drive to protect their private computers from being seized in the case of turning over required public records. Bill and Mary Beth will take care of purchasing one of these for each member and getting them distributed.

Ray suggested that the Town and Commission meet at least annually to review progress and set goals. The group decided that January would be the best month of the year to set that up.

With the Business Park as a priority it may be necessary to have more joint meetings until we figure out how we want to develop it and create a firm plan.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm.