Planning Commission Meeting
Jan. 5, 2017
7:00 pm Community Center

Commission Members:
Janice Olson, Susan Keachie, Joni Vaughn, Jackie Eid and Larry Chernoff.

Members of the Public: Deb Pozzi, Ernie Korpela, Allen Hahn, Roger Lindgren, Nancy Lindgren, Kris Anderson, Gordon Anderson, Mary Beth Tillmans, Dave Tillmans

Minutes: Larry made a motion to approve the minutes from the December meeting, Joni 2nd. All were in favor and the minutes were approved.

Siskiwit River Estuary Protection Project

MaryBeth Tillmans asked the Planning commission to approve of wording to be included in the possible DNR's Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program grant contract with the BRC for the acquisition of the Suroweic (Swenson) and Dorau properties, to allow for future sediment control or river mitigation projects that would be desired by the town and being approved by federal and state agencies, on the property or on lands adjacent to it.

Susan made a motion that the Planning Commission recommend to the Town Board that they make sure such wording is added to the appropriate document, either the Contract between the BRC and the DNR that would accompany the DNR grant or the Land Management Plan for the property. **The additional wording should address the need to allow for possible future mitigation or control efforts on the Siskiwit River that the Town of Bell may desire in the future, as permitted by State and Federal Agencies.**

Mary Beth also informed the group that the Town of Bell has received a letter tentatively approving the DNR grant application with 30 days to receive input from the Town.

Mary Beth had also spoken to a representative from the DNR that saw no conflict if such wording was included in the input from the Town in response to the tentative grant approval.

Joni seconded the motion. Susan, Joni and Janice voted in favor of the motion. Larry and Jackie abstained.

There was quite a bit of discussion regarding the project both in favor of and against.
One of the biggest concerns expressed by the public in attendance and by the Planning Commissioners was whether information that was available to citizens was disclosed as it was made available. Ernie Korpela informed that group that not all proper procedures are being followed as far as operations of the Planning Commission are concerned. Planning Commissioners also expressed their desire to have been provided with more information, especially as related to this project, as it became available. If the Planning Commission is going to be asked to review issues for the Town Board they should be provided with the information that they need to make an informed decision.

A group of citizens has been formed to work towards accomplishing the Conservation Area. They are known as "The Friends of the Siskiwit River Estuary Project and are being led by Allen Hahn.

Susan proposed that since the only economy in the Town is tourism that a project like this should increase activity to our local businesses and is important to their success. She also expressed her opinion that protecting the residential properties that are adjacent to the proposed Conservation Area is a very important priority.
Larry provided a map that is on the Town of Bell website that shows access to the area off Huron St. and between two residential properties.
Deb Pozzi was in attendance to express her vehement opposition to that access point and to the possibility of trespassing and vandalism that might occur if the project were to be put in place.
Jackie has had experiences with visitors infringing on the rights of local property owners in relation to the snowmobile trail and feels that encouraging visitors will be detrimental to the Town and the quality of life for the local residents.
Allen was in favor of the attempt to preserve land in the Town and the protection of the wetland area. He also expressed his opinion that the visitors to the Town are generally of high quality.
Ernie is in favor of the opportunity to preserve such a large parcel for the use of Town residents and although you can't completely plan for the future, options such as limiting the number of visitors could be considered. Ernie mentioned the option of limiting the number of parking spots at the trailhead. I understood him to say that is was not only the PC doing things wrong, it was also other boards and/ other committees. . .

Roger Lindgren made a comment of moving forward on this project, we cannot change past events.

Gordon thought that the negative feedback was borrowing problems and that along with grants that might be available to provide funds for maintenance of the parcel, there are many people willing to volunteer to help.

Larry pointed out that a lot of the grant money that was available for such things is no longer available.

Someone (?) pointed out that controls for access can be written into the Land Management Plan for the area.

Sign Permit Criteria

Joni and Janice had done some research into the measurements of brightness. The most common measurement used for signage is a "nit". The Illuminating Engineering Society of America recommends that surface brightness should be no more than 40 nits. The standard industry practice is 40 nits for night time brightness and 3000 nits for daytime brightness. Janice had also discovered that there is a tool that is relatively inexpensive that can measure the nit brightness. She also found that most signs that are available include that measurement and can also be adjusted to meet local standards. Joni will write up the "nit" language as it should be included in the sign criteria. Joni and Janice will also meet to discuss what some of the "appropriate" considerations should be for signage in the Overlay District.

Annual Review

The Annual Review was tabled until next month's meeting.

Jackie made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Joni 2nd and the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

The next meeting will be February 9th at 7 pm at the Community Center.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Keachie
Secretary