

Planning Commission Meeting

Aug 3rd, 2017

6:00 pm Community Center

Commission Members:

Janice Olson, Susan Keachie, Jackie Eid, Pete Lamb and Larry Chernoff.

Members of the Public: Judy Kerr

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

Updates: No Updates

Correspondence: Janice has been in contact with Dan Biebertz of the WISDOT regarding a permit for the Corny Day parade and the detour needed during the parade. The permit has been submitted. Pete will pick up the signs for the parade detour and possibly the Reduce Speed Ahead (the DOT might be placing these on either end of town on Hwy 13).

Halvorson Smokehouse proposal

There were no updates on this topic. Jackie proposed that we take this item off the Agenda unless we have been contacted by a party who wishes to discuss it or has a new development. She pointed out that having it on the agenda might be a reason for an interested party to attend a meeting when there is nothing to discuss.

Jackie made a motion to remove the "Halvorson Smokehouse proposal" from the agenda unless the PC has received a request. Pete 2nd the motion and all were in favor.

Traffic and parking issues in the Town

Several members of the Planning Commission had been in touch with Dan Biebertz from the Eau Claire office of the WISDOT regarding various issues on Hwy 13.

Susan has discussed with him the intersection of Hwy. 13 and W. Spirit Pt road involving the speed limit increasing to 55 mph. before the left turn onto W. Spirit Pt. Rd. There have been incidents where through traffic passes on the left as someone is slowing down to make the left turn. One possibility is to extend the No Passing zone all the way up the hill and past the intersection to join an existing no passing zone. Dan indicated that it would be approximately 1/3 of a mile. According to DOT regulations he does not feel that he could be successful in maintaining the 45 mph past the intersection. He did suggest that he could do a traffic study during high traffic times. Susan suggested that between 12 and 3 pm on a Friday might be a good time as through traffic going east is higher and local traffic heading towards the Recycling Center is making the left turn.

Dan also suggested that a request directly from the Town on letterhead might carry some weight in a request to the DOT for some action. Susan will work on a draft of a letter to the DOT to that effect.

Susan also asked him about the possibility of using a boardwalk instead of a sidewalk on the approach to a pedestrian crossing from downtown to the waterfront. Because of our artesian drainage issues a boardwalk would prevent filling the ditches that lead to the intersection. Dan thought that could work if it meets ADA compliance regulations. Research will be done on exactly what that compliance would involve. Pete suggested that perhaps if we got the boardwalk/pedestrian crossing in place that speed limits might then be able to be reduced. Pete also suggested that the PC work on a specific plan that would meet DOT regulations. Matt Hipsher should be consulted about the possibilities and the costs. The DOT has made it clear that any lighting at a crossing would be a cost to the Town.

Other road issues that Matt should be consulted on were presented. Additional diagonal parking on Superior Ave. and making Cedar Ave. a one-way street heading east were discussed. The hazards involved with turning left onto Superior Ave. from Cedar Ave. are reasons to make that a one way heading away from Superior Ave. Parking on Superior Ave. has been difficult this year. Additional diagonal parking would increase the number of vehicles that can park on the street.

Janice will invite Matt to our next meeting to get his feedback on the ideas of the Plan Commission.

Jackie had been in touch with Tom Tofer regarding “No Engine Braking” signage. She brought a copy of the Washburn ordinance prohibiting engine braking. She also talked to Scott Kluver the administrator for the City of Washburn and he said that their ordinance has been extremely effective in reducing the noise from trucks using their engine to decrease speed. If we have an ordinance prohibiting engine braking the County will provide the signage. We need them on both Hwy 13 and County Rd. C on the approaches from the east and southeast. Janice will use the template of the Washburn ordinance to draft a similar ordinance for the Town of Bell and present next month for review.

Other topics of discussion were:

-the speed limits on town roads which vary quite a bit and could possibly be standardized. The speed limit of 45 mph on Mountain Rd. and Stage Rd. was discussed. Whether that was too fast and if signage does exist. Pete will drive that route and report.

-the possibility of designing signage in keeping with the nature of the town to alert people to the speed limits. “Twenty is Plenty” was presented as an example.

Susan made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Pete 2nd and the meeting was adjourned at 7:07 pm

The next meeting will be **Sept. 7th at 6 pm** at the Community Center.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Keachie
Secretary