

Planning Commission Meeting

Sept 7, 2017

6:00 pm Community Center

Commission Members:

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

Town Board Members: Yvette Fleming

Matt Hipsher: Town Roads

Bayfield Regional Conservancy: Erica Lang

Members of the Public: Judy Kerr, Bill Krause, Kathleen Russell

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

Updates: No Updates

Correspondence:

Application to Bayfield County for a Class B permit to rezone a parcel of land owned by Brent and Cheryl Surowiec from R-1 to RRB.

There was heated discussion regarding the review of this permit application. The Town of Bell Board has requested that the Surowiec's apply for rezoning of one of the parcels included in the Siskiwit River Estuary Protection project. This property is being purchased through grants that will allow the Town of Bell to own it. Planning and Zoning has advised that the only area that needed to be rezoned would be for the placement of the trail head and parking lot. The parcel that is being considered for rezoning would accommodate access to the Siskiwit River Estuary Protection project. The Town of Bell Electorate voted to give the Town of Bell Board of Supervisors the authority to accept the parcel under the Grantors' conditions. Although other issues involving the acquisition were introduced, the Commissioners were reminded that their review was limited to whether the rezoning request was in keeping with the Goals and Objectives of the Town of Bell Comprehensive Plan.

Susan made a motion to recommend that the Town Board approve the permit request as the application conforms to the Goals and Objectives of the Town of Bell Comprehensive Plan. Pete seconded. Janice, Susan and Pete were in favor. Larry and Jackie were against. The motion was approved.

Traffic and parking issues in the Town

Matt Hipsher attended the meeting to help the Planning Commission in its goal of trying to improve parking in the village, get a pedestrian crosswalk across Hwy. 13 at Superior Ave., and address the speed limit on Hwy. 13 as it passes through the town. All agreed that the increase in activity in town has created some parking problems. One of the reasons why may be because of the closure of the Village Inn which in the past has taken some of the traffic off Superior Ave. The other is an increase in day tripper's coming from neighboring communities. Pete thought the right-of-way of Superior Ave. was 80' – Matt thought 100'. Pete will do the research and find out exactly what it is. The Town of Bell owns this right-of-way and has complete authority over it. Options for additional parking were discussed. Matt offered to work with us over the winter on figuring out the best solutions to some of these issues. The Planning Commission will prioritize their concerns. Matt has some contacts that may be able to help with some of them and is willing to join our efforts.

Speed limits on Town roads were discussed. Mountain Road and Stage road have a 45 mph limit but it appears that there are no signs posted. All other town roads have a speed limit of 35 except Blueberry Lane which is 25 mph and posted.

Suggestions were discussed to reduce speed on Superior Ave. Jackie suggested speed bumps. Matt agreed that they would probably be the most effective. Possible placement of 2 of the on Superior Ave. during the busy season could be very effective. Matt will check on the options for them and the cost.

The pedestrian crosswalk was discussed. Laying a boardwalk on grade met with Matt's approval. He also suggested that it be made of a material that would not deteriorate such as manufactured decking or metal. It will have to meet ADA standards and we are still not certain about the specifications. That will need further investigation. Jackie also noted that the code says that they cannot be placed across areas where the speed limit is over 40 mph. This may work for us in reducing the limit on Hwy 13 – or work against our ability to install a crosswalk.

Having Cedar Ave. marked as a one-way street was discussed because of the danger of poor visibility of traffic entering on to Superior Ave. from the east and the speed of traffic turning on to Superior Ave. from Hwy 13. A suggestion that this could be marked a one-way from Memorial Day to after Apple Fest was made. This was acceptable to Matt. It would be difficult to plow in the winter if it was one-way all year.

Janice had drafted an ordinance prohibiting “Jake breaking” based on a copy of the Washburn ordinance. Matt spoke against applying that to all Town roads as it would limit the ability of the Town crew to use their compression brakes. He pointed out the various types of compression or engine braking and suggested that the term “Jake” be removed from the ordinance. Since the ordinance was intended to control engine braking on both Hwy 13 and County Rd. C on the approaches from the east and southeast, Janice will revise the Ordinance and present the new version next month.

The Economic environment in the Town of Bell was discussed briefly. Options for better paying job opportunities and the limitations of what could exist in the Town were discussed. Fiber optic cable is a plus, transportation for goods is a minus. This topic will be looked at again.

Larry made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Jacki 2nd and the meeting was adjourned at 7:40 pm

The next meeting will be Oct 5th at 6 pm at the Community Center.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Keachie
Secretary