

**Minutes of the
Orono City Council & Planning Commission
Special Joint Work Session
Monday, April 9, 2018
Council Chambers 5:00 p.m.**

PRESENT: Mayor Dennis Walsh, Council Members Richard F. Crosby II, Wendy Dankey, and Victoria Seals. Representing staff were City Administrator Dustin Rief, Community Development Director Jeremy Barnhart, and City Clerk Anna Carlson.

Guest Presenter: WSB & Associates Inc. Representative Eric Zweber, and Planning Commissioners

Meeting Start Time: 5:00 p.m.

1. Navarre Area Plan Review

WSB & Associates Inc. Representative Eric Zweber, presented the final report for the Navarre Area small area Plan. The plan was guided by the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). PAC Meetings, an open house, use of Social Pinpoint, an online engagement tool, and previous plan studies have been used to gather information for the plan.

There was discussion regarding the focus of improvements, visibility, traffic issues and concerns of placement of the pedestrian walkways for the Navarre area. Discussion regarding the park, trail, and safety of use for pedestrians followed.

City Administrator Dustin Rief mentioned that the feedback received mentions that residents are more likely to use their car in the area versus walking around. Rief also mentioned that we are currently in the utility stage, and there is a big focus on the pedestrian/biking traffic. Hennepin County is aware of these issues and is focusing on improving it.

Zweber mentioned other areas of focus related to design that impacts other property owners. Zweber mentioned that a survey was used to gain feedback about these design elements and areas of concern. Zweber noted that there was not a large number of concerns, the main concern gathered from the survey was that there was desire to maintain the neighborhood character of the area. Other concerns that came from the survey were the timing of construction, teardowns and replacement of older houses and how that would affect the look of the area. Zweber mentioned that implementing standards for new development, code enforcement and encouragement of up keeping of existing homes in the area. There is still quite of bit of time for this process and review of this plan.

There was discussion regarding the need to engage with a larger number of people and also include engagement through ways other than only the internet.

Community Development Director Jeremy Barnhart mentioned there will be an open house for the entire Comprehensive Plan in May. The Planning Commission will see it in

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June and hold a public hearing, the City Council will see the preliminary plan in July, and meanwhile starting May 1st public comments will be received and continue throughout the summer and those comments will come back to City Council in September or October and any changes at that time will be incorporated into the plan and will be addressed in December. After final approval the Comprehensive plan will be submitted to Metropolitan Council likely at the end of December.

Mayor Dennis Walsh noted that the city needs to get as much citizen input as possible regarding the road because it is an important aspect of this plan.

Rief mentioned that the city does anticipate a public comment period for the road as well prior to final approval of the Comprehensive Plan.

Dankey mentioned that only 6 of 58 business owners in Navarre had returned a questionnaire in 2011. She asked Zweber if WSB had attempted to engage those businesses this time.

Zweber mentioned that WSB has engaged people throughout the PAC and Open House but has not interviewed any of those businesses.

Dankey would like to see more interaction with all of the business owners if possible.

Barnhart mentioned that it was a very good comment, however we will need additional resources to implement that type of engagement. Barnhart noted that we are trying to engage as many people as we can with the resources we have. If the Council would allow more resources to do that we would certainly reach out for that additional feedback.

Walsh noted that getting as many people's input as we can is the goal and that there is always time to amend the Comprehensive Plan in the future as new recommendations and ideas come about.

Zweber mentioned that if the Council would like to keep the PAC going as a working group to continue working on various aspects of the plan, including the intersection, trail extensions, community events section, etc. they can do that and it would be beneficial.

Rief thanked everyone for coming and sharing their input; it is much appreciated. He mentioned that density is one of the main areas of concern that had been identified. Rief noted that Thirty feet is the recommendation and that he would like to get the group's input on the density/height.

Walsh noted that the biggest general concern that the Council and Orono residents has is not whether or not to have density in their neighborhood. It makes sense in certain areas, but he is not convinced that Navarre is the area to allow more density in since it has its

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own feel and community. Walsh questioned if a change in density is necessary. Walsh added that if the standard is changed, it might be very hard to ever change it back to the way it was.

There was discussion regarding the support of the current standards and opt to not change the current density. Through discussion a questioned was raised that it could be possible that residents may not understand the full meaning behind density.

Walsh mentioned that the standard may hold new developers accountable. Walsh noted that developers would work with the standards if interested in the land. He questioned if we would want to try to make it happen.

Council Member Richard F. Crosby II, mentioned that it is the ramifications to the people that live there that needs to be taken into account when talking about density and design. He opted that the two story standards fits within that standard.

Barnhart mentioned the city had received comments regarding support of the improvements and also support of increasing density.

There was group discussion regarding the possible impacts that density may have in the area and the affects the will have on crosswalks, pedestrian traffic, parking and growth of the Navarre area.

Rief mentioned that there is an interest to standardize design and also there is interest in improving access to the businesses. Rief added that he would like to reach out and present to people to show what it may look like. Rief mentioned that inevitably new developments will come into the area and he questioned if we would want to standardize design to accommodate those redevelopments and what the area is expected or desired to look like for the future.

Crosby mentioned that the current newer businesses out there have already started the standard design and we may want to follow that design to mainstream the area.

Walsh feels we should be careful with the term standard because of all the different types of businesses that could possibly develop there and there needs for design.

There was discussion to possibly standardize the preference of materials could be established versus standardizes a style or rules. The general consensus was to look further to the public for more information.

Rief mentioned we need to review the access into the area and also into the businesses. We need to look further into the access, sidewalks, and how we need to address those.

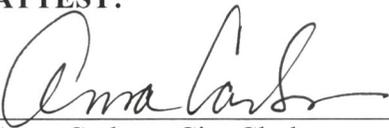
There was discussion of the benefits to the businesses from an underground parking for

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shopping or something similar, sidewalks moved further from the road, possible removal of curb cuts or ways to slow down traffic.

Meeting End Time: 6:53 p.m.

ATTEST:



Anna Carlson, City Clerk



Dennis Walsh, Mayor