

# Joint Plan Commission & Common Council

Monday, October 14, 2019

The Plan Commission and Common Council met on the above date at 4:30 p.m. in Council Chambers of the Municipal Building. Present from the Common Council: Ald. Mudler, Ald. Tortomasi, Ruetten, Maron, and Kilps. Present from the Plan Commission: Mayor McFarland, Zoning Administrator Jacob Maas, Steve Board, Dan Olejniczak, Sherry Cira, and Tony Arnett. Also present were Recreation Director Randy Wojtasiak, Health Officer Carol Quest, Mike Slavney and Ben Rohr, from Vandewalle & Associates, Clerk/Treasurer Elissa Friedl, City Attorney Rose Simon-Silva, and John Kaliebe on behalf of St. Mark's Lutheran Church.

1.&2. **Call to order.** Mayor McFarland called the Plan Commission and Common Council meeting to order at 4:35 p.m.

3. **Presentation of the Final Draft Park & Open Space Plan by Vandewalle & Associates.** Mike Slavney, of Vandewalle & Associates, stated the Park Plan is intended to be an aspirational guide for the next five years. It identifies more parks than needed but this is encouraged by the Department of Natural Resources to qualify for certain grants. He said the plan identifies park sites in areas to coincide with planned development. Slavney also explained the fees and land dedication requirement recommendations within the plan. He stated that adopting the plan does not change the fees or land dedication requirements and any changes to those would need to be adopted by the Common Council.

Ben Rohr, of Vandewalle & Associates, reported the planning process began in April and involved updating goals, objectives and strategies to mirror the Comprehensive Plan. He explained the plan revises constrained vs. non-constrained land and recalculates the parkland standard using revised demographic data. Ben said some new park locations identified include part of the Bethesda campus, Marathon gas station site and the proposed Town Square. The Plan also recommended staffing levels and improvements to existing parks.

4. **Plan Commission opens the public hearing.** Mayor McFarland opened the public hearing at 4:44 p.m.

a. **Public opportunity to speak on Final Draft Park & Open Space Plan.** No comments.

b. **Plan Commission & Common Council discussion on Park & Open Space Plan.** Tony Arnett addressed the major increase in recommended fees. Rohr explained that there were comparisons to the cost of park development including Oregon, Mount Horeb and Lake Geneva. Slavney noted the cost of materials has exploded. Arnett questioned if there were fee comparisons from neighboring communities.

Arnett stated the City does a great job with facilities for younger children but older children need access to Brandt/Quirk and Riverside Park. He feels the southwest portion of the City (Bielinski Development) is disconnected from access to those facilities as a pedestrian. He suggested there may be funds the City could obtain for multi-use paths to connect the southwest side of the City to premier park facilities.

Steve Board addressed the emphasis in the Comprehensive Plan on industrial land but the Park Plan lacks park space by industrial development.

5. **Plan Commission closes public hearing.** Mayor McFarland closed the public hearing at 4:53 p.m.

6. **Vandewalle & Associates responses to any public or Plan Commission comment.** Slavney explained the recommended fees per housing unit would be among the highest in the region, in part, because of the price of steel and concrete needed to construct parks. He again noted the plan can be adopted but ultimately Common Council would have to consider changes to fees and will need to consider whether the entire cost of new park facilities should be funded by fees on new development or shared with the existing tax base. Slavney commented that the best way to implement the path recommendation is to update the City's official map. Rohr explained that if and when the City pursues a bike/pedestrian plan the City can determine what

makes the most sense. Slavney responded to the concern about lack of green space in industrial areas and said preservation of the river frontage in the Bethesda area for public open space is recommended. Slavney explained that statutes don't allow charging fees in lieu of parkland dedication requirements on non-residential development but the City can, through negotiation of development agreements preserve green space in other types of development. He added that mixed use development that includes some residential can impose the requirements.

**7. Plan Commission takes action on Parks & Open Space Resolution.** Steve Board moved to recommend adoption of the Parks and Open Space Plan, seconded by Dan Olejniczak. Olejniczak stated that he was part of the process as a member of the Parks, Recreation & Forestry Commission and he feels they have done a good job of assessing future needs with limited resources. He is in favor of enhancing current facilities and encourages the City to be cognizant during development of the recreational potential of the Rock River. Dan added he was surprised there was a desire for another dog park by the public engaged in the process. Comments were made during the focus group that the layout is not as user-friendly as other dog parks in the area. Board noted that other dog parks charge user fees. Rohr said the City can enhance current dog parks and/or pursue a new one. Olejniczak stated that accessibility is always a challenge for public facilities. Tortomasi noted a good job was done involving the public in the process. He is concerned there may be a public perception that items in the plan will be implemented soon but that is not possible and the City will need to prioritize. Arnett encouraged Alderpersons present to not adopt the fees recommended in the plan. Motion carried by voice vote.

**8. Common Council takes action on Parks & Open Space Adoption Resolution.** Ald. Maron said he sees the need for the plan and noted the Council is not committing to adopting the recommended fees in the plan by adopting it. He is apprehensive of the extent the City can implement the plan if we don't have the money. Ald. Mudler stated the last Park Plan was adopted in 2014 and he would like to look back at that document and find out what was really implemented. Zoning Administrator Maas noted a more robust plan is necessary for grant opportunities because if a proposed park facility is not in the plan, the City can't apply for funding. Ald. Mudler said he wants to be confident a portion of the plan will be executed and not just use the plan to get grants. Rec. Director Wojtasiak agreed, stating that a lot of time and effort goes into the plan and we want to follow it. Mayor McFarland suggested the annual Park and Recreation report address items that were accomplished that are part of the Park and Open Space Plan. McFarland said she feels there will be discussion about fee structure in the future and some updates are likely needed. Motion to approve the resolution adopting the Park and Open Space Plan was made by Ald. Ruetten, seconded by Ald. Maron and carried by roll call vote: Yes-5; No-0.

**9. Presentation of Draft #2 Watertown Comprehensive Plan by Vandewalle & Associates.** Mike Slavney, of Vandewalle & Associates, explained that zoning decisions, by statute, must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Changes to zoning code and zoning maps and annexations need to follow future land use maps. He said map amendments are allowed but require a public hearing so it is important to have maps as predictive as can be. He said the Comprehensive Plan will be back to the Plan Commission and Common Council. Because Common Council has a public hearing requirement but Plan Commission does not, many cities have joint Plan Commission/Common Council meetings so both hear public input. Rohr stated there will be another joint meeting on December 3, 2019. Rohr reported the update of Comprehensive Plan began in January. He noted some of the key action items in the plan are include: annual review of the plan to track progress, creation of a City-wide 5-year capital plan, establishing a City Economic Development Team, conduct a traffic study of downtown, address stagnation of residential development, water resource planning and more. Rohr said several edits were made reflecting Plan Commission recommendations. He noted a specific land use type was created for the Bethesda area which would allow for more adaptability as that area develops over time.

**10. Plan Commission & Common Council discussion & questions.** Board asked what the connection was between the Comprehensive Plan and Parks & Open Space Plan and questioned whether every development should have open space. Slavney replied that not every development has suitable property. Mayor McFarland said if not identified here, it can be taken care of at Site Plan. Slavney added that as lot size shrinks, open space is more of a limited resource so the Park Plan becomes more important. Ald. Maron said it was his understanding that the Bethesda land was going to be single family. Mayor McFarland said the desired classification is general so the City is open to the most options for development. Ald. Maron noted the nearby subdivision is single family and asked if this would change use of that area. Slavney answered that good subdivision design can have strong property values with multiple uses within it. He explained that in the 1950's, 75% of American households were a nuclear family with children in the home, now only 25% of households are nuclear families with kids in the home. As people live longer and stay in their own homes longer, there is more need for two-family residential development to allow space for young adults and empty nesters. He explained that the needs of housing have evolved with time but we don't want to undermine existing neighborhoods. Arnett said he feels the plan lacks an economic identity of Watertown. He said successful communities have a vision for a business thread/identity. He also feels a 5-year budget projection, including bonding capacity or set of principles around budgeting should be included to view this plan as strategic and not just for land use.

**11. Common Council adjourns.** Motion was made by Ald. Maron, seconded by Ald. Kilps for the Common Council to adjourn at 6:02 p.m.

**12. Review & approve Site Plan Review Committee minutes of September 23, 2019.** Steve Board moved to accept the minutes as presented, seconded by Tony Arnett and carried by voice vote.

**13. Review & approve Plan Commission minutes of September 23, 2019.** Tony Arnett moved to accept the minutes as presented, seconded by Dan Olejniczak and carried by voice vote.

**14. 201 N. Sixth Street, St. Mark's Congregation, driveway variance request.** The Church plans to use the property as a parking lot. Steve Board moved to approve the driveway variance request subject to remaining three feet off the property line per code and subject to compliance with access standards in Chapter 550 of the municipal code as suggested by the Zoning Administrator. Motion was seconded by Sherry Cira and carried by voice vote.

**15. 615 Jones Street, St. Mark's Congregation, Preliminary Certified Survey Map request.** The request is to combine multiple lots to create one parcel. Zoning Administrator Maas reported that because of the location of the property it is not prudent to ask for a 6-foot right-of-way and noted the Airport Protection Zone was listed on the map. Tony Arnett moved to approve the Preliminary Certified Survey Map with no conditions, seconded by Dan Olejniczak and carried by voice vote.

**16. Adjournment.** Tony Arnett moved to adjourn the meeting of the Plan Commission at 6:10 p.m. Motion was seconded by Dan Olejniczak and carried by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Elissa Friedl, City Clerk/Treasurer

Note: These minutes are uncorrected and any corrections made thereto will be noted in the proceedings at which these minutes are approved.