

**LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**  
**November 25, 2013**

The meeting of the City of Baxter Long Range Planning Commission was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Kevin Donnay.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kevin Donnay, Cathy Clark, Bob Ryan, Lori Rubin, Jim Kalkofen, Rock Ylimeini and Council Liaison Todd Holman

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mark Cross

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Gordon Heitke and CD Director Josh Doty

OTHERS: Phil Carlson, Nathan Hall and Rob Griffin

**Approval of Minutes**

Motion by Commissioner Ryan, second by Commissioner Kalkofen to approve the minutes of the October 28, 2013 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

**Review Process**

Chair Donnay turned the floor over to Mr. Phil Carlson of Stantec who stated that several items on the agenda he would be handling with a brief presentation.

**Community Forum-Review Comments**

Mr. Carlson briefly reviewed the Community Forum and explained that the comments will be part of the appendix.

**Draft Goals & Policies-review and Discuss**

Mr. Carlson reviewed the following items in the packet and gave an explanation.

- **Goal 1: Promote a well-planned community balancing land uses and expansion of services.**

Policies:

- Create a land use plan that defines the types and locations of residential, commercial, industrial and public uses required to meet the community's projected needs, and zone property consistent with the land use plan.
- Identify growth areas within the city limits and potential urban expansion areas and include these areas in land use planning to guide the orderly and cost effective provision of infrastructure at a rate consistent with anticipated growth.
- Continue to use the Area wide Urban Alternative Review (AUAR) process to evaluate impacts of new development; ensure updates are prepared to keep plans current

Chair Donnay asked if the AUAR is in the plan itself. Mr. Carlson stated it is more of a policy and that there are separate implementation steps.

- Require efficient use of the land with compact urban development standards in both new development and redevelopment.

Council Liaison Holman asked about a policy for in-fill (land that has development around it but is currently vacant) instead of expansion. Mr. Carlson stated that he is hearing that a policy should encourage in-fill first, that was correct.

Commissioner Ryan, said that if we are going to promote in-fill using this policy, what are we going to say to the developer that wants to develop on Grand Oaks Dr. where there is a swamp. What incentives we are going to offer needs to be worked out ahead of time. The Commission discussed the options of removing the language or leaving the language in the policy. Mr. Carlson explained that the verbiage could be changed, that maybe incentive isn't the right choice of words that maybe "encourage", "support" or "promote" would be a better word. Tonight is just to decide which goals and policies are wanted. Resident Ray Griffin indicated that this is the guideline for the policy not that actual policy. The Commission discussed the need for language in the subdivision regulations to require consistency with the comprehensive plan. Chair Donnay thanked Mr. Griffin for his input and encouraged additional comments.

- Identify, prioritize and protect sensitive natural features, such as the lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, natural open space and local parks, as development proceeds. Employ conservation design principles in areas of environmental sensitive land areas.
- Provide for commercial and industrial land uses at locations where adequate municipal services are available, that serve market demand, and with access to major roadways, especially State Highways 371 and 210.
- Create a Hwy. 371 Corridor plan that provides guidance and specific plans for land use, infill and redevelopment opportunities, bicycle/pedestrian elements and public spaces.

Commissioner Kalkofen stated that the safety of pedestrians/bicycles crossing 371 should be looked at closely as it is a concern of the Parks Commission and is discussed frequently.

- Create and enforce building, site/landscaping design and signage standards to insure high quality development that enhances Baxter's identity and character.

- **Goal 2: Provide a variety of housing types, densities and choices to meet the life cycle housing needs of residents.**

Policies:

- Maintain a balance, through land use, in the types and densities of housing units available to meet the housing needs of Baxter.
  - Promote infill residential development in appropriate areas where existing infrastructure may be utilized.
  - Develop standards for conservation design principles that protect Baxter’s sensitive or unique land and water features in new residential development.
  - Assess the need for additional workforce and affordable senior housing needs in the community.
  - Promote the improvement of the existing housing stock, and encourage the rehabilitation or redevelopment of substandard housing.
- **Goal 3: Support, enhance and expand existing businesses and promote new businesses to Baxter.**

Policies:

- Continue promoting new businesses to help fill niches including diverse retail and restaurants to enhance choices within the City.
- Through land use create opportunities to meet market demand for industrial, business park, medical service and professional office development to expand the number of livable wage jobs in Baxter.
- Promote available business assistance and incentive programs to bring new businesses to Baxter or support improving, maintaining and expanding existing businesses.

Commissioner Kalkofen asked if there is a current incentive program to bring new businesses to Baxter. Administrator Heitke stated that Baxter has used a revolving loan fund and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) in the past. It was also noted that BLADC is also financed/supported through Baxter funding.

- **Goal 4: Coordinate transportation with land use planning.**

Policies:

- Implement transportation system improvements according to existing (and future) studies that address congestion, improve access and connections and meet forecasted development demand and future traffic impacts.

- Work with neighboring communities, townships, and counties to develop an efficient, regional transportation system to minimize congestion.
  - Require traffic impact studies for development that will affect collector or arterial roadways.
  - Continue creating a positive image along the city’s corridors and gateways through building, site design, and signage standards and the development of gateway features.
  - Identify and implement on-road bicycle corridors along major roadways.
- **Goal 5: Maintain and improve the existing transportation system to provide safe and functional multi-modal roadways.**

Policies:

- Develop and maintain a plan for existing roadway upgrades and maintenance.
- Continue to require sufficient right-of-way and easements on existing roadways in new development to ensure future traffic needs will be addressed.
- Integrate pedestrian and bicycle trails (on and off road) into the design of existing and new roadway facilities that provide links to key destinations such as existing neighborhoods, parks, schools, commercial areas, and public uses.

Commissioner Kalkofen suggested adding verbiage regarding “links” to other trails/segments.

- Design and identify a funding mechanism for construction of a bike and pedestrian bridge over Hwy. 371 that provides connection to the Paul Bunyan Trail.

Commissioner Kalkofen noted it should say “over or under” Hwy. 371.

- Provide safe pedestrian routes and crossings for schools.
  - Maintain (or define) a truck route system to serve industrial uses and minimize impact on other parts of the roadway system.
  - Use traffic management technology to improve the operations and pedestrian safety of the roadway system.
  - Design and install appropriate traffic calming features to minimize speeds and discourage through traffic from intruding on residential areas.
- **Goal 6: Maintain existing infrastructure and cost effectively manage expansion of municipal utilities and services to meet demand.**

Policies

- Maintain the City-wide Capital Improvement Plan and map for water and sewer expansion so residents and businesses can set reasonable expectations for where services will be offered in the future.
- Continue to require that all commercial, industrial, office, and mixed use development is connected to City sewer and water services.
- Require all new residential developments to be connected to City sewer and water services.
- Promote energy efficient design in all developments to reduce electrical, heat and water needs.
- Plan for completion of water and sewer connections in developed areas (River Vista Drive area).

Mr. Giffin requested that one neighborhood should not be singled out in the plan

- **Goal 7: Promote new development and redevelopment of existing corridors to enhance Baxter's character and identity.**

Policies:

- Study and inventory land uses within key corridors including State Hwys., 371 and 210; former Pine Meadows Golf Course, North Baxter AUAR area, vacant parcels south of College Road and scattered infill sites to determine appropriate land uses and redevelopment sites that support and expand the economic vitality of the corridors.
- Create a corridor plan for Hwy. 371 for commercial and office development that includes land use, transportation and design guidelines.
- Strengthen and enforce building, site design and signage standards to insure high quality development that enhances Baxter's identity and character.
- Implement a streetscaping and lighting plan for major roadways.

Commissioner Yliniemi explained that in the past the residents have not wanted to see street lighting in their neighborhoods. They have petitioned for them not to come into residential areas. The reason being is they would like to see the stars, not a bright street light. Administrator Heitke expressed that this would be major roadways and not so much residential.

- **Goal 8: Ensure that the City's aesthetic character for residents, visitors and business patrons is enhanced through high quality development and infrastructure and the visual attractiveness of key corridors.**

Policies:

- Establish a community image theme steeped in Baxter’s heritage with participation of residents, business owners and property owners.
- Develop and enforce a plan to keep the City’s gateways attractive by maintaining and enhancing signage, landscaping, or other features at key City entrances.
- Include improved signage in beautification efforts to direct residents and visitors to lakes/beaches, river, parks, recreational activity areas, landmarks, and shopping.
- Encourage business owners to use and increase landscaping and other design aesthetics to beautify their buildings, entrances and parking lots. Create buffer standards to provide natural screening separation between commercial and industrial uses to residential.
- Promote compliance with all building and zoning codes through effective enforcement strategies and follow through direction with property and or building owner.

Mr. Carlson indicated that enforcement is crucial or all of this is a waste of time.

- **Goal 9: Continue to provide for the park, recreation, trail, and open space needs of the Baxter community.**
1. Update the existing Baxter Park and Recreation Plan to meet current and future park, trail, and open space needs:
    - a. Define current and future needs for passive and active parks, trails and open spaces to provide a full range of recreational opportunities.
    - b. Determine current and future athletic, community and event facility space needs (including potential shared facilities with the school district).
    - c. Determine the need for additional or improved maintenance facilities.
    - d. Evaluate the park dedication ordinance to determine adequate fees are acquired to meet park and trail development needs.
    - e. Work with neighboring cities, townships, counties, and other relevant agencies to develop a coordinated and connected local, regional and park/trail system.
  2. Acquire sufficient park and open space to meet to meet current and future needs.
    - a. Define acquisition search areas based on a prioritized master plan.
    - b. Pursue public and private funding opportunities for land acquisition for preserving open space within the city.
    - c. Maintain current parks, beaches, trails and recreational areas to highest standards for Baxter residents and visitors to enjoy.
  3. Update the existing trail plans to connect parks, community facilities, shopping, school and regional trail systems.
    - a. Identify gaps in existing trail system within existing parks and open spaces as well as missing connections between destinations and commercial areas to create full loop trails benefiting all neighborhoods in Baxter.

- b. Create designated on-road cycling lanes with signage, stripping on major roadways.

Commissioner Yliniemi explained the past practice with signage and is concerned about the retro reflective requirement. The Commission had a conversation regarding the different types of signs and which ones are required.

- c. Require sidewalks and/or trails in new development and redevelopment projects.
- d. Create opportunities for increased designated snowmobile trails with access to the Paul Bunyan Trail.
- e. Design and identify a funding mechanism for construction of a bike and pedestrian bridge over Hwy. 371 that provides connection to the Paul Bunyan Trail.

Commissioner Kalkofen stated that MNDot would have to be willing to work with Baxter to have a trail over/under Hwy. 371.

- **Goal 10: Create and maintain an atmosphere of cooperative and effective local government.**

- Create streamlined policies and procedures for development review and building permit issuance that provides efficient review while maintaining Baxter's standards for quality development.
- Continue to work cooperatively with all adjacent jurisdictions and agencies that can improve the quality of life for Baxter residents and businesses.
- Update the zoning ordinance and other regulatory tools to implement that Comprehensive Plan in a manner that supports the plan at appropriate levels of regulations to meet the vision.
- Explore options to make City Council meetings more transparent through televised meetings, website and other media options.

Commissioner Clark asked how do you evaluate the items in Goal 10. Mr. Carlson stated that a survey of current conditions and then have another survey in 3 years.

Council Liaison Holman asked if there was a water protection plan or goals. He hasn't seen it in the past and thought drinking water protection and sustainability should be included. Mr. Carlson agreed that it should be placed in the comp. plan. Commissioner Yliniemi thought that the MS4 policy was what the city is currently using as a plan. Mr. Carlson agreed to see where water protection could be placed in the goals.

### **Draft Land Use Plan-Review and Discuss**

Mr. Carlson reviewed the different colors on the map and the current uses. Commissioner Yliniemi gave the example of a piece of Potlatch land that is mixed used and out of the way. He asked if a small convenience store could go over there and people could even bike to that location for general items verses going on the 371 corridor. Mr. Carlson stated yes if there is a market. He added that it should be looked at to see if that is a direction Baxter would be willing to look at in the future.

He asked that the Commissioners each look at the map and decide what areas may need to be changed or updated. This map is to show where the city wants to go in the next 20-30 years.

Council Liaison Holman asked if mixed use could be residential and commercial. Mr. Carlson indicated that it can be done, depending on the regulations. Council Liaison Holman explained that planned unit developments require a sketch and conditional use permit and can be time consuming; with a mixed use district, it would make the process easier. Council Liaison Holman added that he would like to see more mixing of uses. Chair Donnay stated that the concern is about density. If you own a single family dwelling, would you want a three story apartment building built next to you. It needs to be a gradual density change. Mr. Carlson stated that density isn't the only factor. He added that you can mix land uses, and people's perception of the development can be as much based on design, building articulation, height, as much as density.

The Commission at this point left their stations and made comments on the map. They spoke of:

- There is another manufactured home park north and west of Cashwise.
- AUAR/Potlatch Properties. Staff to provide alternative land use plan to Mr. Carlson to add to Land Use Plan for review.
- Want lower density with larger tracts in the south west portion of the city.
- Plan needs to match up with Sylvan Township.
- Guide Anderson gravel mine properties residential and not industrial.
- Concept of a downtown in Baxter. Baxter is often referred to as the downtown of a larger region.
- Discussed the golf course property as a property for some type of mixed use. Concern was stated about traffic for redevelopment of this property. It was added that trail connections are needed in this area of the city.
- The city needs to be realistic with the land use guide plan and understand the impact of changing the colors on the map.
- Baxter has been developed such that automobiles are the most common way move around.
- Where is there a place/development that is Baxter?
- College Drive and having a lighter Industrial Districts. It was discussed that a tier system is currently in place.
- Remove the Forestry designation.
- Mississippi Overlook Conservation Easement.
- Look into regulations for RS zoned properties. Do we need to get tougher with our regulations that allow new well and septic systems.
- Discussed locations where fiber is available in the City.
- Discussed stake holders meeting and dates.

### **Next Steps**

Setting the open forum with stake holders and residents.

### **Other Business**

None

**Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for December 16, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. (moved up due to the holiday week) with a Community Forum to follow at 7:00 p.m.

**Adjournment**

Motion by Commissioner Ryan second by Commissioner Clark to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 p.m.

Approved by:

Respectfully submitted,

---

Chair Kevin Donnay

---

Shanna Newman  
CD Technical Clerk