

BAXTER CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
Work Session
March 3, 2015

Mayor Darrel Olson called the City Council Work Session to order at 5:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Darrel Olson and Council Members Quinn Nystrom, Steve Barrows, Todd Holman, and Mark Cross.

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Assistant City Administrator Kelly Steele, Community Development Director Josh Doty, and Public Works Director/City Engineer Trevor Walter

Review Plans and Specs for the 2015 Isle Drive Extension Project

Chuck Rickert, WSB, invited the Council to gather around the conference table to review the Isle Drive plans and specifications he and Aric Welch, of WSN, have been working on. Mr. Rickert explained there have been several minor revisions to the project plans. The roundabout has been modified for easier expansion in the future to a two lane and the east leg of CSAH 48 alignment was modified to match the existing single lane section. Ironwood Drive no longer includes on road bike lanes at the direction of Crow Wing County. The county policy is that if a pedestrian facility is located off road then on-road facilities should not be provided. In order to accommodate the roadway drainage, a pond was added north of Isle Drive by expanding the existing pond and realigning the Paul Bunyan Trail connection. Re-naming of two streets was discussed.

Review Draft Comprehensive Plan

Community Development Director Doty explained he is pleased to recommend the updated Comprehensive Plan to the council. In early 2013, the City re-constituted the Long Range Planning Commission (“LRPC”) to consist of chairs of all commissions, representation from the public, and the Economic Development Authority. The LRPC was the working commission for an approximately two-year process, which included 18 public meetings regarding the Comprehensive Plan. The Parks and Trails Commission held public meetings throughout nearly the same two-year process to develop the Parks and Trails Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.

The public process included the following five phases: project initiation; vision, goals and policies; land use and growth; plan preparation; and implementation and adoption.

Community Development Director Doty reviewed the highlights from each chapter. Community Development Doty reviewed a map depicting properties currently served by city services.

Community Development Director Doty explained there are two new land use guides. The first is a mixed use and the second is a business gateway. The mixed use allows for a mix of residential and commercial uses. The business gateway land use is intended to provide for

office, light industrial and limited retail uses that would create a high quality, attractive “north woods” image of the City’s southeast and west gateways on Highways 371 and 210. The two mixed-use areas are the North Baxter AUAR area and the former golf course area. The business gateway has received a lot of attention, including objections from some property owners. The property owners objected, requested greater flexibility of uses, and objected to the scale limitations. The LRPC goal for this area was to be different from what has currently developed along the City entrances. A draft of the business gateway district was included as an appendix to the draft Comprehensive Plan. Community Development Director Doty explained big box stores would not be permitted under the proposed business gateway district. The LRPC did agree to recommend a concession to their initial recommendation to address the concerns of some property owners.

Community Development Director Doty explained he would have to make sure the City Code and Land Use Map are consistent with the draft Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Map. Community Development Director Doty explained the council has provided feedback regarding the draft Comprehensive Plan and those items would be reviewed individually.

The Council discussed if the city is planning too much growth area based on demographics. The Council also discussed identifying the Clearwater Road corridor as a future multi modal corridor to connect the Paul Bunyan Trail and Northland Arboretum with Whipple Beach and provide an inter-city link between Baxter and Brainerd. The draft Comprehensive Plan does not recognize the uniqueness of the Northland Arboretum. The draft Comprehensive Plan discusses sidewalks, but it does not differentiate if they are promoted as private connections or if they are promoted in the right-of-way during public improvement projects.

Community Development Director Doty explained the next step is to place the draft Comprehensive Plan on the March 17 council agenda for adoption.

Mayor Olson explained the purpose of the work session is for council discussion and the public can make comments during the public forum of the regular council meeting.

MOTION by Council Member Barrows, seconded by Council Member Holman to recess the work session at 6:51 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

The Council returned to the work session at 7:57 p.m.

Community Development Director Doty explained the Council would review a list of items identified for additional discussion.

There are concerns with larger blocks of high density without mixing uses. Council identified this item as an implementation item.

The Council has the ability to require a traffic study when presented with a development plan.

The Council discussed contacting the property owner south of Hinckley to inform them of the City’s plan for future development of the area.

The Council indicated support to complete a study to determine the best location for a pedestrian bridge over Clearwater Road.

The Council supported planning and development and decision participation in both local transit and the regional airport development.

The Council supported adding communication and civic engagement to chapter five of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Council supported adding language to the Comprehensive Plan regarding the importance of the Northland Arboretum. By adding language, it allows the city to support grants applications for the Northland Arboretum.

The Council discussed a ½-mile ring around existing parks to identify the service area.

The Ski Club has expressed interest in having ski trials in MOP park.

The Council asked to have the language removed from the draft Comprehensive Plan regarding corridor designation for TH 210.

The Council would like to have the Parks and Trails Commission develop a sidewalk plan.

The Council directed Community Development Director Doty and Council Members Holman and Cross to meet one additional time to hear new information from Potlatch and Sells.

MOTION by Council Member Cross, seconded by Council Member Barrows to adjourn at 10:08 p.m. Motion carries unanimously.

Approved by:

Respectfully submitted,

Darrel Olson
Mayor

Kelly Steele
Assistant City Administrator/Clerk