

BAXTER CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
Work Session
April 7, 2015

Mayor Darrel Olson called the Work Session to order at 6:15 p.m.

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

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: None

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

Helsene Property

Community Development Director Doty explained Larry Helsene contacted the City to let us know he is considering putting his property up for sale. He stated before he lists the property with a realtor, he would like to know if the City is interested in acquiring it. The property includes approximately 80 acres in southwest Baxter. The property is unique compared to other areas in the City. The property has frontage on the Mississippi River, Bass Lake, and an un-named lake southwest of Bass Lake.

At the February 3, 2015 work session, the Council discussed the potential for this parcel to serve as a connection piece for improvement public access to this area of Baxter for emergency services and the potential goal of the Parks and Trails Commission to conserve more of the Mississippi River Shoreland. The Council requested more information from staff regarding how this parcel fits into the City's priorities.

Community Development Director Doty explained the City's Long Range Transportation and Functional Classification Street Map does not identify a future roadway through the property. However, because this is a rural area of the City, specific locations for future public street corridors have not yet been planned or identified.

A question was raised if Timber Ridge Drive is the location of the historical settlement road named Leech Lake Road. Staff located a historical map, which shows the Leech Lake Road did not follow Timber Ridge Drive. The road was further west of this area near the Gull River.

Mr. Helsene has not provided staff with a price for the property. Therefore, staff collected value information from Crow Wing County. The total land value listed for the 90 acres is \$162,700. The total building value of the home is \$104,003, for a total value of \$266,703. Mr. Helsene has assumed the City would not be interested in his home, so he would like to remove approximately ten acres from the potential sale to the City.

The City's typical finding source for an open space land purchase would be from the City's Park Dedication budget. Considering 2015 park dedication expenses, staff estimates there is approximately \$400,000 remaining in the fund.

The Parks and Trails Commission reviewed Mr. Helsene's request at their March 23, 2015 meeting. The Commission was asked if they would consider revising the Comprehensive Plan to identify this property as a priority. The Commission stated this property would not rank above other priority park improvement projects that have been identified in the Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, the Commission recommended that no changes be made to the Parks and Trails chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Council discussed because of the priority list, the Parks and Trails Commission did not feel this purchase was a viable option to take on knowing the City has other priorities. The property also has accessibility issues, as residents would have to go through Pillager at this time to access the property. The Council consensus at this time is not to purchase the property. The Council asked staff to send a letter to Mr. Helsene to express the City's appreciation regarding the offer to purchase the property.

Dellwood Drive/ Novotny Road Improvements

Mr. Welch explained per direction received at the March 17, 2015 work session, WSN has completed a preliminary analysis of alternative assessment methods as allowed by the City's Assessment Policy for Public Initiated Improvements. The two alternative methods investigated included the area assessment method and a combination of front footage and area.

Several of the abutting properties include wetland areas. For the preliminary assessment calculations, wetland areas have not been excluded from the area calculation. Mr. Welch explained he believes wetland areas should be excluded from the calculation, but this raises several issues. Property owners may be able to fill portions of the wetland when the property is developed.

The Council discussed drawing the line 300' back for assessment calculations. The City standards do not fit the geometry of the area.

Mr. Welch explained if the feasibility report were modified, another improvement hearing would have to be held. The project schedule can still be modified to accommodate this change. Mr. Welch explained the City still has to complete the wetland permit process for Inglewood Drive, so that may delay both projects.

Draft Comprehensive Plan

Community Development Director Doty explained on March 17, 2015, staff presented the Comprehensive Plan update to the Council. The Council heard from two property owners during the public forum who requested a small committee meeting to further explain and work through their objections to the plan. The Council agreed and appointed Council Member Holman, Council Member Cross, and Long Range Planning Commission Chair Donnay to meet with the property owners. On March 16, 2015, the meeting was held.

During the meeting, the Baxter Mainstreet group stated they would like the City to delay action on the Comprehensive Plan update to allow them the opportunity to submit a Planned Unit Development ("PUD") request. The Baxter Mainstreet group stated they do not have a developer, but the PUD request could be used as a marketing tool for the property owner. They explained the PUD application would allow them to present an application with a big box development they believe the Council would be happy with. The Baxter Mainstreet group wanted an approval over a sketch review. The consensus of the

committee was to allow for a PUD application. Additional work is needed between Baxter Mainstreet and staff to determine the type of PUD request they can submit based on the information received.

During the committee meeting, the Potlatch group stated they have worked with the City for 35 years and are in this for the long term. Potlatch has four sites they would like to see a different land use designation. Potlatch would like to see Mixed Use instead of Business Gateway for the west Baxter property north of highway 210. The mixed-use option expands the potential for commercial uses and allows for the potential mixing of residential use for this area. Potlatch would like to see Low Density Residential instead of Rural for their southwest Baxter property. Potlatch stated the rural designation would not allow for future single-family use at urban densities. Potlatch would like to see Mixed Use instead of Low Density Residential for their south Baxter property, which is west of highway 371. Potlatch explained they would envision a mix of high density residential and neighborhood commercial use on this property. Potlatch would like to see High Density Residential instead of Low Density Residential for this south Baxter property, which is east of highway 371. Potlatch explained high density residential would allow more of the land area to be preserved for the highway 371 corridor than would be seen with a single-family subdivision.

The committee identified support of delaying the Comprehensive Plan update to allow a PUD submittal for Baxter Mainstreet. The committee also identified support for three of the four requested land use changes by Potlatch. The committee was not supportive of the request for southwest Baxter from Rural to Low Density Residential. The committee also stated gateway standards should be considered for the residential properties.

The Council discussed they would like to establish a date to have the Comprehensive Plan on the agenda for approval. The Council discussed submitting a PUD application versus a sketch plan and the process for review and approval of each. The Council consensus was to schedule the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan for the second meeting in May.

MOTION by Council Member Cross, seconded by Council Member Barrows to adjourn at 6:55 p.m. Motion carries unanimously.

Approved by:

Respectfully submitted,

Darrel Olson
Mayor

Kelly Steele
Assistant City Administrator/Clerk