

LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
July 23, 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, Mark Cross Jim Kalkofen, and Council Liaison Todd Holman

MEMBERS ABSENT: Lori Rubin and Rock Ylimeini,

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Gordon Heitke

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Ylimeini, second by Commissioner Rubin to approve the minutes of the June 24, 2013 regular meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Planning Services

Phil Carlson and Tina Goodroad of Stantec thanked the Commission for choosing Stantec. Mr. Carlson asked that the Commission to please introduce themselves and explain their role in the Commission.

Mr. Carlson explained the reasons behind planning and how they work together for private businesses and residents. This long range vision/plan is a guide for elected and appointed officials to assist in future development. Mr. Carlson then highlighted the following items that will be discussed throughout the process:

- Plan for growth and infrastructure
- Anticipation of growth
- Demographics and aging population
- Understanding the economic pattern
- Elements of the comprehensive plan
 - Land use and zoning-are there areas to be rezoned or areas of conflict?
 - Transportation-Roadways for residential, including pedestrian/biking and commercial
 - Parks-Where new ones should be located and connecting trails
- Engaging in with the public-Visual Preference-the best way to connect via-email, Facebook, newsletters or meetings

Mr. Carlson turned the floor over to Ms. Goodroad. Ms. Goodroad took the Commission through the comprehensive plan approval. She explained the five phase process as:

1. Kick off meeting with the Commission and staff
2. Visions and Goals Statements
3. Alternative growth/spacing mapping
4. Drafting/Planning chapters (heavy review)
5. Implementation and adoption by City Council

Mr. Carlson explained S.W.O.T which stands for: Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Treats.

He asked the Commission to take a few minutes and think about each topic and write down items under each topic. The Commission findings were as followed:

Strengths (Things you like, are proud of, that enhance the community)

Location to natural amenities – 7
Trail system – 4
Uniqueness of neighborhoods (space, big lots, variety) – 3
Easy regional access – 3
Tourism – 3
Strong community support for school bonding, sales tax – 3
Regional retail hub and variety of retail – 3
Schools – 2
Industrial land available – 2
Medical services – 1
Stable commercial and industrial land – 1
Dedicated workers/employees
Strong average household income
Christian community
Nice, clean neighborhoods
Airport
Businesses “step up a notch” to meet customer expectations
Parks
Good variety of restaurants
Sense of place
Values
Retirement facilities
Active citizen groups
Citizen pride
Cost of living
Low crime

Weaknesses (Things you don’t like, should be corrected, that detract from the community)

Public - perception that the City is difficult to work with. (City approval process) – 6
Conflicting expectations – between residents & tourists who (expect more) for services, (i.e. restaurants service / hi-speed internet) retail, amenities - 5
Condition of infrastructure – 4
Pedestrian trail crossing of Hwy. 371 (connect to Paul Bunyan trail) - 4
Lack of industrial/manufacture head of household jobs – 4
Sense of place (“Baxterization” of 371) (“Anyplace USA”) lack of City Center – 2
Hwy. 371 and 210 divides the City – 2
Lack of walkability/bikeability – 2
Lack of inter-connected planning land use, transportation, etc. – 2
Lack of identity – 1
Water / sewer not available everywhere
Fast, uncontrolled growth
Difficult to “listen” to Baxter
How to hear from the community
Lack of “whole system” buy in with Comp Plan

Baxter has become too commercial
City is spread out
Seasonal traffic jams
Mix of residential neighborhoods and appearance (hodge/podge)
Consistency in following rules/policies

Opportunity (Good things that could happen but haven't yet)

Connected trail systems – hike, bike, snowmobile, etc. – 6
Guided planning around demographics – 6
Commercial land / store fronts available
Get ahead of growth with Planning & Visioning – 4
Incorporate natural resources into development
Rebuilding our economy – guide to decision making – 3
Joint projects with regional neighbors – 2
Major partners (decision makers) are here – system planning – i.e. MnDOT – 2
Balance growth with provision of recreational facilities (i.e. destination recreation) – 2
Industrial growth with existing vacant industrial land – 2
Emerging transit system – part of larger transportation system – 1
City to become better partner to citizens – 1
Attract innovative / technology entrepreneur's – 1
Expansion of medical facilities /services – 1
Mississippi – trails along river, Park area - 1
Rebounding residential Development
Simonson lumber (new site)
To motivate creative / talented citizens

Threats (Bad things that could happen but haven't yet)

Deteriorating / aging infrastructure – 7
Breakdown of communication with neighbors – 5
Loss of Natural Resources – 5
Economic stagnation – 3
Policy leadership not sticking to plans – 3
Disenchanted disengaged citizens – 2
High cost of development related fees – 2
500 empty S.F. lots with water and sewer – 2
Coping with rising number of Retirees – 1
Impact of state and federal laws and mandates – 1
Possible changing ethnic demographics and how City responds
Surrounding units of government
Higher taxes, higher gas prices
Unsafe pedestrian / trail systems
Emergency response – RR, etc. plus wellhead protection
Diminished tax base
Create plans that don't get implemented
Another downturn in the economy
High dependence on tourism and retail

After the S.W.O.T. exercise was complete Mr. Carlson explained the steps for the next meeting, they were:

- A. Review Comp Plan process
- B. Review demographics – what’s changed in Baxter
- C. Review land use map – input on neighborhoods or communities within Baxter

The above mentioned items will be placed on the agenda for the September 23, 2013 meeting.

Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Clark, second by Commissioner Ryan to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gordon Heitke
City Administrator