

# MINUTES

## Stakeholder Meeting – Rural Residential July 17, 2017

**Stakeholders Present:** Gary Fields; Jill Lundgren; Tom Bucher; Jim Ogren; Paul Wiseman; Sheryl Neibuhr; Jo Ford; Mary Christensen; Emily Peterson; Mindy Gustafson; Austin Anderson; Michael Phan; Nate Landucci

**Staff and Consultants Present:** Jennifer Haskamp, Swanson Haskamp Consulting Consultant; Ellison Yahner, Swanson Haskamp Consulting Consultant; Stephen Wensman, Planning Director; Emily Becker, City Planner.

**The meeting was called to order by Consultant Haskamp at 6:36 PM.**

### Agenda/Introduction

Consultant Haskamp provided an overview of the agenda for the meeting and introduced herself and Consultant Yahner as two of the consultants for the 2040 Comprehensive Plan update.

### What is a Comprehensive Plan?

Consultant Haskamp explained that the Comprehensive Plan was a long range plan for the city, communicating a unified vision, goals, and strategies of the City as well as current and future planning efforts. She went on to explain that the Metropolitan Council, as part of the Metropolitan Land Planning Act, requires that certain components be included in Comprehensive Plans within the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area and that these plans be updated every ten years to accommodate system statement updates that are also sent out every ten years. She specified that system statements are updated on every year ending in “5” (i.e. 2005, 2015) and that Comprehensive Plans need to be updated every year ending in “8” (i.e. 2008, 2018). System statements provide projections on city growth and address how the community should comply with regional systems including sewer, parks, transportation, housing, etc. Key terms to be used throughout the evening and within the Comprehensive Plan were defined.

Haskamp then outlined the timeline of the Comprehensive Plan process, explaining where the City was in the process and that it would be due to the Metropolitan Council by December 31, 2018. The City of Lake Elmo was projected to have a draft of their updated 2040 Comprehensive Plan to the Metropolitan Council by March of 2018.

The question of where additional housing units that the system statement designates will go was asked and if the City solicits advice on when and where those units will go. Haskamp

replied that the Advisory Panel has just started this discussion and that more information will be solicited on this topic.

Another question about how meetings, events, surveys, etc. held to solicit feedback on the Comprehensive Plan were being communicated. There was concern that advertising these events in *The Fresh*, water bill mailings, and the City website were not enough, as not everyone receives water bills or has access to electronics. It was clarified that the City would utilize mailed notices in the future as needed, as the City recognizes that citizen feedback is a key component of the plan.

### **Demographics & Land Use Trends**

Consultant Haskamp continued with explaining that a background report has been drafted, providing an existing conditions analysis, including demographics, land use, housing, etc. She demonstrated, by comparing City trends to those of the surrounding area, that the City has experienced significant population growth, quite a large younger population, an aging population, a substantial amount of households that are married without children, a high average household income, and a significant number of single family homes. It was outlined that the 2015 Systems Statement prepared by the Metropolitan Council projected a lower number of households than was previously estimated for the City. This rose discussion in whether planned sewer areas could be shrunk. It was explained that while the Metropolitan Council cannot set forth land use requirements, it does set forth sewer requirements, and that in sewer areas, an average density of at least three units per acre must be met. Commercial areas do not count towards this density requirement. The City may expand its sewer areas, as long as density requirements are being met.

### **Rural Residential Trends**

A brief discussion was held concerning density in open space developments. There was the desire to allow the 18 units per 40 acres density to be calculated using the gross area of an open space development as opposed to the buildable area, as the Comprehensive Plan currently allows. There was no substantial conclusion on this, though there didn't seem to be desire by the group to allow this.

Haskamp asked that the group provide input about where they live and why they like it.

There was discussion about the tri-lakes area and discussion about the unlikeliness that this area would ever be sewer due to the topography of the area. Many from the group lived in open space developments where community septic existed. The group mentioned concern about failing septic systems and trouble planning new development with these old systems and services. There was a general consensus that the group enjoyed large, quality open spaces; the "rural" feel they provide; and clustering of houses. Management of these open spaces was discussed. It was stated that the Minnesota Land Trust is not always willing to hold conservation easements over all of these open spaces. General consensus was made that the

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City could hold these easements, and volunteers could help monitor if these developments were complying with the terms of these easements.

Trail systems were also discussed, specifically that many of the Open Space Preservation developments have private trails, and the City's Trail Plan shows public trails connecting to these private trails. There has been issue in convincing these development to allow public use of these private trails. There was agreement that connection to the Old Village from throughout the City is lacking and needs to improve.

Discussion was held on if the group preferred larger, private lots (of two to two and a half acres in size) over smaller lots with protected open space. Input included that these larger lots do not create enough of a neighborhood feel or sense of community; a well-planned open space development can cluster lots while still providing the feeling of space. However, these large lots may be preferred for some, and so options should be given; it is good to have a balanced approach. Both can provide a rural feel if a development is correctly executed (i.e. native landscaping as opposed to mowed lawns throughout).

The group went on to discuss if other uses besides residential should be allowed in rural areas. The group conceded that such uses could be allowed if they provided a community amenity rather than a destination.

**Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:45 p.m.**

**Respectfully Submitted,  
Emily Becker, City Planner.**