

MINUTES

Comprehensive Plan Advisory Panel

April 26, 2017

Members Present: Kathy Weeks (public member), Jess Hartley (of the Planning Commission), Mary Frick (of the Parks Commission), Bev Schwalbach (of the Public Safety Committee), Steve Nelson (of the Economic Development Authority), Lisa McGinn (of the Public Safety Committee)

Members Absent: Dominic Travis (backup for the Environmental Committee), Cullen Case (backup for the Public Safety Committee), Barbara Birschbach (public member), Madison Bergmann (public member), Brooke Knoll (public member)

Staff and Consultants Present: Jennifer Haskamp, Swanson Haskamp Consulting Consultant; Ellison Yahner, Swanson Haskamp Consulting Consultant; Jay Demma, Perkins & Will Consultant; Stephen Wensman, Planning Director; Emily Becker, City Planner.

The meeting was called to order by Consultant Haskamp at 6:05 PM.

Approval of Minutes

The meeting was a kickoff meeting, and so there were no previous meetings and therefore no meeting minutes to approve.

Consultant Intro and Meeting Format

Consultant Haskamp kicked off the meeting by introducing herself and the principal and owner of Swanson Haskamp Consulting. Consultants Demma and Yahner also introduced themselves and shared their favorite aspects of Lake Elmo. Haskamp gave an overview of the meeting format.

As an introduction exercise, members of the Advisory Panel shared their favorite and least favorite aspects of Lake Elmo. Members were asked beforehand to send in photos and then explained during the meeting why they chose those photos.

Consultant Haskamp went through an introduction to Comprehensive Planning, explaining it is a long range plan for the city, unifying vision, goals and strategies. She also provided brief explanations on key terms. It was clarified that the Comprehensive Planning process is required due to the Metropolitan Land Planning Act and that the Plan must be consistent with the 2015 System statement. She explained the roles and responsibilities of the Advisory Panel, outlining that it is a working group; participation and feedback are key; the panel is to provide comments and input into plan development. She clarified Staff are to assist with questions and compiling feedback, as well as provide insight. The public will have opportunities for engagement. A timeline for the 2040 Comprehensive Plan planning process was also provided.

Haskamp briefly explained the Background Report, which was provided to the Advisory Panel members. The background report simplifies the Plan components; provides document user with a consolidated snapshot; focuses on the future rather than the past; and provides a common baseline of information as the plan is developed.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

The Advisory Panel conducted a SWOT Analysis for Lake Elmo. First, members completed individual worksheets identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats within the community. They then broke out in to small groups and recorded their SWOT Analysis. The groups identified the following:

Strengths:

- Parks
- Engaged community

- Rural character
- Generally tolerant
- Local loyalty
- Green space
- Educated people

- Small town charm

- Near Minneapolis/St. Paul
- Small businesses
- Old Village Area

Opportunities:

- Use careful planning for future/land use opportunity

- Develop strong city center

- Improved trail systems

- Land
- Online technology
- Growth – leverage natural resources
- Parks/trails

- Open land

Weaknesses:

- Safety/fire
- Too frugal-don't invest when needed
- Stagnate
- Government short-sighted
- No identity – need to define
- Inadequate infrastructure
- Staff development – general City Staff instability
- Tension with City Council and Met Council
- Mass transit

Threats:

- History of Council adverse to local businesses and development
- Lack of economic and housing stock diversity
- No place for 20-35 year olds to live
- Encroaching of big cities
- Fire safety
- Uninformed residents/uninvolved
- Over-development of residential and not enough commercial
- Bond rating

- Community loyalty
- Leverage small businesses
- Excessive taxation
- Reputation
- Maintain businesses

The group then proceeded to place dots on top two priorities in each category.

Future Meetings

Future meetings will generally be held the last Wednesdays of each month at 6:15 pm. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 31st at 6:15 pm.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:10 p.m.

**Respectfully Submitted,
Emily Becker**