

MINUTES

Comprehensive Plan Advisory Panel

June 28, 2017

Members Present: Kathy Weeks (public member), Jess Hartley (of the Planning Commission), Mary Frick (of the Parks Commission), Lisa McGinn (of the Public Safety Committee), Brooke Knoll (public member), Barbara Birschbach (public member); Bev Schwalbach (of the Environmental Committee); Dominic Travis (backup of the Environmental Committee)

Members Absent: Cullen Case (backup for the Public Safety Committee), Steve Nelson (of the Economic Development Authority), Madison Bergmann (public member)

Staff and Consultants Present: Jennifer Haskamp, Swanson Haskamp Consulting Consultant; Ellison Yahner, Swanson Haskamp Consulting Consultant; Stephen Wensman, Planning Director.

The meeting was called to order by Consultant Haskamp at 6:18 PM.

Agenda

Consultant Haskamp provided an overview of the agenda for the meeting.

Commercial Land Use South of 10th Street

Consultant Haskamp started the meeting by discussing the various categories of commercial land use; Convenience, Neighborhood, community and Regional/Super Regional and the typical leasable square feet, site area and trade areas associated with each. Lake Elmo households south of 10th Street currently support approximately 78,000 sq. ft. of neighborhood-scale retail. As more residential growth occurs, it's likely there will be increased demand for retail uses. Consultant Haskamp discussed commercial trends and that a rule of thumb for commercial development is that the site area needed is 4x the size of the building footprint. The demand for retail south of 10th Street is estimated to be roughly 220,000 building sq. ft. by 2040, which would suggest a need for approximately 27-30 acres of land guided for commercial development, but that it is recommended that an additional 50% additional land than what is expected at 2040 build-out (45-50 acres). Too much land guided for commercial can bring the property values down and invite lower quality development. The CPAP members discussed how retail follows residential development. In the past, some retailers would locate in areas expecting residential development, such as Target, but not any longer. And, retailers are changing their building footprints due to shopping habits and on-line retail. It was also discussed [Given Woodbury has developed concentration of retail uses, is known as a regional shopping area and is immediately adjacent to Lake Elmo it may make it more difficult to attract large regional anchors in Lake Elmo]. One member mentioned that without commercial development in Lake Elmo, residents will pay higher property taxes.

The CPAP discussed the fact that cities need to welcome commercial development and that often developers look for land that is turn-key and that if the zoning, etc. is not ready, they can be chased away. The city needs to create an identity for its commercial districts. What uses they would like to attract – a vision for it and where it should best be located. The committee also discussed the changes in the retail market with large retailers struggling and more service oriented walkable retail doing better. The CPAP discussed a desire for retail at a neighborhood scale, walkable (Wayzata development cited as an example), corner stores and need for drug store (like Walgreens). Ability to run small scale errands without driving to Woodbury was appealing for several members of the committee.

Office Land Use South of 10th Street

Consultant Haskamp trends in office space market. The average office sq. ft. per worker has decreased from roughly 250 sq. ft. 20 years ago to roughly 150 sq. ft. today. The trend for office space is to locate it in mixed use, downtown environments that are closer to transit, that are walkable, and close to amenities, housing, entertainment and public gathering areas. The Met Council forecast for Lake Elmo is an increase in roughly 1,500 jobs by 2040. Many jobs likely will not be office based, so it is likely the office based employment will increase to no more than 500 employees, which translates to a need for land use guided for office space to be roughly 4-8 acres by 2040. It was discussed how medical office space does not follow retail trends and is difficult to predict. Many medical offices are being located in convenience malls. Lake Elmo has good demographics in that it is wealthy, but it is less dense than other communities. There may be inadequate supply of affordable housing to support the workers in Lake Elmo. The current Comprehensive Plan locates much of its high density housing/potentially affordable housing into the south east portion of the city rather than integrated across the area south of 10th Street. The mixed use land uses should be thoughtfully located in nodes for take advantage of efficiencies, where people can live, work and play. The airport is an asset to businesses in Lake Elmo.

Some trends are difficult to predict including cooperative work spaces and driverless cars.

Manufacturing and Distribution Facilities South of 10th Street.

Consultant Haskamp discussed how generally manufacturing has been in decline and that currently has been gravitating to smaller communities with lower land values, with the exception of highly-skilled manufacturing jobs. Many cities with Light Industrial land are seeing high vacancy rates. These tend to locate in trendy urban areas with interesting work spaces. Haskamp did state that there has been a growing need for distribution facilities to due to the increase in online retail. Distribution facilities tent to have building sizes from 72,000 sq. ft. to 820,000 sq. ft.; the average being about 300,000 sq. ft..

Visual Preference Survey

Haskamp then conducted a visual preference survey with the CPAP.

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Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:30 p.m.

**Respectfully Submitted,
Stephen Wensman, Planning Director.**