The City of Onalaska's Plan Commission and the Town of Medary's Plan Commission are holding a joint meeting for the purpose of discussing cooperative boundary agreements. The establishment of cooperative boundary plans is pursuant to Wis. Stats. 66.0307. Among the purposes of cooperative boundary plans is the establishment of long-term boundaries between the municipalities in order to reduce annexation disputes and to minimize fragmentation and irregular boundaries.

Item 1 – Election of Chairperson for the Joint Plan Commission Meeting

This item was not addressed.

Item 2 – Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll call was taken, with the following individuals present: City of Onalaska Mayor Joe Chilsen, City of Onalaska Second District Alderperson Bob Muth, City of Onalaska First District Alderperson Jim Binash, City of Onalaska Land Use and Development Director Brea Grace, City of Onalaska City Engineer Jarrod Holter, City of Onalaska Plan Commission Members Sue Peterson, Jan Brock, Paul Gleason, Craig Breitsprecher, and Skip Temte, Town of Medary Representatives Steve Elsen, Bob Skemp, Bill Wittmer, Dorothy Schmaltz, John Schmaltz, Town of Medary Supervisor Mike Weibel, Town of Medary Chairperson Linda Seidel, Village of Holmen Administrator Scott Heinig

Consideration of the following items:

Item 3 – Presentation with overview of general purposes of cooperative boundary plans

Linda said this is an opportunity for the City of Onalaska and the Town of Medary to collaborate and stressed that no final decisions have been made. Linda said there are benefits to having cooperative boundary plans such as more cost-effective services in both municipalities.

Mayor Chilsen introduced Tom Faella, La Crosse Area Planning Committee Executive Director.

Tom noted that the La Crosse Area Planning Committee is funding this process and said the committee has been charged with developing a long-range vision for land use and transportation in the area. Tom said the LAPC developed a regional plan in 2013 entitled "Coulee Vision 2050," which identified long-term transportation and land use outcomes for the region over the next 40 years. Tom said the LAPC came to the conclusion that in order to achieve quality development and maximize funding, cooperative boundary agreements would be beneficial. Tom then introduced Jason Valerius of MSA Professional Services.

Jason said the LAPC had taken all the existing adopted comprehensive plans and examined the land use elements across the entire region. Jason then referred to a map that includes areas of planned development shaded in yellow and said the LAPC estimated that all the communities had approximately 200 years of demand provided for in their respective 20-year plans. Jason said this is significantly more land assumed for growth than the actual population growth supports. Jason said different scenarios had been examined both with stakeholders and the LAPC board, and he referred to two maps being shown to those in attendance. The primary difference between the two maps is that the amount of areas shaded in yellow is significantly reduced. This means that each community in the region does not want to see significant sprawl occur over the next 40 years. Jason said Coulee Vision 2050's policy guidelines include a desire to have as few new roads as possible; develop more transit, biking and walking; create more compact development over time; and establishing boundary agreements to improve cooperation between municipalities. Jason said the LAPC has had several conversations over the last couple of years about proceeding with boundary agreements.

The following City of Onalaska/Town of Medary collaborations were discussed:

- **Meadow Wood Road drainage project:** The City of Onalaska provided the Town of Medary with engineering assistance, and the result was a paving solution.
- **Pralle Road drainage project:** A property owner wanted to do some filling of his property, but there were drainage issues as water was coming over the road. Jarrod pointed out what utilities were present and where the storm sewers were located. As a result, a grading plan was developed and some of the ponding issues were alleviated.
- **Harter Drive improvements:** Jarrod complimented the communication between the City of Onalaska and the Town of Medary.
- **Cooperative Recycling Agreement and Recycling Brochure:** The City of Onalaska works with a variety of townships and other municipalities. Doing so saves printing costs.
- **Mutual Aid Agreements for shared fire and EMS services:** The City of Onalaska Fire Department works with the Town of Medary.
- **Metropolitan Planning Organization (LAPC):** Mayor Chilsen and Linda sit on this committee.
- **Extraterritorial Technical Advisory Committee participation:** This committee brings together the township, the school board and the cities in an area where plat development was to occur. This is a pre-planning meeting where a developer may bring in a preliminary drawing examining road layouts, and possible placement of utilities and sidewalks. Municipalities are brought together before construction occurs.

Jason noted that in February 2014 MSA and the LAPC surveyed elected officials and plan commissioners across the region. The purpose of the survey was to gauge knowledge and opinions of boundary agreements. A "boundary agreement summit" was held in May 2014 in

the City of La Crosse. Jason and Tom visited all the regional jurisdictions in the fall of 2014 seeking approval of resolutions supporting Coulee Vision 2050 and boundary agreement efforts. Jason noted the Town of Medary approved the resolution, while the City of Onalaska expressed its desire to be part of the process. Talks with interested communities, including the City of La Crosse, City of Onalaska, Town of Medary and Town of Shelby have taken place in 2015. There are active working groups with the City of La Crosse, City of Onalaska and Town of Medary, and the City of La Crosse and Town of Shelby. Jason said the City of La Crosse is first focusing on its agreement with the Town of Shelby before turning to an agreement with the Town of Medary and possibly also with the City of Onalaska. Jason said the focus has turned to a two-party agreement between the City of Onalaska and the Town of Medary.

Jason shared the following reasons why the City of Onalaska and the Town of Medary should pursue a cooperative boundary agreement:

Predictability and Trust

- Collaboration on land use patterns, corridor improvements, et cetera, offers predictable and transparent future changes.
- Reach consensus on future annexations.
- Stronger relationships and more dialogue among staff, elected officials and residents of both municipalities.

Save Money

- Avoid costly litigation over annexation disputes.
- Find service efficiencies.

Coordinate Planning and Development

- Clarify edges, corridors and identities of both the City of Onalaska and Town of Medary to build better communities.
- Share in the design of distinctive places.
- Reduce competition for development, and achieve land use compatibilities.

Jason described the following aspects of a cooperative plan:

It is a process

- Informal discussions to identify issues and opportunities.
- Resolution of intent to adopt plan, shared with everyone.
- Work on details, draft a plan.

- Public hearing on draft plan, comments from neighbors and State of Wisconsin Department of Administration.
- Advisory referendum if triggered by resident petition. The goal of the process would be to avoid a referendum.
- Each jurisdiction votes to adopt.
- Plan sent to DOA for review. The DOA then will sign off on the plan and support it.

<u>It is a shared policy document</u>

- Establish a policy of strong communication practices between the City of Onalaska and Town of Medary, both formally and informally.
- Identify long-term boundaries.
- Guidelines for annexation requests – where allowed, where not allowed, incentives to encourage desired annexations.
- Address public infrastructure improvements and maintenance in or through Town of Medary (sewer, water, streets, trails).
- Commitments to cooperative development planning and review.
- Conservation land and easements.

Jason invited Scott Heinig to speak about the cooperative boundary agreement between the City of Onalaska and the Village of Holmen.

Scott said both the City of Onalaska and the Village of Holmen realized their boundaries likely would become contentious due to annexation, development and utilities. Scott said the two municipalities formed a partnership and stated that is what is occurring this evening between the City of Onalaska and the Town of Medary. Scott said he believes it is important that the municipalities want to work together, adding he believes this is why the partnership between the City of Onalaska and Village of Holmen has been successful.

Jason noted that there currently are more than 30 active boundary agreements in the state and cited the examples of the City of Marshfield and Town of McMillan (10 years); the City of Watertown and the Town of Emmet (19 years); and the City of Oshkosh and the Town of Nekimi (40 years). Jason said each agreement identifies areas where the city expects to grow and is protecting that growth area through the agreement. Areas where cities are not expecting to grow also are identified. As a result, the town may feel confident knowing it will be protected either from development or for development of a nature that is appropriate in the town.

Jason shared the steps in the process:

- **Tonight:** Discussion – air questions and concerns about the process.
- **Coming months:** Continued efforts by working group with updates to Plan

Commissions and Board/Council, as appropriate.

- **February/March 2016:** Pass required resolutions.
- **Spring 2016:** Public outreach, working group meetings, Plan Commission updates.
- **June/July 2016:** Public hearing hosted by Joint Planning Commission.
- **July/August 2016:** Plan Commissions review and recommend, and Council and Board adopt.
- **Fall 2016:** Review and approval by Department of Administration.

Item 4 – Discussion of general purposes of cooperative boundary plans

A question was asked about establishing a timeline for the cooperative boundary agreement between the City of Onalaska and the Village of Holmen. A question also was asked about establishing a timeline between the City of Onalaska and the Town of Medary.

Scott said the agreement between the City of Onalaska and the Village of Holmen is a 10-year rolling plan, meaning it will be renewed every 10 years; but this plan has not yet been ratified by the Wisconsin Department of Administration.

Brea addressed the second question, stating a timeline between the City of Onalaska and the Town of Medary "is still open for discussion."

It was noted that any agreement must be for at least 10 years.

Jason asked what concerns anyone might have about reaching a cooperative boundary agreement.

Linda said she believes some Town of Medary residents will be concerned about annexation. Linda added she believes the Town of Medary Plan Commission will have to meet and discuss how to address those concerns.

Mike said one of the working group's goals of a boundary agreement is to secure the boundaries. Mike said the Town of Medary has looked into infrastructure improvements, but the infrastructure is located near the boundary of a city. Mike added that the Town of Medary is reluctant to make any improvements because a change in boundaries would mean the infrastructure would no longer belong to the town. Mike said he believes establishing a boundary agreement will help the town's government operate more efficiently.

Craig noted that he serves with Mike and Linda on the working group and said the goal is to reach an agreement that benefits both municipalities. Craig said it will be important to determine a future direction for the health of both entities, adding he believes that will motivate both to make the necessary commitments and proceed.

Jason asked if there were any concerns or suggestions regarding the process.

Mayor Chilsen stressed the importance of keeping everyone well-informed.

Linda asked that residents be given ample opportunity to provide input.

Craig said it will be important to share every milestone that is reached.

Paul said he would like to obtain public comment "early and often."

Dorothy asked where the draft plan will be reviewed prior to the public hearing.

Brea said previously a notice regarding the boundary agreement between the City of Onalaska and the Village of Holmen was published in the newspaper informing the public that the draft would be available for review either from her or Scott. Brea said the draft could be placed on cityofonalaska.com, and a hard copy could be placed at the Onalaska Library, City Hall and the Town of Medary Hall.

Craig said it will be important for town hall meetings to be well-attended.

Linda noted that in the past the Town of Medary has sent postcards to every resident asking them to attend meetings and explaining why. Linda said it would be possible to do the same for this process.

Ald. Muth noted there have been rumors about the City of Onalaska annexing certain portions of the Town of Medary and said he believes this group's discussions and strong communication will put an end to many of the rumors. Ald. Muth also said he believes citizens will benefit from being informed.

A suggestion was made to contact other municipalities who have reached cooperative boundary agreements and asking what challenges they encountered during the process.

Jason noted there has been an ongoing dialogue with DOA staff and said outreach efforts to residents are crucial, even if they come with an expense. Jason said he believes a referendum on a cooperative boundary agreement would show that not enough work had gone into informing the public. Jason said the best approach with boundary agreements is taking a core group of individuals and working out what likely is to be successful before presenting it to the public.

Item 5 – Public Input (limited to 3 minutes per individual. Input will be taken, but this is not a discussion/answer period)

There was no public input.

Item 6 – Summary discussion about general purposes of cooperative boundary plans

Jason asked the group to support the process and represent the plan moving forward. Jason noted the purpose of tonight's meeting is to inform those in attendance and obtain their support. This way, everyone will understand the process and be ready to discuss the content when it comes time to meet with the public. Jason mentioned holding a form of public outreach either in January or February.

Linda said the Town of Medary will call a meeting of its Plan Commission and the Town Board and discuss a starting point.

Jason said the town's Plan Commission will be able to examine the draft before the public sees it.

Ald. Binash referred to the City of Onalaska's boundary agreement with the Village of Holmen, noting decisions were made regarding points about where someone could go if he/she wanted to annex to a particular municipality. Ald. Binash said he wants to know the direction of the boundaries between the City of Onalaska and the Town of Medary.

Mayor Chilsen said the agreement goes beyond boundaries, noting it also will address services and relations between the municipalities.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Recorded by:

Kirk Bey