

**Long Range Planning Committee**

**of the City of Onalaska**

Thursday, February 4, 2016

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1 The Meeting of the Long Range Planning Committee of the City of Onalaska was called to order  
2 at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 4, 2016. It was noted that the meeting had been announced  
3 and a notice posted at City Hall.

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5 Roll call was taken, with the following members present: Debbie Clarkin, Kristen Odegaard,  
6 Gary Lass, Ken Schmocker, Jim Warren, Jennifer Brown

7  
8 Also Present: Interim Land Use and Development Director Katie Aspenson. Brad Hentschel of  
9 Short Elliott Hendrickson participated via telephone.

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11 Excused Absences: Dana Fredrickson, Jim Warren

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13 **Item 2 – Approval of minutes from the previous meeting**

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15 Motion by Gary, second by Ken, to approve the minutes from the previous meeting (November  
16 12, 2015), as printed and on file in the City Clerk’s Office.

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18 On voice vote, motion carried.

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20 **Item 3 – Public Input (limited to 3 minutes per individual)**

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22 Debbie called for anyone wishing to provide public input.

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24 **Zach Campbell**  
25 **620 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North**  
26 **Onalaska**

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28 “I actually was on the website [Tuesday], and I happened to see this meeting. The funny thing is  
29 that my wife and I have been looking into seeing what we have to do to bury our power lines  
30 from pole to pole [and] not to the home. Where we live, we’re up on a hill, and if you saw the  
31 hill and where our window sits we’re looking at the lake, and the power lines sag really low.  
32 That’s what brought me here, because of this seemed to pertain to that subject a little bit. I just  
33 wanted to see what was going on with all that. We have reached out to Xcel [Energy] and  
34 CenturyLink, and they will do it for a price. I’m just going from there and trying to research  
35 more.”

36  
37 **Dennis Aspenson**  
38 **1735 Pine Ridge Drive**  
39 **Onalaska**

40  
41 “First, I want to thank the committee for letting me speak, and [also] for the work and everything  
42 I’ve seen over the years. The reason I’m here tonight is ... I think Katie just passed out [a copy

Reviewed 2/5/16 by Katie Aspenson

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43 of] the Menards/Elmwood Master Plan Town Center Development, that is mentioned in the long  
44 range planning that you have been reviewing and looking over. That's why I'm here tonight: to  
45 ask you to reaffirm the existence and proceed forward with this plan, along with extending the  
46 boundaries. I'm requesting that the boundaries be extended on this plan to the north along Sand  
47 Lake Road to [County Road] OT; expand it to the south to Redwood Street; to the east to Clover  
48 off of [County Road] S; and to the west to Cliffview. The reason behind this is, in wanting to  
49 bring this all forward again and put it on the front burner, it sets down the tone for development.  
50 It sets down the tone for the architecture of the area. It's my feeling that the Sand Lake Road  
51 corridor – or boulevard, as it's referred to in here – is Onalaska's 'last frontier,' for lack of a  
52 better word. I truly believe that it is our last frontier for large development that we can have  
53 some control over and control the accesses and the quality of development and what goes into  
54 the developments. This document was done in June 2004, and it's a very good document. It  
55 holds true today. I'm not exactly sure how we keep this process moving forward with this  
56 document and to put it in the forefront. One of my concerns is that that Sand Lake Road corridor  
57 boulevard area will start developing and the city will get caught behind the 8-ball. We've all  
58 heard of some possibilities of Mayo and what have you coming out there, so if we're not  
59 prepared and looking ahead into the future, once the developers and/or Mayo start coming, I  
60 really feel that they're going to [be aggressive]. I would like the committee to address that and  
61 take a look at it. I don't know if it has to go from here to the Plan Commission or what body  
62 directs it, but I'd look for your [Katie's] input in that area. That's basically why I'm here  
63 tonight: to put it into the forefront because I really am concerned. I don't want the city to get  
64 caught behind the 8-ball in that area.”

65

66 Gary asked if Dennis is one of the owners of the property [in this area] and said Elmwood  
67 Partners owns it.

68

69 Dennis said there are several owners, including Traditional Trades, Elmwood Partners, a doctor,  
70 and Mayo Clinic. Dennis said he is asking that the boundaries be expanded beyond what  
71 committee members are seeing on the front page of the document.

72

73 Debbie told Katie she believes this matter should go before the Plan Commission as opposed to  
74 the Long Range Planning Committee.

75

76 Katie said Dennis is correct in that the Comprehensive Plan refers to the document before the  
77 committee this evening. Katie said that the Menards/Elmwood Master Plan serves as a point of  
78 reference when developments occur. Katie said, “If we want to change that plan or amend it, I  
79 do have to find out which, as you mentioned, is the appropriate body. Is it the Common  
80 Council? Is it the Plan Commission? I have to find out if there is a budgeting item that has to be  
81 considered. I don't know the exact process today as to what happens. But since it does refer to  
82 this plan, this is a good start. I can take this and talk to the necessary decision-makers as to  
83 where this should go, and then we can move forward at that point.”

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**Consideration and possible action on the following items:**

**Item 4 – Discussion and consideration of draft 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update**

Katie noted the public hearing for the 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update was held at the December 15 Plan Commission meeting and said the Plan Commission sent the Comprehensive Plan back to the Long Range Planning Committee to obtain more information regarding Chapter 5: Utilities and Community Facilities – specifically, transmission lines and power lines. Katie referred to a memo she had prepared for the committee and said it came as a cooperative between the city’s legal counsel, Brad, and city staff.

The following changes were made to Chapter 5:

- A map, which was distributed to committee members, was created. This map notates locations of substations in the City of Onalaska and associated substation zones. City staff also mapped locations of 161kV and 59 kV transmission lines in the city. The map does not include the local lines seen throughout the city.
- Page 92 has been updated to include Dairyland Power, which operates large transmission lines in the city in addition to Xcel Energy. It also has been noted that a large natural gas pipeline runs through the city.
- Page 100 has been updated to read as follows: *“Additional private investments in utilities, particularly electric transmission lines and cellular/data-related towers, will continue to be proposed in Onalaska. It is important that the city continue to evaluate these proposals on strict criteria in terms of placement, impact to residents and environmentally sensitive areas, and general aesthetics. The State of Wisconsin has a State Energy Policy (Wis. Statute 1.12) which indicates that siting of new transmission lines should be consistent with economic and engineering considerations, reliability of the electric system, and protection of the environment, the following corridors should be utilized in the order of priority: a) Existing utility corridors; b) highway and railroad corridors; c) recreational trails, to the extent that the facilities may be constructed below ground and that the facilities do not significantly impact environmentally sensitive areas; d) new corridors. This is consistent with the City of Onalaska’s preference that new transmission corridors be developed only as a last resort.”*
- Pages 101 and 102 were updated in the following manner:
  - Goal 1 has been modified to read: *“Coordinate the location of public and private utilities and facilities with projected growth and development patterns.”*
  - Goal 1, Objective 4, which is new, reads: *“By evaluating requests to change existing or install new corridors based on such factors including but not limited to: residential impacts; neighboring land uses; bluffland impacts; preservation of cultural, historic and archaeological sites; protection of natural areas and wildlife, density, lighting, and health and safety impacts.”*

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- 127           ○ Goal 1, Objective 5, which is new, reads: *“By determining the practical minimum*  
128 *level of development or redevelopment for which utility relocation is financially*  
129 *feasible on a case-by-case basis.”*
- 130           ○ Goal 1, Objective 6, which is new, reads: *“By considering amendments as*  
131 *appropriate to the subdivision/zoning ordinance for requiring utility relocation as*  
132 *part of development activities.”*
- 133           ○ Goal 1, Objective 7, which is new, reads: *“By encouraging burying existing aerial*  
134 *power lines as appropriate in older neighborhoods through redevelopment efforts or*  
135 *utility upgrades.”*
- 136           ○ Goal 1, Objective 8, which is new, reads: *“By enforcing the Airport Overlay Zoning*  
137 *District Ordinance in conjunction with the City of La Crosse and the La Crosse*  
138 *Airport and updating the ordinance as deemed necessary.”*
- 139           ○ Goal 3, Objective 2, has been modified to read: *“By installing utilities underground*  
140 *(where and when feasible), to avoid blufflands and other environmentally sensitive*  
141 *areas and utilizing designs and locations that minimize ridge lining and other*  
142 *environmentally sensitive areas.”*
- 143           ○ Goal 4, Objective 4, has been modified to read: *“By educating and involving the*  
144 *public in facility and utility expansion decisions, when possible, and asking for public*  
145 *comments and placing citizens on appropriate boards.”*

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147   Katie referred to the last bullet point on the memo, which reads: *“It is of the opinion of city staff*  
148 *and legal counsel that the city does not define a specific utility corridor for transmission lines.*  
149 *Such corridors would likely be along [State Trunk] Highway 35 (Great River Road), [United*  
150 *States] Highway 53, and Interstate 90. Previously, in 2014 the City of Onalaska successfully*  
151 *fought the Badger-Coulee Transmission Line that was proposed to run along US Highway 53*  
152 *and Interstate 90 that would have bisected the community. Had the Comprehensive Plan noted*  
153 *such a corridor, we would not have been able to fight the project as we would have specified that*  
154 *we wanted the transmission lines in those areas. Rather, the City of Onalaska believes that the*  
155 *process outlined in Goal 1, Objective 4 will better the position of the city for future proposed*  
156 *projects.”*

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158   Katie said, “With these changes that we’re suggesting, city staff and legal counsel truly believe  
159 that we are prepared to protect the City of Onalaska in regard to future transmission lines. My  
160 request, and what I’ve put before you today, is that this memo with the new modified objectives,  
161 conditions and goals – and with the new map – that we get a motion from the committee to  
162 forward this to the Plan Commission with the proposed changes for adoption and approval.”

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164   Gary asked if the Plan Commission has seen the modifications.

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166   Katie said not yet and noted that the Plan Commission will receive copies of the map and the  
167 memo. Katie also noted that the city’s legal counsel will be attending the February 23 Plan  
168 Commission meeting to answer questions.

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170 Motion by Gary, second by Kristen, to approve the 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update with the  
171 recommended changes and forward it to the February 23 Plan Commission meeting.

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173 On voice vote, motion carried.

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175 **Item 5 – Discussion and consideration of 2015 Comprehensive Plan poster plan**

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177 Katie showed committee members a copy of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan poster plan and noted  
178 that the Land Use Map is now two-thirds of the document. A large picture has been removed,  
179 and there are clearer definitions as to what the different districts mean. Katie referred to the  
180 other side of the document and noted it includes the purpose of the plan, the names of the  
181 individuals who worked on it, public participation information, the survey and its results, vision  
182 statement, and major implementation goals. Katie said copies of the poster plan will be available  
183 in the Planning Department, and it also will be available online.

184

185 **Adjournment**

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187 Motion by Kristen, second by Ken, to adjourn at 6:02 p.m.

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189 On voice vote, motion carried.

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192 Recorded by:

193

194 Kirk Bey