

Long Range Planning Committee

of the City of Onalaska

Thursday, September 10, 2015

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1 The Meeting of the Long Range Planning Committee of the City of Onalaska was called to order
2 at 7:02 p.m. on Thursday, September 10, 2015. It was noted that the meeting had been
3 announced and a notice posted at City Hall.

4
5 Roll call was taken, with the following members present: Debbie Clarkin, Gary Lass, Kristen
6 Odegaard, Ken Schmocker, Jennifer Brown, Dana Fredrickson

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

10
11 Excused Absence: Jim Warren

12
13 **Item 2 – Approval of minutes from the previous meeting**

14
15 Motion by Gary, second by Jennifer, to approve the minutes from the previous meeting, as
16 printed and on file in the City Clerk’s Office.

17
18 On voice vote, motion carried.

19
20 **Item 3 – Public Input (limited to 3 minutes per individual)**

21
22 Debbie called three times for anyone wishing to provide public input and closed that portion of
23 the meeting.

24
25 **Consideration and possible action on the following items:**

26
27 **Item 4 – Review and discuss changes to draft 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update**

28
29 Brea said tonight she wants to address some of the “loose ends” as the Comprehensive Plan
30 Update nears its completion. Brea noted there had been a discussion regarding residential
31 assessment values and referred to a map that had been included in committee members’ packets.
32 This map takes the assessed value of structures and shows where lower-assessed and higher-
33 assessed structures in the city are located. Brea said the map already has proved to be useful as
34 La Crosse County’s biodiversity coordinator, who is running a project to educate about urban
35 corridors and to plant more trees and native vegetation in neighborhoods with lower-assessed
36 structures, is proceeding with a project in an older section of Onalaska. Brea pointed out that
37 land values, tax-exempt properties, and properties with improvement values of less than \$10,000
38 have not been included on the map. Brea said staff expects the map to be included in the
39 Housing chapter (Chapter 3).

40
41 Brad said he believes a new version of the draft document had come out Thursday and that
42 committee members should have a copy.

Reviewed 9/17/15 by Brea Grace

**Long Range Planning Committee
of the City of Onalaska**

Thursday, September 10, 2015

2

43
44 Brea said she had updated cityofonalaska.com with the document to which Brad had referred.

45
46 Debbie said the color coding on the residential assessment values map is similar for properties
47 assessed at \$300,000, \$400,000, greater than \$500,000 and the water. Debbie said it is possible
48 there are too many categories.

49
50 Brea asked Debbie what she would recommend grouping together.

51
52 Dana suggested combining the \$300,000, \$400,000 and \$500,000 categories.

53
54 Brea said perhaps the water can be a hatching shade.

55
56 Dana suggested changing the coloring on the \$100,000 to \$150,000 properties versus the
57 \$150,000 to \$200,000 properties.

58
59 Brea addressed the following change to Chapter 9 (Land Use):

- 60
- 61 • **Tax-Exempt Properties:** Committee members questioned the amount of tax-exempt
62 properties in the city. According to 2015 assessment data, 31.17 percent of Onalaska’s
63 total acreage is tax-exempt. This includes federal and state lands as well as Onalaska
64 School District property. All city-owned properties including, but not limited to, parks,
65 city facilities, stormwater ponds, and reservoirs are also included in the total acreage.

66
67 Brad said he believes the concept of tax-exempt properties is important, especially when
68 discussing budget _____ and revenue streams. Brad noted there are communities that attempt to
69 maximize revenue from tax-exempt properties through alternative funding mechanisms such as
70 stormwater utilities or PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) programs.

71
72 Brea discussed the following changes to the Future Land Use Map that were made after a staff
73 meeting:

- 74
- 75 • On the east side of 2nd Avenue North/State Trunk Highway 35, the full block from Locust
76 Street to Poplar Street was designated “Downtown Mixed Use District.” The eastern half
77 of the block is now designated “Mixed Density Residential” to preserve the neighborhood
78 along 3rd Avenue North.
 - 79 • Two blocks north of City Hall along King Street were designated “Downtown Mixed Use
80 District.” This area has been modified to “Mixed Density Residential” to preserve the
81 neighborhood.
 - 82 • The Gundersen “Medical Facility” area on South Kinney Coulee Road has been
83 expanded to the south to accommodate current ownership and future facility expansion
84 area.

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Thursday, September 10, 2015

3

- 85 • The residential area at the intersection of State Trunk Highway 157 and County Road PH
86 (near Caribou Coffee, Bronston Chiropractic and River of Life Church) has been
87 modified to allow for a progression from “commercial” on the southern portion of the
88 parcel, from “Mixed Density Residential” to “Mixed Use/Smart Growth Area.” Brea
89 noted that River of Life Church has wanted to sell a portion of its property and said
90 developers have expressed an interest in redeveloping this area and constructing a
91 commercial property that would be visible from STH 157.

92

93 Kristen asked how much land River of Life Church wishes to sell.

94

95 Gary said approximately 3 acres.

96

97 Brea said River of Life would like to have a shared parking arrangement between the church and
98 a commercial property.

99

100 Jennifer inquired about access to this area.

101

102 Brea referred to a ‘T’ intersection on the map and said it would be a good access point if a
103 commercial property access is developed on the site.

104

105 Jennifer asked if concerns have been raised about the intersection becoming troublesome if a
106 commercial property is developed.

107

108 Brea said Jarrod would likely request a traffic impact study for the intersection if there is a
109 rezoning request. Brea said, “I still want to hit it home that this is our goal for 20 years. It’s not
110 the zoning map. The zoning map still has to change, so there’s still leverage and an opportunity
111 when a rezoning comes forward to invite the public to come in.”

112

113 Dana asked if the traffic impact study could be done ahead of time so the city would know what
114 would be best suited for this area.

115

116 Brea said the city has typically placed the responsibility of the study and associated costs on the
117 developer. Brea noted that Tobacco Outlet Plus and Red Lobster, both of which are located near
118 the intersection of STH 157 and CTH PH, are located within the City of La Crosse. Brea said it
119 will take inter-municipal coordination to make an impact study come to fruition.

120

121 Dana said he had made the suggestion to perform the study ahead of time so it will give city staff
122 an idea of what would be best suited for this parcel.

123

124 Brea noted the following changes to Chapter 10 (Implementation):

125

- 126 • There is an updated goal and strategies for the Onalaska Fire Department.

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**Long Range Planning Committee
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Thursday, September 10, 2015

4

- There are new goals and strategies for both the Onalaska Police Department and the Onalaska Parks and Recreation Department.

Jennifer referred to the first strategy bullet point under the Onalaska Fire Department, which reads “*Provide the best and safest fire and EMS response protection as possible,*” and suggested that perhaps it could be reworded.

Brea said it can be reworded so it is a stronger statement.

Brea noted the Police Department discusses its mission in the section that was added. This section notes that the Onalaska Police Department has a 27-officer department, with three full-time positions and one part-time civilian position. The department provides 24-hour service. The primary objective is to provide protection to citizens and visitors. The department has responded to more than 12,000 calls on average per year over the last five years. Another objective is to collaborate with the community on various programs and also to build community bonds, including with the city’s youth. Brea noted that the Police Department has lost two positions despite the fact the city’s population has increased. Brea indicated that the department had added to the Implementation section a goal to update the staffing plan to address traffic calls and drug crimes.

Debbie suggested that the Police Department state it initiated the “National Night Out” instead of noting when it had been held this year. Debbie also suggested including the fact it is an ongoing project.

Dana said he would believe he was moving to a city with a high crime rate if he read that the Police Department responds to more than 12,000 calls per year. Dana said, “That number by itself leaves a lot of interpretation.”

Brea promised to speak with Police Chief Jeff Trotnic and said it is a balance between trying to frame the positive aspects of the community and also point out its challenges. Brea said she could inquire about the range of calls.

Debbie said she understands why the Police Department wants to increase its staff to address challenges such as drug crimes, but suggested it might not be necessary to include this in a 20-year plan. Debbie said, “We want a positive spin.”

Brea said, “But we also want to help them frame what their needs are going to be.”

Brad noted that the City of Onalaska is located on a major corridor (Interstate 90) and said drug crimes do occur here. However, Brad promised to rework the wording of this strategy.

Debbie questioned including the Long Range Planning Committee as one of the implementation

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Thursday, September 10, 2015

5

169 leads for the Police Department.

170

171 Brad noted that the Long Range Planning Committee had worked on the Comprehensive Plan
172 Update and had been included as an implementation lead in several instances. Brad said the
173 Long Range Planning Committee can work with the department heads.

174

175 Debbie asked that the implementation leads be more consistent, noting that the Common Council
176 and the Onalaska Fire Department had been listed as implementation leads for the Fire
177 Department. By comparison, the Police Department staff, Long Range Planning Committee and
178 the Common Council had been listed as implementation leads for the Police Department.
179 Debbie suggested that the Common Council should be an implementation lead in every instance.

180

181 Brad said Short Elliott Hendrickson is currently cleaning up the formatting on the final document
182 as well as making final edits. Brad said SEH is close to having the final version ready.

183

184 Brea said the goal is to have the document “in good shape” by late October.

185

186 **Item 5 – Discussion regarding 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update schedule**

187

188 Brea said she will speak to the Plan Commission at its September 22 meeting about establishing
189 a public hearing date. The open house is scheduled for Wednesday, September 30 from 4:30
190 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in the Common Council Chambers at City Hall. A presentation will be given
191 at 5:30 p.m. The Long Range Planning Committee’s next meeting is scheduled for Thursday,
192 October 15. Brea said staff will be revising the document between the open house and the next
193 Long Range Planning Committee meeting. Brea said if the committee has reached a point at its
194 October 15 meeting where it is comfortable making a recommendation for the Plan Commission
195 to review the document, it could do so at that time. Brea said there is no “hard and fast
196 deadline,” so the committee will work based on the feedback that it receives. Brea said the Plan
197 Commission could review comments from the open house at its October 27 meeting, and a
198 public hearing for the document could be held at its November 17 meeting. However, the public
199 hearing could be delayed until the December 15 Plan Commission meeting if there are more
200 public comments to review. The Plan Commission ultimately will make a recommendation to
201 the Common Council, which will consider a recommendation to adopt the 2015 Comprehensive
202 Plan Update either at its December 8 or January 12 meeting.

203

204 Brea noted she had spoken with the La Crosse Area Builders Association and the Government
205 Affairs Committee, and members said they agree with the direction the committee is going with
206 the Future Land Use Map.

207

208 Considering the September 30th Open House, Brea suggested that perhaps the Common Council
209 Chambers will not be large enough for several poster documents with stations pertaining to the
210 major elements of the plan.

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6

211

212 Gary said he would prefer to hold the open house at City Hall instead of the Omni Center.

213

214 Jennifer asked if perhaps the open house could be relocated to Irving Pertzsch Elementary
215 School.

216

217 Debbie said she is not expecting a significant number of citizens to attend the open house.

218

219 Brea said the open house will remain at City Hall.

220

221 **Item 6 – Discussion and consideration of 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update**

222

223 Brea suggested that the Long Range Planning Committee should make a motion to the Plan
224 Commission to consider a formal public hearing either at its November 17 or December 15
225 meeting once the committee members believe the Comprehensive Plan Update is ready for that
226 step.

227

228 Motion by Kristen, second by Ken, to recommend to the Plan Commission to consider holding a
229 public hearing for the 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update either at its November 17 or December
230 15 meeting.

231

232 Debbie asked what the difference is between the open house and public hearing.

233

234 Brea explained that the open house is an informal process by which public feedback will be
235 obtained. Brea also explained that statutorily a comprehensive plan must be consistent with a
236 municipality's zoning and must be updated every 10 years. Statutes require that 30 days notice
237 be given to adjacent municipalities when a comprehensive plan is updated. The Plan
238 Commission is required to hold a public hearing to receive formal comment on the planning
239 document before it approves the document.

240

241 On voice vote, motion carried.

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243 **Adjournment**

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245 Motion by Ken, second by Dana, to adjourn at 8:05 p.m.

246

247 On voice vote, motion carried.

248

249

250 Recorded By:

251

252 Kirk Bey

Reviewed 9/17/15 by Brea Grace