

MEDINA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
OF MARCH 16, 2010

The Planning Commission of Medina, Minnesota met in special concurrent session with the Medina City Council on March 16, 2010 at 5:36 p.m. in the Medina City Hall.

I. Call to Order

Members present: John Anderson, Beth Nielsen, Victoria Reid, Kent Williams, Robin Reid (arrived at 5:46 p.m.)

Members absent: Nolan, Martin

City Council Members Present: Weir, Siitari, Smith

City Council Members Absent: Crosby, Johnson

Also present: City Administrator Chad M. Adams; City Planner Dusty Finke; Park Commissioners Ben Benson, Ann Thies and Janet White; City Conservation Design Consultant Dan Petrik

II. Open Space/Conservation Design Ordinance – Barr Engineering

City Planner Dusty Finke provided some background of the City's Open Space/Conservation design work conducted over the past few years, including the Open Space Task Force, Open Space Report, and Comprehensive Planning process. Finke introduced Dan Petrik, Barr Engineering, as the City's consultant that would be guiding the City through the ordinance preparation.

Dan Petrik, Barr Engineering introduced himself to the attendees and explained his background with preparation of the Hanover conservation design ordinance. He provided a slide presentation related that included a project overview and timeline, expectations for tonight's meeting, review of conservation design and comparable regulations, questions on the comparable regulations memo, and goal priorities and regulation approach.

Petrik stated that conservation design is often used to cluster homes on smaller lots in order to permanently protect significant amounts of designated open space. He provided some examples for an urban core, developed suburbs, developing suburbs and explained issues related to urban/rural transition and rural and agricultural.

Petrik illustrated some concepts of preserving ecological areas during development of parcels and outlined market condition considerations including developer's risk/rewards, profit, certainty and time as well as homebuyer preference, supply/demand and location.

Petrik discussed the regulatory framework for conservation design ordinances. He addressed uses, density/lot size, open space amount, design standards and permanent protection for zoning. He also referenced processing procedures, submittal requirements, and design standards for subdivision.

Robin Reid arrived at 5:46 p.m.

Petrik provided an overview of how to encourage conservation design and stated in order to be successful, conservation design should not be more difficult to implement than a base district (including processing, time frame and cost to developer). He added that project feasibility (meeting the market's attractiveness gap) and flexibility were important components to encouraging conservation design.

Petrik discussed setting and achieving specific goals that included generalized open space vs. specific goals as well as incentives, standards and requirements to achieve the goals. He stated that conservation design ordinances tend to be much more successful if they are tailored towards specific goals.

Finke stated that the incentives the City could offer to support conservation design are likely finite, so identifying more specific goals would allow the City to concentrate its incentives towards situations which best meet the City's objectives.

Petrik provided examples and key variations between three existing conservation design ordinances in Inver Grove Heights, Lake Elmo and Hanover. There is a good deal of variation with relation to: the main objectives of each city's open spaces; whether the conservation design was required by the ordinance or encouraged through incentives; minimum amount of required open space; and the aggressiveness of incentives offered to potential developers.

Discussion was held on implementing some mandatory regulation to preserve the highest priority natural resources in the City versus an entirely optional/incentive based approach. Some members expressed interest in mandatory development standards in areas in the community where exceptionally high value natural resources were located. Discussion was held about a public reaction if the City were to map these high value areas.

Petrik stated that the regulations enacted by a city can vary depending on the main objectives it wishes to achieve. Commissioners and Council members conducted a goal setting exercise to determine highest and lowest priorities as a guiding tool in drafting an ordinance. *General consensus of the members present included high priority being placed on protection of sensitive ecological resources, protection of views/vistas from development (including preservation of rural character) and protection of corridors for habitat movement. Lowest priority areas included protection of agricultural practices/economy and transition between urban and rural areas.*

Petrik described collaborative processes that other communities are attempting to implement in order work with developers on conservation design. Discussion was held on approaches to encourage developers to engage and understand the City's conservation design ordinance when adopted. *General consensus of the members present was to institute a collaborative planning approach between a developer and the City.*

III. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:58 p.m.