

**BIG LAKE PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

AUGUST 18, 2010

1. CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chair Green called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Commissioners present: Kirby Becker, Ketti Green, Doug Hayes, Patricia May, and David Schreiber. Commissioners absent: Duane Langsdorf and Scott Marotz. Also present: Senior City Planner Katie Larsen and Economic Development Assistant Sandy Petrowski.

3. ADOPT AGENDA

Commissioner Becker moved to adopt the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Hayes, unanimous ayes, agenda adopted.

4. OPEN FORUM

Vice-Chair Green opened the Open Forum at 7:02 p.m. No one came forward for comment. Vice-Chair Green closed the Open Forum at 7:02 p.m.

5. APPROVE PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES OF JULY 7 & JULY 21, 2010

Commissioner Hayes motioned to approve the July 7, 2010 and July 21, 2010 Meeting Minutes. Seconded by Commissioner May, unanimous ayes, Minutes approved.

6. BUSINESS

6A. REVIEW/DISCUSS POPULATION & HOUSING PROJECTION DATA

Senior Planner Katie Larsen reviewed the August 9th memorandum pertaining to population and housing projection data, noting that this information is an important tool when planning for the future of Big Lake. Examples of information contained in the data are: 1) available lots by subdivisions (i.e., developed and undeveloped); 2) approved preliminary plats; 3) population and household data for 2000 through 2009 (i.e., actual and projected); and 4) extrapolation population (through 2035), per the State Demographic Center (October 2007).

This item was for information/discussion purposes; no action required or taken by the Commission.

6B. STATE SUPREME COURT RULING ON VARIANCES

Planner Larsen reviewed the August 8th memorandum on the June 24, 2010 ruling by the State Supreme Court in how communities grant variances. This ruling clarified that "...city authority to issue a variance is limited to those very rare cases where the property cannot be put to a "reasonable use" without the variance. This establishes a high threshold for both the city and the property owner when considering requests." Planner Larsen noted that in the review of future variance applications, the applicant would need to be more diligent in proving a true "undue hardship" in order to grant the variance.

Staff and the Commission further discussed the City's current zoning flexibility it has through the use of temporary permits, Conditional Use Permits (CUP's), Interim Use Permits (IUP's), and Planned Unit Developments (PUD's), with site and building plan review continuing to play an important role in development to identify and avoid potential zoning conflicts.

This item was for information purposes; no action required or taken by the Commission.

6C. THE ROLE OF PLANNING AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Planner Larsen discussed information contained in the August 10th memorandum on the role of planning and public health; noting that the Municipal Planning Act enables cities with the legislative authority to guide community development and protect the public health, safety, and general welfare of its residents. In addition, planning also encompasses the practice of promoting public health by creating safe, active communities for all. Planner Larsen asked for the Commissioners' comments on how much of an active role the City should have in planning and public health (i.e., walkability of neighborhoods). Also discussed was the potential adoption of a "Complete Streets" Policy and staff asked for comments on whether or not the Commission feels that there should be a written policy and standards or only recommendations to guide healthy community development and/or Complete Streets.

Commissioner Schreiber stated that it appears that ideas such as "Safe Streets For All" is more talk than action in Big Lake, citing a couple recent projects in the City that are not pedestrian friendly (i.e., the Ormsbee Street project, uncompleted railroad crossing improvements, etc.). Planner Larsen stated that a policy such as "Complete Streets" would require specific items (i.e., sidewalks) to be viewed just as important along a roadway as other items, such as storm sewers.

Commissioner Hayes stated that if there were any roadway within the City that would be benefited by a policy such as "Complete Streets", it would be the walkway/sidewalk across/along County Road 43 adjacent to the Northstar Station site. Commissioner Becker stated that he believes that this type of policy is important/necessary for the City and would be interested to know if such a policy would apply to specific areas of the City or all streets/roadways within the City.

Commissioner Hayes stated that he believes that an ordinance would help the City and would guide developers. Commissioner Becker suggested that a broader ordinance could be drafted, with more guidelines on specific types of streets, etc.

Planner Larsen noted that staff believes that the City has been doing a good job with community development but that there is always room for improvement and staff would like to see some sort of systematic guidelines put into place.

This item was for discussion and informational purposes; no action required or taken by the Commission.

7. PLANNER'S REPORT

7A. PROJECT UPDATE REPORT

Planner Larsen reviewed the eight (8) items listed in the August 12th Project Update Report and answered questions of the Commission. No action required or taken by the Commission.

8. COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS – No reports.

9. OTHER – None.

10. ADJOURN

Commissioner Hayes motioned to adjourn at 8:12 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner May, unanimous ayes, motion carried.