

**BIG LAKE PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

MAY 18, 2011

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Marotz called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

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

3. ADOPT AGENDA

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

4. OPEN FORUM

Chair Marotz opened the Open Forum at 6:35 p.m. No one came forward for comment. Chair Marotz closed the Open Forum at 6:35 p.m.

5. APPROVE PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 6, 2011

Commissioner Hayes motioned to approve the April 6, 2011 Meeting Minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Langsdorf, unanimous ayes, Minutes approved.

6. BUSINESS

6A. PUBLIC HEARING: CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT FOR ELECTRONIC CHANGEABLE COPY SIGN FOR COMMUNITY READER BOARD

Senior Planner Katie Larsen reviewed the May 2, 2011 Planning Report on the City's request for approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to allow for a sixteen (16) square foot (2' x 8') electronic changeable copy sign as part of a proposed Community Reader Board to be located in the new downtown Jefferson Square Park at the southeast corner of U.S. Highway 10 and TH 25. This electronic changeable copy sign will be used to promote community events.

Chair Marotz opened the public hearing at 6:40 p.m. No one came forward for comment. Chair Marotz closed the public hearing at 6:40 p.m.

Commissioner Hayes motioned to approve the proposed Conditional Use Permit (SUP for a sixteen (16) square foot electronic changeable copy sign for a proposed Community Reader Board. Seconded by Commissioner May, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

7. PLANNER'S REPORT

7A. PROJECT UPDATE REPORT

Senior Planner Larsen reviewed the twelve (12) items within the May 9, 2011 Project Update Report. No action required or taken by the Commission.

7B. COMMUNITY ATTITUDES SURVEY

Senior Planner Larsen briefly reviewed information on the Community Attitudes Survey being drafted by City staff to obtain input from Big Lake residents regarding City services and facilities, noting that the survey will be included in the May monthly utility bills and will be sent to approximately 3,600 households and commercial/industrial users, 55 residents owning properties without City sewer and water utilities, and 350 multi-family unit residents.

The results of the survey will be shared with the Planning Commission, Big Lake Economic Development Authority (BLEDA), Parks and Parks Committee as well as being posted on the City's website.

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

7C. MN STATE STATUTE AMENDMENT REGARDING VARIANCES

Senior Planner Larsen reviewed the May 9th memorandum on the amendment to State Statutes recently signed into law (effective May 6, 2011) which restores municipal variance authority. This new law rebrands the municipal variance standard from "undue hardship" to "practical difficulties" but still retains the familiar three (3) factor test of: 1) reasonableness, 2) uniqueness, and 3) essential character. The law also states that "Variances shall only be permitted when they are in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the ordinance and when the terms of the variance are consistent with the comprehensive plan."

When evaluating variance requests under the new law, cities should adopt findings addressing the following questions: 1) Is the variance in harmony with purposes and intent of ordinance?; 2) Is the variance consistent with the comprehensive plan?; 3) Does the proposal put the property to use in a reasonable manner?; 4) Are there unique circumstances to the property not created by the landowner?; and 5) Will the variance, if granted, alter the essential character of the locality?

This item was for informational purposes only; no action was required or taken.

7D. NEWS ARTICLES

Staff briefly discussed the two (2) articles included in the packet; the articles were provided for information only and no action was required or taken by the Commission.

8. COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Commissioner Marotz discussed the proposed Community Garden project and stated that the project is still in the need of an administrator.

9. OTHER - None.

10. ADJOURN

Commissioner Langsdorf motioned to adjourn at 7:06 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Hayes, unanimous ayes, motion carried.