

**BIG LAKE PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

JULY 18, 2012

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Marotz called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

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

3. ADOPT AGENDA

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

4. OPEN FORUM

Chair Marotz opened the Open Forum at 6:31 p.m. No one came forward for comment.
Chair Marotz closed the Open Forum at 6:31 p.m.

5. APPROVE PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 20, 2012

Commissioner Green motioned to approve the June 20, 2012 Meeting Minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Schreiber, unanimous ayes, Minutes approved.

6. BUSINESS

6A. POPULATION AND HOUSING PROJECTION DATE

Senior Planner Katie Larsen reviewed the July 12, 2012 memorandum on population and housing projection date for the City of Big Lake which included: 1) 2011 estimated population (from the MN State Demographer) to be 10,164 with 3,409 households (with the equivalent of 2.98 persons/household); 2) chart depicting the census populations and % changes from 1900-2010; 3) chart noting a total of 441 platted single family lots ready for development; and 4) chart indicating actual population and household data for 2000 to 2011.

Larsen briefly discussed the City's Comprehensive Plan which was last revised in 2000, using 1990 census data and noting that, because of budget constraints, another revision has not yet been able to be done.

6B. “WHY BIG LAKE?”

Planner Larsen stated that the purpose of item was for to allow for an opportunity for staff and the Planning Commissioners to have an open discussion regarding their vision for Big Lake, which included their input to the following discussion items:

Why do you live in Big Lake?

- Cost/affordability of home and land
- Feels like it is out in the country as you have to go to another town for some purchases (need to make an effort to do something rather than go to a suburban strip mall).
- Location to work
- Wasn't important to live near retail
- Family lived here and children stayed
- Feels like home
- Nice not having all the shopping traffic but close enough to other malls in nearby towns.

Why should somebody else move to Big Lake?

- Not over populated; there is room to breathe.
- Nice neighborhoods; you get out of the neighborhood what you put into it (it is important to get out and get to know the neighbors).

What are the City's biggest assets?

- The Lakes (could do more to promote the lakes, i.e., canoe/paddle boat rentals).
- Can live on the edge of agricultural land but still have the amenities of suburbia.

What are the City's biggest drawbacks?

- It is difficult to get to know people in town as there are not a lot of opportunities/activities to get people out into the community; solving this issue may be outside the scope of municipal government but a big part of getting people to stay in town would be to get them involved in the community.
- The school district; would not recommend for a young family.

Does Big Lake have a niche?

- Slow pace of life
- Affordable housing
- Community events such as Spud Fest

Planner Larsen asked what recommendation the Commission would make to the City Council to make Big Lake a better place (i.e., should an attempt be made to make something unique about Big Lake or should Big Lake remain as it is?)

The recommendations included:

- Need to get people involved, if you don't, you lose the connection (i.e., Spud Fest)
- Movies in the Park (could be tied in with the lakes if it were to be held at Lakeside Park and possibly expand to hold separate movie events for children and for adults)
- Continue to hold annual Day In The Park event
- Possible city-wide/volunteer day to clean up parks and/or public facilities as a way to deter vandalism (would be good to make people accountable for the City's amenities).
- Neighborhood activities (block parties, etc.)
- Neighborhood crime watch program events; have the Police Department advocate more for these events
- The social aspect in Big Lake is important.
- Promote a bigger picture of the "area" instead of just Big Lake; work together with surrounding communities to market opportunities in the area/region.
- Have discussions on how to make biking more accessible within community (out to State forest and along river, etc.)

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

7. PLANNER'S REPORT

7A. PROJECT UPDATE REPORT

Senior Planner Larsen briefly reviewed the twelve (12) items listed in the July 2012 Project/Prospect Status Report; no action required or taken by the Commission.

7B. MNAPA PLANNING MINNESOTA – JULY 2012 NEWSLETTER

Planner Larsen briefly discussed the “Planning Minnesota” information handout obtained from the Minnesota Chapter of the American Planning Association; no action required or taken by the Commission.

8. COMMISSIONERS’ REPORTS

Chair Marotz provided an update on the recent purchase of the former Shady River Campground property (located off of County Road 5/Eagle Lake Road); this property was purchased for a regional-type park for the City which would include an active park (playground) and another area for bog walks/paths. The City hopes to receive grants to make improvements on the site in the future.

9. OTHER

The Commission briefly discussed the absences of Commissioner Hayes over the past two years and it was the consensus to direct staff to speak with him to determine his intentions with regards to serving on the Planning Commission.

10. ADJOURN

Commissioner Green motioned to adjourn at 7:55:p.m. Seconded by Commissioner May, unanimous ayes, motion carried.