

PLAN COMMISSION

Time and Date: The Plan Commission met on Wednesday, February 16, 2022, at 5:00 p.m. in the Common Council Chambers of Wausau City Hall.

Members Present: Mayor Katie Rosenberg, Eric Lindman, Tom Neal, George Bornemann, Bruce Bohlken, Andrew Brueggeman; *By WebEx*: Pat Peckham

Others Present: Brad Lenz, Sam Wessel, William Hebert, Brian Stahl, Melissa Engen, Thomas Brown, Gary Gisselman, Jonathan Creisher, Christine Martens, Larry Nigbur, Brian Davies

In compliance with Chapter 19, Wisconsin Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and transmitted to the *Wausau Daily Herald* in the proper manner.

Mayor Rosenberg called the meeting to order at approximately 5:00 p.m. noting that a quorum was present.

Approve the minutes from January 18, 2022 meeting.

Bohlken motioned to approve the minutes from the January 18, 2022 meeting. Neal seconded, and the motioned carried unanimously 7-0 by roll-call vote.

Discussion and possible action on designating John Marshall School (1918 Lamont Street) as an historic landmark.

Mayor Rosenberg stated that public comments would be allowed on this item.

Lenz stated that this item comes from the Historic Preservation Commission to designate John Marshall School as a local landmark. The Historic Preservation Commission felt the school should be landmarked. A public hearing was held. The Wausau School District is not in favor of the designating the school as an historic landmark.

Thomas Brown, 715 North 5th Avenue, said that it is too early to designate the school as an historic landmark. Brown urged the committee to vote against this item and work with the Wausau School Board.

Gary Gisselman, 319 Park Avenue, said he is present to urge the commission to landmark the school and the criteria has been met. The school has been a key part to the neighborhood for the last 100 years. This has been a community center. When the school was built in 1922, the area was full of vacant lots. Gisselman said that Grant School is now landmarked and was also a key part of that neighborhood.

Jonathan Creisher, 151008 Juniper Lane, said that he is on the Wausau School Board and stated that this designation will handcuff the school district to what can be done with this building. There are higher costs to renovate a building than to tear down and build a new one. The demographics in the area are shifting. There is a lot of change ahead and this will limit the school district's options.

Christine Martens, 1228 Arthur Street and member of the Historic Preservation Commission, said that this year will be the 100th anniversary for the school. Martens said that the commission wanted to get in front of this instead of behind, which is what happened with Grant School. The time to landmark it is now.

Neal motioned to designate John Marshall School as an historic landmark. The motion died due to a lack of a second.

Peckham moved to table the designation six months so that Wausau School Board has time to evaluate the buildings. Bornemann seconded.

Neal said that there has been a lot of loss of historic structures in this small town. When building is gone, it is gone and there needs to be a proactive stance. Now is the time, otherwise we are going down the road and going loose the heritage.

Mayor Rosenberg thanked Alderperson Peckham for the motion and is it is always best to work collaboratively with the school. Mayor Rosenberg said that she grew up in this neighborhood and the school is a big part of it. There is a lot of passion but working with the school district is the right thing to do.

Bornemann said that he is reluctant to force this onto another elected body. Bornemann said that he supports the motion to table the item for six months.

Brueggeman said that looks back fondly at the school but it is difficult to force the landmarking on the school district. The City needs to be more collaborative with the school district. It is preemptive and not neighborly.

Peckham stated that this is a sound idea and this would give the school district a fair shot.

The motion carried 4-3 by roll-call vote. Brueggeman, Neal and Lindman voted against the motion.

PUBLIC HEARING: Request to approve a conditional use at 1730 North Business Highway 51 to allow for an addition of an order board sign for a second drive thru lane, in a SMU, Suburban Mixed-Use Zoning District.

Wessel said that the conditional use would be for the signage since the drive-thru is a permitted use. A neighboring property owner did have a concern about the shared access easement, which is a separate issue than the order board sign.

Mayor Rosenberg opened the public hearing.

Larry Nigbur, 1740 North Business Highway 51, said that there is an easement of 60' that cannot be used due to the traffic of this facility. With the current drive thru, 6-10 vehicles will be lined up and cars are going through the easement. This this addition, additional vehicles will be going through the easement. This is the time to get it resolved. The property was surveyed last week, and the parking lot is encroaching the easement.

Mayor Rosenberg closed the public hearing.

Discussion and possible action on approving a conditional use at 1730 North Business Highway 51 to allow for an addition of an addition of an order board sign for a second drive thru, in a SMU, Suburban Mixed-Use Zoning District.

Neal said that he goes through the drive thru lanes and the lines should be shorter with this request. The parking spaces are a different issue. Neal said that this will relieve congestion and supports the request.

Lenz said that staff can do some investigating on this before the next meeting.

Nigbur said that he doesn't have a vendetta against Taco Bell and does not have a concern about the sign. The striping on the easement cannot remain.

Brian Davies, Taco Bell, said that it is their intent to reduce the line and is willing to work with Nigburs. Davies said that he is happy to discuss this and reach an understanding.

The action on the CUP will take place next month. Neal left the meeting at approximately 5:30 p.m.

Discussion and possible action approving Alexander Davis Preliminary Plat (formerly Wausau Center Mall site).

Tom Radenz, REI Engineering, presented the plan for the area. The plat primarily covers blocks 2, 3, 4 & 5. There is an interested buyer in Lot 4 and possibly Lot 5. This is the preliminary plat, and some things may change before the final plat.

Lenz said that his comments in the review letter were about easements that are not shown on the plat, but they were mentioned in the presentation. He said there were previous plans showing a connection from the Sears ramp to Washington Street at 4th Street. He asked when the final plat may come back. Radenz added that the hope is to have the final plat ready in late summer. Radenz said that some changes will need to be made depending on what the street design is. Lenz said that the curved right-of-way will impact the design of the street. The downtown area needs to be pedestrian friendly.

Brueggeman motioned to approve the Alexander Davis Preliminary Plat. Bohlken seconded, and the motion carried unanimously 6-0 by roll-call vote.

Next meeting date and future agenda items for consideration.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 15, 2022.

Adjournment.

Bohlken motioned to adjourn, seconded by Brueggeman. The motion carried unanimously 6-0 and the meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

The Plan Commission is next scheduled to meet at 5:00 p.m. on March 15, 2022.