PLAN COMMISSION

Time and Date:	The Plan Commission met on Tuesday, November 26, 2024, at 4:03 p.m. in the Common Council Chambers of Wausau City Hall.
Members Present:	Mayor Doug Diny, Eric Lindman, Sarah Watson, Bruce Bohlken, George Bornemann, Lou Larson.
Staff Present:	William Hebert, Brooke Mueller, Brad Lenz, Andrew Lynch, Randy Fifrick
Others Present:	Tyler Sheeran (Vice President of Commonwealth Development), Dustin Vreeland (Vreeland Surveyor), Josh Sommerfeldt (M+A Design)

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 Doug Diny called the meeting to order at approximately 4:03 p.m. noting that a quorum was present.

Discussion and possible action of approving the meeting minutes of September 17, 2024.

Motion by Bohlken and seconded by Bornemann. Motion approved unanimously, 6-0.

PUBLIC HEARING: Discussion on amending Section 23.10.31 – Zoning Amendment

William Hebert said this item is a continuation of a previous amendment brought forward. State legislation prohibited communities' supermajority vote for zoning protest petitions. To comply with state legislation, an ordinance amendment is needed to be done before the end of this year.

Mayor Doug Diny opened the public hearing.

No comments

Mayor Diny closed the public hearing.

Discussion and possible action on amending Section 23.10.31 – Zoning Amendment

Motion by Bohlken and seconded by Bornemann. Motion approved unanimously, 6-0.

PUBLIC HEARING: Discussion of rezoning 700, 804/806, 810, 814, and 816 Grand Avenue from Urban Mixed Use (UMU) to Planned Unit Development (PUD) and approving the General Development Plan (GDP) for a 50- unit apartment building. [M+A Designs]

Andrew Lynch provided a staff update. There are 6 addresses but 5 parcels. The site is challenging because of the shape of the parcels and the location. Commonwealth Development was able to receive a tax-credit to build affordable-rate housing. They were able create a building plan that will fit on this site, but they will need some flexibility for the rear setback being decreased to 0 and for the density of units being above 36 units which are allowed in a UMU and fewer parking spaces. The staff report on the packet shows the criteria for approval and that staff recommends the approval of the zoning change and the GDP.

Mayor Diny opened the public hearing.

Tyler Sheeran, Vice President of the Commonwealth Development, stated that there was a previous rezone done at these sites as a UMU. Sheeran explained that they were fortunate to receive the tax credit. During surveying and design, engineering discovered municipal lines on the site. This presented unforeseen conditions but with the help of city staff they were able to reconfigure the site plan and maintain the 50-units for WHEDA's financing. However, because of the reconfiguration we do not conform to the UMU zoning district and now requires the approval of a PUD zoning district.

Mayor Diny closed the public hearing.

Discussion and possible action rezoning 700, 804/806, 810, 814, and 816 Grand Avenue from Urban Mixed Use (UMU) to Planned Unit Development (PUD) and approving the General Development Plan (GDP) for a 50- unit apartment building [M+A Designs]

Alderperson Lou Larson stated that he will not support it because he is concerned about traffic and safety. With having many more vehicles coming in and out of that 50-unit area next to Grand Ave and Thomas St intersection and with Kolbe and Kolbe nearby getting off work every day, there is no way it will work.

George Bornemann also has the same concern that Alder Larson has mentioned. Bornemann is also concerned about the limited parking onsite. At this point, Bornemann supports the PUD but emphasizes that he will look thoroughly at the Specific Implementation Plan when it comes back to the Commission.

Lynch noted that the current traffic level on Grand Ave & Thomas St intersection are within their design limits. Lynch also stated that the General Development Plan shows that the site entry on Grand Ave is only a right-turn in and out which will limit the impact on traffic. On the parcels, there is also reservation along Grand Ave to allow for Department of Transportation (DOT) to make changes to the road for any potential upcoming projects.

Brad Lenz stated that the current UMU zoning district for these parcels could allow commercial developments that would generate a lot more traffic compared to a residential development. The unit number may seem high but the traffic from those units is relatively low in comparison to what else could go there. DOT is also looking at improving this intersection that could help it even further. He said that regarding the parking spaces, there is guidance in the ordinance for a parking ratio, but this can be reduced by 50% with a conditional use. From previous projects of this type, the 1.5 ratio is generally more than is needed.

Motion by Bohlken and seconded by Bornemann. Motion approved, 5-1.

Discussion and possible action on vacating and discontinuing certain right-of-way along East Thomas Street abutting a portion of 700 Grand Avenue and vacating a portion of right-of-way formerly known as 804/806 Grand Avenue, 810 Grand Avenue, 814 Grand Avenue, and 816 Grand Avenue (I&F)

Eric Lindman stated that he will be voting against this, because there is not a developer agreement approved by the City Council. Lindman also stated the site has many challenges from an engineering standpoint, because of the ingress and egress challenges we are facing even after the design and plans shifted south.

Lenz stated that this item came from I&F who voted unanimously in favor of it, 5-0. When this comes to City Council, they will receive the two recommending votes from two committees: I&F and Plan Commission. The Council will have the final vote.

Bornemann asked if this needs to be approved at this time or can it be held with this Commission.

Randy Fifrick stated that this was being brought forward at this time in order to develop a concise legal description for the development agreement. When the Request for Proposal (RFP) for this project was sent out, it was with the intention to reserve 20 feet of right-of-way for Grand Ave or for any future infrastructures needed along that stretch. Also from previous meetings, similar motions have been brought forth. For instance, the DOT reimbursement from part of this parcel was already acted on by the Council. This current item is a part of that process. However, this can be held; it would require some coordination with Plan Commission and Economic Development and Finance.

Lindman stated that there are some back and forth with the DOT's planning on Grand Ave. Lindman mentioned that he would like to see it come together. However, he is concerned that if the City vacates now but somehow the project doesn't come forward, then it results with us relinquishing our ability of not getting reimbursed for the cost of that property from the DOT. Lindman understood that it was previously approved by the Council for the DOT project, but DOT is very clear that if the project does not go forward, any work like vacating this right-of-way will relinquish our ability to recoup any costs.

Fifrick stated upon Lindman's concerns on vacating that he spoke with the City Attorney that we can wait and bring this back.

Lindman asked if there is a time constraint for this to be bought back.

Lenz stated that it could be tabled and brought back at a certain time, or it could be voted on now and held off on sending it to Council until the developer agreement goes to Council; However, we won't have a clear or set date for this to go to Council with this option.

Fifrick asked if there are any requirements or rules that we need a clear date to go to Council.

Lenz stated that he is not aware of any stipulations, and Mayor Diny concurred with Lenz's statement.

Mayor Diny asked is there any downsides of tabling it at Plan Commission.

Hebert stated this started at I&F, and now it's on Plan Commission agenda. It will still need to go to City Council regardless of holding it in Plan Commission.

Bornemann asked if we can amend the motion by adding that once a developer agreement is ready to go to Council then so can this item.

Lindman stated that we can do that. Mayor Diny also stated as the chairperson he can work with staff to hold onto it until it's ready for Council as well.

Motion to approve by Bornemann and seconded by Bohlken. Motion approved, 4-2.

Discussion and possible action on Final Plat for Green Tree Meadows (I&F)

Lenz stated there are some minor changes from the preliminary plat, nothing too drastic. Staff, builders, and surveyors have worked together on the plat and a developer agreement, which is currently a draft but will be executed as part of the approval. Staff from engineering and planning are in favor of the plat. The final plat had also passed unanimously in I&F, 5-0. He said the alderperson for this area would like to have an informational meeting for the neighbors to the south. Staff will work with the development team to set up a meeting.

Motion by Larson and seconded by Watson. Motion approved unanimously, 6-0.

Discussion and possible action the landmarking of the Marathon County Home and Hospital, also known as 1200 Lake View Drive. (Historic Preservation Commission)

Mayor Diny stated that the Historic Preservation Commission approved unanimously: 5-0.

Lenz explained that Historic Preservation Commission held a public hearing in August 2024. There was a pause requested by the County, and the Historic Preservation Commission did allow them the extra month. Another meeting was held in September and there was no input from the County at that time; so, Historic Preservation Commission recommended the landmarking. The next step is for Plan Commission to review the criteria, which are slightly different than the Historic Preservation Commission – the criteria pertain to the development of the city and the effect of the public interest. Staff recommends approval of the landmark designation based upon the criteria.

Motion by Watson and seconded by Larson. Motion approved unanimously, 6-0.

Discussion and possible action on approving Native American land acknowledgement marker in RiverLife Park.

Lenz stated this item went through the Arts Commission and the Parks and Recreation Committee. Both voted in favor unanimously. There was some discussion of spelling in the Ho Chunk language on the plaque. What has been handed out is the most recent version. The project comes from the Thomasgard family who is in attendance for any questions. They have been working hard on it for several months. This would go to the Council for final approval in the near future after there is more local engagement of the tribes.

Watson stated that she has attended every committee for this, and she thanked and appreciated the admirable efforts and engagement done by the parties who have brought it together.

Mayor Diny stated that the motion is for the new sign, type, and location and that there still may be some back and forth on verbiage which Lenz mentioned earlier. However, the commission could make a motion on what was presented.

Motion by Watson and seconded by Larson. Motion approved unanimously, 6-0.

Discussion and possible action on approving Boy with the Boot sculpture at 3rd St and Jackson Street.

Mayor Diny stated that the "Boy with the Boot" sculpture was originally in the mall before it was torn down. Before the mall was constructed, the sculpture was in Hammond Park since the 1920s. The sculpture would be outdoor during summer weather and will be stored during winter weather times.

Motion by Larson and seconded by Watson. Motion approved unanimously, 6-0.

Next Meeting Date

Next Meeting Date is scheduled for Tuesday, December 17, 2024.

Adjournment

Motion by Watson and seconded by Bohlken. Motion approved unanimously 6-0, and the meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.