

PLAN COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
TOWN OF GRANT  
January 20, 2016

Present: Jim Wendels (Chairman), Nathan Wolosek, Ron Becker, Lori Ruess, Sharon Schwab, (Committee Members) Marty Rutz (Zoning Administrator), Kathy Lee (Secretary),

Guest: Kristin Johnson (Portage Co. P & Z)

Citizens: None present

### **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by Jim Wendels, Chairman.

### **STATE OF PUBLIC NOTICE**

It was stated that the agenda was posted at two posting stations (Grant Town Hall and the Grant transfer station) and on the town's website.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

There was a question regarding the name of the contact person for the Saratoga ATV Club. The correct name is Chuck Hanson. The minutes will be revised to correctly identify the person contacted. It was moved by Jim Wendels and seconded by Sharon Schwab to approve the January 5, 2016 minutes as revised. The motion was approved with unanimous ayes.

### **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVISION**

The discussion was led by Kristin Johnson, Associate Planner – Portage County Planning and Zoning. The week prior to the meeting K. Johnson provided drafts of updates to the Introduction, Chapter 1 and Chapter 2.

#### Introduction (pages 1-2):

- Minor changes were made including changing verbs to past tense and uniformly starting County with an upper case "C." K. Johnson will check on the availability of a Planning Grant.

#### Chapter 1 (pages 3-16):

- Wording from the State Statute 66.1001 that applies to Chapter 1 were inserted at the start of the chapter to clarify what is covered in the chapter.
- Revisions were made to the brief history by updating the information regarding St. John Lutheran Church, adding comments about the sesquicentennial, and ensuring congruency between the size of the town in the text and on figure 1.1 (map).
- Recent Zoning Ordinance amendment dates of 2006, 2008, and 2010 will be added to Section 1.2.
- The date of when the Comprehensive Plan update was initiated will list September 2015, the month during which the Portage County Planning and Zoning Department was contacted with a request to provide assistance in the update process.
- The type of data available regarding demographic trends has changed since the original Comprehensive Plan was developed. Based on this change, it is not possible to simply update the data or compare current data to earlier data. The decision was to use the most recent data even if it provides information in a different format.

- Extensive discussion took place regarding Table 1.2. In the original Comp Plan, data was available regarding change of residence during the past 5 years. Current data is only available regarding changes during the year prior to the 2010 census. Having data that only looked at one year was viewed as non-useful for understanding trends or making future plans.
- Extensive discussion took place regarding Table 1.3 (showing distribution of age groups in 1990, 2000, and 2010) and the accompanying text. It was recommended to edit the text to highlight the aging of the Town and the presence of fewer families with young children.
- Discussion regarding a decrease since 2010 in the percent of residents with education between 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade without a diploma will be removed from the Comp Plan.
- The number of nonfamily households consisting of members that are not related is not available from the U.S. Census Bureau. When looking at householders living lone and 65 years and older, an increase in the actual number is seen. This is potentially significant for the Town.
- The accuracy of the poverty thresholds on Table 1.7 was questioned. Those numbers are accurate according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Poverty guidelines are published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and those numbers are different.
- Figure 1.3 provides information on Employment by Industry. Despite the fact the majority of the property in the Town is agricultural, only 3% of employed citizens identified themselves as working in agriculture, forestry, fisheries, or mining. There is no information on the percent of citizens who are unemployed or retired.
- Section 1.5 provides information on “Forecasts.” There was uncertainty expressed on how far into the future projections should go. For now, projects up to the year 2040 will be included.
- Section 1.6 (Goals) needs to be further updated. It was recommended to include goals that do not appear in other chapters of the Comprehensive Plan. It was recommended that K. Johnson determine what information other towns have included in this section.

**ACTION:** K. Johnson will attend the 2-17-2016 and the 3-29-2016 meetings of the Plan Commission. Approximately one week prior to the February meeting, she will forward draft revisions to Chapters 3 & 4.

### **TOWN BOARD REPORT**

- WisLine Teleconference – A brochure was circulated that showed dates and topics for upcoming teleconferences including “Promoting Local Protection of Wetlands and Updates to the Shoreland Zoning” on 2-17, “Housing and the Community” on 3-6, “Community Vitality and Placemaking” on 4-20, and “Case Law and Legislative Update” on 5-18.
- There is a bill in the State Assembly and State Senate that would allow children under 12 to drive more powerful all-terrain vehicles and children younger than 16 to drive small utility terrain vehicles. This is something to be aware of as we consider an ATV ordinance.
- A recent article in the Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune discussed three developments to watch related to the proposed Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) in the Town of Saratoga. The three included a meeting in the Town of Rome, details emerging on the Wysocki land buy, and anticipation of a statement by the DNR on the environmental impact of the CAFO.
- The Portage County Board approved the requested amendment to the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map and rezoning from High Density Residential to Commercial parcel number 018-22-0730-12.25 owned by Galles on 12-17-2015.
- A letter was received from the DOT regarding the plan for J-turn at the intersection of County U and WIS 54. A short-term closure of County U of 3 weeks is required. The anticipated

closure will occur in July or August 2016. There will not be an official detour during the closure.

- A correspondence was received from the Town of Plover regarding proposed zoning text amendments. Several concerns were expressed regarding the proposed changes.
- The Portage County Groundwater Citizens Advisory Committee will meet on January 21, 2016.
- A letter was received from Katrina Shankland in response to the Plan Commission’s letter regarding AB 582.
- The “Community Discussion on Portage County Agriculture and Food System” was held by the Portage County Farmland Preservation Ad Hoc Steering Committee on January 6, 2016. Nathan Wolosek and Ron Becker shared their impressions of the meeting. Nathan found the displays and networking with ad hoc steering committee members prior to the panel discussion more informative than the actual meeting. The panel discussion was viewed as an attempt to convince those in attendance to accept a farmland preservation zoning district as part of the zoning ordinance and not an overlay district. This approach is supported by Jeff Schuler. This could result in farmers being thrust into a zoning district, and its associated regulations, that they did not desire.

Ron found the reports by Dick Okray and the UW-Extension Agriculture Agent informative. When the Q&A started, the discussion got off topic.

The T of Grant Plan Commission continues to support an overlay approach for the Town. This method is supported by Barry Jacowski, chairman of the Farmland Preservation Committee. It is supported by Scott Karel. If our plan is approved by DATCAP, Portage County should not be able to dictate an alternative plan.

- Transportation Alternatives Program: The program supports bicycle/pedestrian road improvements. Jim Wendels has initiated the application process and has done a cross section design for the Mertz subdivision located south of Grant Elementary School. The principal of Grant School stated 10 to 15 children cross CTH WW to reach the school. Improvements to that crossing are desired. The Town has until January 29, 2016 to make an application.
- T. Plover ATV meeting: Sharon Schwab, Nathan Wolosek, attended the Town of Plover ATV meeting on 1-11-2016. The T. of Plover would like to gain cooperation between townships that share Town Line Road. The T. of Plover would like to use a ¼ mile section of CTH R as an ATV route. The Portage County Safety Committee and Portage County Corporate Counsel do not support allowing ATVs on county roads. The Portage County Highway Department has not taken a formal action on the T. of Plover’s request. At this time, townships boarding Town Line Road are not in agreement on ATV use along that road. The ATV Ordinance will be on the next agenda of the T of Grant Plan Commission. Starting with a limited number of roads and possibly a one-year trial are considerations for the Town.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Ron Becker motioned to adjourn; Nathan Wolosek seconded. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kathleen D. Lee, Plan Commission Secretary