

PLAN COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
TOWN OF GRANT
February 17, 2016

Present: Nathan Wolosek, Ron Becker, Lori Ruess, Sharon Schwab, (Committee Members),
Kathy Lee (Secretary)

Excused: Jim Wendels, Marty Rutz

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

Citizens: None present

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by Ron Becker, Acting 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 on 2-15-2016.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Nathan Wolosek and seconded by Lori Ruess to approve the February 9, 2016 minutes with the recommended revisions. The motion passed with unanimous ayes.

CITIZEN INPUT

None was presented

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVISION

Discussion was led by Kristin Johnson. As a follow-up to the January 20, 2016 meeting, she stated the T. of Grant ranks 108th out of 1900 towns in Wisconsin in size. This will not be included in the Comprehensive Plan.

CHAPTER 1

Revisions made to Chapter 1 by K. Johnson following the January meeting were reviewed:

- Section 1.4 E. (Employment Characteristics) was reorganized for ease of reading. The committee approved the changes. Figure 1.3 Summary of Employment by Industry, 2010-2014 will be discussed in Chapter 6 and the text reflects that.
- Following discussion during the 1-20-2016 meeting, it was recommended that the Comp Plan reflect the aging of the Town and the presence of fewer families with young children. The newly added text focuses on greater than a 100% increase in the children who were under 5 years in 2000. The statement is misleading because the comparison group included 10 years of children instead of 5 years. It also stated there was a 17% increase in "family" age individuals. Much discussion took place. R. Becker pointed out the increase in medium age. N. Wolosek added that middle age people are moving away from the city, but that does not need to be included in the text. The chart could speak for itself. When comparing the number of children age 0 to 14 for 2000 and 2010, there has been a decrease. That portion of the population accounted for 23% of the population in 2000, but only 17% of the population in

2010. There are fewer school-age children. It is recommended to look at percentages, as that is what the American Community Survey did.

- **A statement will be added to reflect that fact that our medium age is increasing more rapidly than the County as a whole and that people move here and remain here as they age.**
- **The sentence regarding the 100% increase in 2010 of the population 5 or under in 2000 will be removed.**
- **Minor changes will be made to the paragraph on medium age to include the actual medium age in 2000 and the medium age in 2010.**

CHAPTER 2

A draft was previously distributed for the 1-20-2016 meeting.

- **Minor changes will include consistently spelling out Wisconsin Statutes and not using abbreviations. The comment (found in paragraph 3) regarding the numbers used in the tables and figures are often estimates will be bolded. The column headings in tables will be edited to 2010-2014 (not 2014).**
- Housing occupancy characteristics table and text were approved as written.
- Discussion occurred regarding the number of single family home permits. Table 2.2 indicates there are newer 8 homes (built 2010 or later). Figure 2.1 indicates a total of 22 single family home permits between 2010 and 2014. The accuracy of those numbers was questioned. It was also questioned that we rank 3rd in new home starts in the County. Our population and our recent lack of population growth would not support that placement. Further review of Table 2.2 took place noting that the Town has only 8% of the homes being built in 1939 or earlier, while the County as a whole has 18% of the homes being built prior to 1939. This indicated our homes are generally newer than those in the rest of the County. An unusual finding was the fact that the number of homes listed as being built in certain decades was higher in 2010-2014 when compared to 2000. That was viewed as reporting errors and not requiring additional attention.
 - **K. Johnson was given contact information for several individuals (Marty Rutz, Zoning Administrator; Claude Rigelman, Assessor; and Dale Bates, Building Inspector). She will verify the numbers of single family home permits for inclusion in the Comp Plan.**
- K. Johnson stated if numbers do not make sense or we do not agree with them, a comment can be made in the text. The methods used for collecting data may cause the numbers to look odd.
- Structural characteristics of homes were discussed. The most common type of housing is single family detached. The location of the single family attached homes is not known. The accuracy of the self-reporting regarding living in an attached unit is uncertain.
 - **The information is an estimate. Once again, that should be emphasized in the text. Two sentences in the paragraph following Table 2.3 that discuss Single Family Attached will be deleted.**
- The information regarding mobile homes was viewed as potentially accurate, although not a certainty.
- Home Value Characteristics was reviewed and discussed. The value of our homes went up and this can be contributed to appreciation. Value has also increased due to additions.

- **Appreciation will be added to the text. Words that editorialize (e.g. dramatic, fairly significantly) will be removed from the text.**
- House Affordability was reviewed and discussed. K. Johnson explained if a person is paying 30% or more of their income, it is considered to be not affordable. Twenty-eight percent of owner-occupied homes are not affordable to the owner. Forty-three percent of renter-occupied homes are not affordable. Portage County has a similar number for renters. The reason for the increase in these numbers since 2000 is not clear. It could be secondary to a decrease in income or an increase in rental costs. The numbers could be skewed by the low number of people reporting.
- Housing programs have not changed. Descriptions were changed slightly. This is an area in which the Town could do a better job of sharing information with citizens. It could be included in a newsletter.
 - **K. Johnson will send us the housing program information from the Comp Plan in a Word document.**
- The housing issues/conclusions, goals, objectives, and policies from the 2005 Comp Plan were discussed. R. Becker stressed the need to verbalize that the town does not intend to develop a municipal water supply system or waste water system. This inclusion was viewed as not possible because portions of the T. of Grant are in the City of Wisconsin Rapids water district, but a statement with a similar theme could be included. Groundwater is a big housing issue for both residential and agricultural.
 - **It was recommended to add/remove the following:**
 - **Add two objectives –**
 - **Protect and maintain our existing water quality**
 - **New housing development will be serviced by individual wells and on-site septic system**
 - **Add five policies –**
 - **Adequate minimum lot sizes to accommodate private wells and septic systems.**
 - **Encourage the use of lot averaging to maintain open space and logical housing clusters.**
 - **The soil must be able to support septic systems.**
 - **Keep housing from encroaching on our agricultural lands and discourage urban sprawl in the prime agricultural area.**
 - **Encourage private well testing for nitrates and bacteria.**
 - **Change housing issues / conclusions –**
 - **Remove the question “How do they (transient trailers) differ from mobile homes?”**
 - **Other items should remain**
 - **Add: there is a “perception” that the quantity and quality of groundwater is changing.**
- Work on the Comp Plan will continue on 3-29-2016 with review of Chapters 3 and 4.

FARMLAND PRESERVATION

There have been recent emails with Scott Karel. He stated the farmland preservation plan can only be certified on the county level. So essentially whatever the final draft of the Portage County FP plan map for the Town of Grant will be the basis for determining what is eligible to

be certified under zoning for the Town of Grant’s ordinance. He added we are more than welcome to have an overlay district in our ordinance for our certified district.

The next meeting of the Portage County Farmland Preservation Ad Hoc Committee is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, February 23rd. Jeff Schuler stated he would have a draft of the County’s plan at that meeting. Nothing regarding the next meeting is on the committee’s website. N. Wolosek is not available to attend. R. Becker may be able to attend. The meeting could be postponed if a draft of the Farmland Preservation Plan is not completed.

N. Wolosek stated if county does not have a plan, an agreement can be done. The statute states the department may enter into a farmland preservation agreement that complies with s. 91.62 with the owner of land that is eligible under sub. (2).

N. Wolosek read portions of 91.40 “Applying for certification of ordinance” It stated the “Chief elected official” needs to provide the signed statements. He believes if we are falling under the County’s plan, they will also need to sign. If the County signs off on our overlay district, we should be fine. The County Planning Director is the individual at the county level that must sign.

We should submit our overlay district and map to the County for approval. Before we do this we need to verify that nothing in our ordinance conflicts with the County’s plan. We need to review their plan. We also need to compare our plan to the guidelines provided in Wis. Stat. 91.44 and 91.46. If there is no problem S. Schwab will need to sign off on our overlay district and our map. It will need to be submitted as an amendment to our Zoning Ordinance. If a hearing were held on this before we finalize the revisions to the Zoning Ordinance; it would be a quicker discussion. It would be more costly to hold a separate public hearing.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Someone should try to attend the next Portage County Farmland Preservation Ad Hoc Committee meeting. N. Wolosek will determine when the meeting will occur and notify our committee members.**
- **Review our plan. Make sure we are satisfied with the ordinance. While we have more permitted uses and conditional uses in our plan than our listed Wis. Stat. 91.44 and 91.46, Scott Karel never indicated they needed to be removed. We can submit the plan and if it is not correct, we can make the necessary changes.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen D. Lee, Plan Commission Secretary
Approved 3/8/2016