

**MELROSE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2010 – 6:30 P.M.**

**AGENDA**

1. Call to Order/Roll Call/Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes
4. Reports
5. Action Items
6. Unfinished Business
  - a. Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance Update Proposal
  - b. 2010 Revised Zoning Ordinance
7. New Business
  - a. Comprehensive Plan Committee Composition
8. Informational Items
9. Issues by Planning and Zoning Commission Members and/or Staff
10. Adjournment

**MELROSE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2010 – 6:30 P.M.**

**A.I. #1 CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Melrose Planning and Zoning Commission met in a Regular Meeting on Wednesday, February 17, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. at the Melrose City Center pursuant to due notice being given thereof. Present were Commission Members Henry Ahrens, Tim Gillet, Tony Klasen, Dave Rodahl, and Kevin Thomes, Community Planning/Development Director Gary Walz, Public Works Director John Harren, and Human Resource Technician Diane Gruber serving as the Recording Secretary. Commission Member Randy Dufner arrived at 6:50 p.m. Absent was Commission Member Jeanne Kraemer. Chair Thomes called the meeting to order.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**A.I. #2 APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

A motion was made by Mr. Rodahl, seconded by Mr. Klasen and unanimously carried to approve the agenda as submitted.

**A.I. #3 APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Mr. Ahrens, seconded by Mr. Gillet and unanimously carried to approve the minutes from the Commission's January 14 Regular meeting as submitted.

**A.I. #4 REPORTS**

None

**A.I. #5 ACTION ITEMS**

None

**A.I. #6 UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- a. At the request of the Planning and Zoning Commission, Bonestroo, the City's Engineer, was asked to present a proposal to update the City's Comprehensive Plan, its Zoning Ordinance, and review its Land Subdivision Regulations as part of its engineering services to the City. Tina Goodroad from Bonestroo was on hand to present the proposal. (See attached proposal)

According to the proposal, the Comprehensive Plan update can be completed by February 2011 at a cost not to exceed \$32,770 and the Zoning Ordinance with a review of the Land Subdivision Regulations by October 2011 at a cost not to exceed \$13,000 for a total proposal cost not to exceed \$45,770. This amount includes mapping and reimbursable expenses.

Director Walz stated that a section of the City's Strategic Plan addresses the proposed updating of the City's 1998 Comprehensive Plan, which was amended in 1999, along with updating the 1989 Zoning Ordinance, which has been amended periodically, and the 1999 Land Subdivision Regulations. He noted that the Strategic Plan projected the cost for the total project including the Comprehensive Plan update, the Zoning Ordinance update, and the Land Subdivision Regulations update at \$75,000. To address those anticipated costs, the City had set aside a portion of the projected cost with the hope of utilizing matching grant funding from the HCP Program of \$5,000 to \$7,500.

Director Walz reported that the cities of Princeton and Albany recently contracted with Bonestroo, which is also their City Engineer, for planning-related services. Princeton is updating its Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance at a cost of \$47,000. Albany is updating only its Zoning Ordinance at a cost of \$13,440.

Director Walz reported that City staff, including Assistant City Administrator Karen Thostenson, Public Works Director John Harren, and himself have reviewed the Bonestroo proposal and recommends its approval by both the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Council. He noted that among other things, staff believes the proposal is well-written, encompasses the City's needs, and is competitively priced. Furthermore, staff believes that utilizing Bonestroo's planning services combined with its mapping and other services will facilitate preparation of the Plan. In addition, proceeding with the Plan at this time would hopefully allow the City to receive HCP matching grant funding to assist with the cost.

Director Walz reported that he had contacted the Initiative Foundation regarding the availability of HCP funding prior to the Program's ending scheduled for May 2011. He noted that the Initiative Foundation is unwilling to make a commitment until a grant request has been submitted following the City's action on a proposal for services. Prior to submitting a grant request to the Initiative Foundation, staff may recommend possibly dividing the proposal into two or three phases in hopes of garnering the maximum grant assistance.

Director Walz also reported that if the Commission and Council concur with the proposal, staff will initiate the grant request and tentatively plan for the first Comprehensive Plan community meeting before the end of May.

Mr. Gillet inquired whether or not the lack of the current census data could potentially affect the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Goodroad noted that the census, which will be conducted this year, is a short census of approximately 10 questions. She does not believe this limited data, when it eventually becomes available, will affect the Comprehensive Plan. In other words, proceeding without it will not be a detriment to the Plan. She also noted that Bonestroo is effective in its demographic research.

Mr. Dufner inquired whether or not the City is required to obtain more than one proposal. Director Walz noted that the City had considered obtaining Requests for Proposals (RFP) but that they are costly and a lot of work for proposers. Public Works Director Harren stated that because Bonestroo is the City's engineering firm, RFPs are not required. The City is able to contract directly for such services.

Mr. Klasen inquired as to whether updating of the Comprehensive Plan could be done by City staff rather than consultants. Director Walz stated that while staff would play a significant role in the process and will do what they can to minimize expenses, qualified outside experts with their experience and training still need to lead this project.

Mr. Ahrens inquired whether the recent Zoning Ordinance changes would be included in the update. Ms. Goodroad stated the Comprehensive Plan serves as the foundation for the Zoning Ordinance which takes each of the revised/updated implementation strategies and ensures that ordinances are clearly spelled out to achieve the City's goals. The focus of the Comprehensive Plan update will be utilizing and accurately identifying what is working and not working in the current Plan.

Ms. Goodroad reported that as a cost savings measure, most all of the communication will be done electronically through the City's website and email.

Mr. Klasen questioned what effect, if any, not updating the Plan would have on the community. Director Walz noted that, generally, plans are updated every 10 years and that the City's Plan is 12 to 14 years old considering the rewrite process was started in 1996 and completed in 1998 and the Zoning Ordinance is 21 years old. In addition, there are things happening in the community that need to be addressed such as access from County Road #65 to the Eighth Avenue West Industrial Park, addressing vacancies in the downtown area, possibly providing for commercial district expansion along South Second Avenue East, and addressing limited downtown customer and employee parking. Furthermore, the current Plan does not address issues such as redevelopment. He noted that the State will not allow some projects such as the possible County Road #65 to Eighth Avenue West connection to cross its property (the Lake Wobegon Trail) without an updated comprehensive plan. Director Walz reported that with the economy as it is now, it is important to have direction because the current Plan was prepared in a totally different environment with a substantially different mindset.

Mr. Ahrens stated that he has been on the Planning and Zoning Commission for a long time and the Commission was always busy and that this appears to be a slow time in development due to the economy, so it would be an opportune time for the Commission to address these matters.

Director Walz reported that the City has issued only one building permit in 2010 and that Building Official Dan Marthaler has seen only three permits this year in his six-city service area.

A motion was made by Mr. Ahrens, seconded by Mr. Rodahl and unanimously carried making recommendation to the Council to accept the proposal submitted by Tina Goodroad of Bonestroo for updating the City's Comprehensive Plan with a completion date of February, 2011 at a cost not to exceed \$32,770 and the Zoning Ordinance with a review of the Land Subdivision Regulations by October, 2011 at a cost not to exceed \$13,000 for a total proposal cost not to exceed \$45,770. This total cost to include mapping and reimbursable expenses.

Mr. Rodahl requested that along with the recommendation to the Council to accept Bonestroo's proposal, Mr. Klasen as Council representative, relay to the Council the need for adequate resources and funding for staff involvement in this project.

- b. Director Walz discussed the blue three-ring binders which most Commission Members had containing the City's Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and miscellaneous documents noting that the 2010 amended Zoning Ordinance is being prepared for distribution. Director Walz reported that staff will update the binders and return them to the Commission.

Mr. Ahrens stated his disappointment that the Commission's recommendation to the Council that the maximum area of accessory buildings on a residential lot with a home with an attached garage be limited to 900 SF and for a home without an attached garage be limited to 1,800 SF was not adopted by the Council. Director Walz noted that there was a split vote among the Council Members on the Commission's recommendation and that if staff had envisioned this would be such a contentious matter, then it would have gathered additional information from surrounding communities as to what, if any, restrictions they have for accessory buildings prior to the Commission's and Council's review. He also noted that this item can be revisited in the future such as when/if the Zoning Ordinance is updated.

#### **A.I. #7 NEW BUSINESS**

- a. The Commission then had preliminary discussions regarding the makeup of a Comprehensive Plan Committee. Ms. Goodroad noted that public participation is central to the Comprehensive Planning process. Director Walz stated that the Commission, with its varying degrees of experience, should consider participating on the Comprehensive Plan Committee. It was also suggested that the Commission could compile a listing of individuals it felt could contribute to the Comprehensive Plan Committee and that a representative from each of the townships of Melrose and Grove should be considered. Another suggestion was to put an article in the local paper about the comprehensive planning process and possibly include a stuffer with the utility bills. The paper and utility bills might also be used to request individuals to submit their names and credentials for Comprehensive Plan Committee participation. By consensus, the Commission agreed that the full Commission needs to be part of the Comprehensive Plan Committee and that staff should advertise for community interest if the Council approves the Bonestroo proposal.

**A.I. #8 INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

None

**A.I. #9 ISSUES BY PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEMBERS**

None

**A.I. #10 ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Mr. Ahrens, seconded by Mr. Klasen and unanimously carried that the meeting be adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

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PATRICIA HAASE – CITY CLERK