

**Plan Commission
of the City of Onalaska**

Tuesday, December 17, 2019

1

1 The Meeting of the Plan Commission of the City of Onalaska was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on
2 Tuesday, December 17, 2019. It was noted that the meeting had been announced and a notice
3 posted at City Hall.

4
5 Roll call was taken, with the following members present: Assistant City Engineer Kevin
6 Schubert (for City Engineer Jarrod Holter), Jan Brock, Craig Breitsprecher, Skip Temte, Steven
7 Nott

8
9 Also Present: City Administrator Eric Rindfleisch, City Attorney Amanda Jackson, Deputy City
10 Clerk JoAnn Marcon, Planning Manager Katie Aspenson, Planning Technician Zach Peterson,
11 Ald. Kim Smith

12
13 Excused Absences: Acting Mayor Diane Wulf, Ald. Tom Smith, City Engineer Jarrod Holter,
14 Jenny Akins

15
16 **Item 2 – Approval of minutes from previous meeting**

17
18 Motion by Skip, second by Kevin, to approve the minutes from the previous meeting as printed
19 and on file in the City Clerk’s Office.

20
21 On voice vote, motion carried.

22
23 **Item 3 – Public Input (limited to 3 minutes per individual)**

24
25 Craig asked that anyone who wishes to provide public input pertaining to Item No. 6 wait to do
26 so until the Plan Commission addresses that item. Craig then called three times for anyone else
27 wishing to provide public input and closed that portion of the meeting.

28
29 **Consideration and possible action on the following items:**

30
31 **Item 4 – Review and Consideration of an Easement Agreement for 1785 East Main Street,
32 Onalaska, WI 54650**

33
34 Zach said the property was approved for a Conditional Use Permit by the Plan Commission on
35 November 22, 2005 to install a telecommunication facility at 1735 East Main Street. The
36 Common Council gave it final approval on December 13, 2005. Zach noted the documents
37 related to the conditions of the CUP and the conditions related to the Site Plan Permit were
38 included in commission members’ packets, as was further background information regarding this
39 property. Zach said Acme Commercial Properties, LLC has a proposed Easement Agreement for
40 consideration this evening, and he told commission members Acme wishes to work with the city
41 to clarify and acknowledge the access to the communication tower by entering into a formal
42 Easement Agreement with the City of Onalaska.

Reviewed 12/19/19 by Zach Peterson

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43
44 Motion by Skip, second by Steven, to approve an Easement Agreement for 1785 East Main
45 Street, Onalaska, WI 54650.

46
47 Amanda told commission members city staff had spoken with Acme representatives and said one
48 of the conditions of the Site Plan Permit states the owner will maintain the road to the tower.
49 Amanda said this has not occurred and told commission members city staff would be looking at
50 having the current owner do a Site Plan Amendment to remove that condition as part of this
51 process.

52
53 Katie told commission members if this item is approved this evening, the Plan Commission will
54 be directing city staff to continue working with Acme and amend the site plan. That item then
55 would come before the Plan Commission at its January 28 meeting.

56
57 Craig asked if staff would address any adjustments that need to be made, and the Plan
58 Commission would look at it for the final time in the future.

59
60 Katie told Craig the Plan Commission would have a final look at the Site Plan Amendment and
61 said this item would go before the Common Council for final approval at its January 14 meeting.

62
63 Amanda told Craig it also would be possible to refer this item to the January 28 meeting and look
64 at both together.

65
66 Craig asked Katie what city staff's recommendation is.

67
68 Katie noted a representative from Acme Commercial Properties, LLC is attending this evening's
69 meeting.

70
71 **Laddie Galloway, Acme Commercial Properties, LLC**
72 **PO Box 6405**
73 **Abilene, Texas**

74
75 Laddie told commission members he appreciates them working with Acme and considering its
76 request to make this a formal easement. Laddie said, "We're just trying to clear things up and
77 square it up and make it right. ... I didn't know if you could look at it this evening. I'd hate to
78 come back."

79
80 Craig explained the motion on the floor is to approve the easement and asked, "What is the
81 discussion here?"

82
83 Steven said he does not see how one impacts the other and stated he does not understand why the
84 Plan Commission could not vote on the easement this evening.

Reviewed 12/19/19 by Zach Peterson

85
86 Skip said he believes his motion leaves it up to the city to work out the details.

87
88 City Administrator Rindfleisch told commission members he recommends approving the
89 Easement Agreement this evening. Doing so will direct city staff to take the next step, meaning
90 addressing the Site Plan Amendment, which would come before the Plan Commission for final
91 approval January 28.

92
93 On voice vote, motion carried.

94
95 **Item 5 – Review and Consideration of Invoice No. 018-021-18 from Hoisington Koegler**
96 **Group inc. for UDC/Zoning Rewrite Project**

97
98 Katie noted this is the final invoice for the UDC/Zoning Rewrite Project, which totaled out to
99 \$108,000. Katie noted the city will not pay the invoice until the project has been completed in
100 full, at which time it will go before the Common Council for final payment.

101
102 City Administrator Rindfleisch noted the payment requested amount is included in the billed to
103 date amount.

104
105 Motion by Skip, second by Steven, to approve Invoice No. 018-021-18 from Hoisington Koelger
106 Group inc. for UDC/Zoning Rewrite Project in the amount of \$11,615.75.

107
108 Skip noted this amount is above the original contract amount and said he believes the minutes
109 from the December 10 Plan Commission Subcommittee meeting provide a thorough explanation.

110
111 Jan asked if the city had planned for the overage. Jan also noted the December 10 Plan
112 Commission Subcommittee meeting minutes stated the city would hold the final payment to
113 HKGi, and she asked if that means any final payment.

114
115 Katie told Jan the original budgeted amount for the project was \$90,000 and noted there was a
116 contract amendment to go above and beyond. Katie said HKGi is within the bounds of the
117 contract, and she told Jan it is the city's standard practice to hold the final payment until a project
118 has been completed.

119
120 On voice vote, motion carried.

121
122 **Item 6 – Discussion and Consideration of the Proposed Zoning for County Road PH**
123 **Properties**

124
125 Craig noted several comments from citizens already have been submitted in writing, and these
126 comments will be included in the minutes of this evening's meeting.

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127
128 Katie said that as part of the comprehensive review of the City of Onalaska’s current zoning map
129 as part of the UDC/Zoning Rewrite Project, city staff is proposing that the 12 parcels as
130 identified on the map included in commission members’ packets along County Road PH be
131 rezoned from Single Family Residential (R-1) to Mixed Use-Neighborhood (MU-N) to be in
132 conformance with the Future Land Use Map within the 2015 Comprehensive Plan. The city is
133 required to have the zoning match how properties are utilized, which Katie said is what city staff
134 is proposing this evening. This recommendation is based on the current development in this
135 neighborhood, including comments from individuals who reside along County Road PH
136 regarding the ability to walk to commercial areas, the mixture of commercial and residential
137 uses, and recent development in the neighborhood. Katie noted the current mixture of the
138 neighborhood includes Olive Juice Quilts, River of Life Assembly, and the Bronston
139 Development. The neighborhood also is located directly next to big-box retail and commercial
140 strip developments.

141
142 Katie explained that the purpose of the MU-N District is to provide areas for the development
143 and redevelopment of land based on the design principles of traditional neighborhoods. Katie
144 said, “Inherently, a mixed-use neighborhood means there is supposed to be a mix of residential
145 and commercial. It is not the goal of the Mixed Use-Neighborhood to eradicate or to remove
146 residential, because at that point it would no longer be mixed use. At that point it would be a
147 commercial district, which we’re not proposing. Our intent is to make sure that it stays a
148 residential neighborhood, with the ability of some commercial to be mixed in with certain design
149 criteria related to architecture, height, screening, landscaping, [and] setbacks that you don’t find
150 in other traditional commercial districts. Much like what was found in the old Transitional
151 Commercial for those extra design standards, those have now been included in this district, in
152 addition to a lot more standards that weren’t there before.”

153
154 Katie acknowledged that neighbors are concerned about the proposed rezoning from R-1 to MU-
155 N, noting there are several people attending this evening’s meeting who wish to share their
156 concerns with the Plan Commission. Katie said, “Because of that, we want to have the Plan
157 Commission make a recommendation to the Common Council as to what you believe is the best
158 use for these 12 properties. If the intent is that it should stay Single Family Residential, we can
159 work with that, and we would have to change our Future Lane Use Map, which is a possibility.
160 Again, the intent is to make sure that the zone matches what the use is today. It is residential
161 today, but it is also very much mixed and adjacent to commercial, which is how it falls into being
162 a mixed-use neighborhood, with the emphasis on neighborhoods over a commercial
163 development. City staff is requesting that the Plan Commission make the determination this
164 evening. The Common Council would consider it at [its] January [14] meeting.”

165
166 The following emails and letters were sent to Amanda:

167
168 From Harlan and Dorothy Yahnke, 582 Court Road, Onalaska: “*We received a notice from*
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169 *Richard and Julie McGarry on Friday morning, December 13. We don't have email, so we're*
170 *hoping this notice gets to you soon enough. We are putting it in writing about the city rezoning*
171 *the area to Mixed Use-Neighborhood. We have lived at 582 Court Road for 64 years and are*
172 *definitely against the rezoning. We are both elderly and have medical issues and need to keep at*
173 *home. There are enough places in this area that went out of business, so they can use those*
174 *areas if they need to build something."*

175

176 From Eugene Alberts, 475 Sycamore Street, Onalaska: *"I am unable to attend the Plan*
177 *Commission meeting on December 17 to discuss the proposed rezoning of property contiguous to*
178 *the Mayfair Addition to MU-N. I reside at 475 Sycamore Street, and our property lies outside of*
179 *the 250-foot notification area. However, I do have some concerns I am hoping the commission*
180 *addresses, or at least takes into consideration. Please forward my comments to the commission*
181 *members:*

182

- 183 1. *The Mayfair Addition and its abutting properties have been around for 40-plus years,*
184 *and has grown into a very livable and friendly neighborhood. We generally know each*
185 *other, even streets over. My family has personally lived at our home for 28 years and is*
186 *one of the newest families on the block. I would hate to lose the neighborhood feel.*
- 187 2. *Traffic on PH is becoming more problematic with cars running both stop signs on PH*
188 *regularly.*
- 189 3. *Traffic congestion is occurring more regular by Tobacco Warehouse and the*
190 *chiropractor/dentist office, particularly since a drive-through was added for the coffee*
191 *shop and the sub shop was added. If more businesses get added to this small stretch of*
192 *street, traffic will be even more problematic.*
- 193 4. *I have concern that this new zoning designation would allow bars, tattoo parlors and*
194 *other businesses that are open to late in the evening and have the possibilities to host less*
195 *than savory individuals. If this is the case, my property values and those of my fellow*
196 *neighbors will be greatly lowered as well as our standard of living.*
- 197 5. *[Regarding] lighting, as businesses move in and are allowed, additional lighting and*
198 *noise will infiltrate our neighborhood.*

199

200 *Please consider these comments as you plan the future of our neighborhood, and just remember*
201 *additional tax base isn't always best for the city. Strong neighborhoods where we look out for*
202 *one another is."*

203

204 From Gail Saltz, 1259 CTH PH, Onalaska: *"I am writing to let you know that my mother*
205 *[DeLaney Gilster] and I are not in favor of rezoning the area on CTH PH. My mother and I*
206 *have lived in our home since 1958, and from what I am guessing we are probably the longest*
207 *residents out there. The Mayfair addition was my step-grandfather's far, so I have seen a lot of*
208 *changes over the past 61 years. We do not want, nor do we need, any more commercial*
209 *development in our neighborhood. We have empty buildings that could be put to better use. We*
210 *have enough traffic problems as it is; we don't need any more. I live right across the street from*

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211 *the quilt store, and that is not pleasant. She has tour buses coming, there are semis coming in,*
212 *and her customers park wherever they please. This creates problems on PH and Sycamore that*
213 *we don't need. We like our neighborhood as it is and want to keep it that way. We don't need*
214 *the city to tell us what is best for us. The sidewalk is a joke, as is the bike lane. Has anyone*
215 *done a study out there about the traffic? Or are you going to tell us again that there is not a*
216 *problem and we need to get along with the other people who are using our street as we have*
217 *been told in the past? I cannot tell you how many people run the stop signs, speed, laugh, make*
218 *fun, leave trash, how many near-miss accidents there are, and just plain stupid drivers. Some*
219 *people have told me they use PH because it is pretty and they do not want to have to stop for the*
220 *lights on 16 and 157. Also, a lady told me that she did not realize that people live out here. How*
221 *dumb is that? I also remember someone from the city saying to watch out for the people of the*
222 *Mayfair Addition, because when they get mad they will fight for their neighborhood. Whoever*
223 *said that was right. We will fight this with everything we have."*

224

225 From Ryan J. Beach, 1203 County Road PH, Onalaska: *"I am not able to attend the meeting on*
226 *December 17 at 7 p.m. I live at 1203 County Road PH and attended the last meeting. I oppose*
227 *this proposal to change the zoning from residential and wish to have that known as I did at the*
228 *first meeting. I have been living here since 2010, and my grandparents were here before me for*
229 *almost as long as I can remember. Why expand this area for commercial development when we*
230 *cannot even fill the vacant buildings we already have around here? [There are] two open spots*
231 *next to Jersey Mike's, Payless Shoes, Shopko, Toys R Us, [and Valley View] Mall are some, but*
232 *not all around here."*

233

234 From Steve Nordyke, 1232 County Road PH, Onalaska: *"I cannot make it to the December*
235 *public hearing on Tuesday, December 17 at the Onalaska City Hall, but I wanted to weigh in on*
236 *the plan to rezone the south leg of PH from R-1 to MU-C. I am opposed to this plan for two*
237 *reasons:*

238

- 239 1. *There is a shortage of affordable housing in the Onalaska/La Crosse area, and making*
240 *this area accessible to business development will reduce housing further.*
- 241 2. *There is already an abundance of properties for businesses to access, both existing*
242 *(Valley View Mall, Carlos O'Kelly's, Shopko, et cetera), and new.*

243

244 *Our community would be better served if you would protect the residential areas for the*
245 *improvement and development of residences."*

246

247 Craig welcomed public input regarding this item.

248

249 **Larry Pohja**
250 **626 Gilster Street**
251 **Onalaska**

252

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253 “I am here this evening to ask you to recommend that the area along PH stay zoned R-1. This
254 rezoning, MU-N, would not just affect the people along PH, but also everyone who lives in this
255 addition. I and many of my neighbors who have lived here 40 to 50 years have seen the growth
256 in this area, which is good. But with the growth comes more traffic, which the streets in this area
257 are not designed for. At certain times of the day there is gridlock at the intersection of PH and
258 [State Trunk Highway] 157. Since this is the main entrance to this area, if an emergency vehicle
259 had to get through during this time, precious minutes could be lost, which could cost a life.
260 Under the heading ‘Purpose and Intent’ of the UDC that you are working on, Item [No.] 2 states:
261 *‘to protect the character and sustainability of the residential, business, manufacturing, and other*
262 *districts within the city, and to promote the orderly and beneficial development thereof.’* Item
263 [No.] 7 under this heading states: *‘to stabilize and protect the existing and potential property*
264 *values, and to encourage the most appropriate use of land throughout the city.’* You already
265 have a valuable middle-class residential area that most cities would be proud of, and the land is
266 being used wisely for residential use. Why mess with it? I guess the question is, do you want
267 buildings that may become empty in the future, as we now have? Or do you want a continued
268 valued residential area that would continue to benefit the City of Onalaska? Thank you.”

269

270 **Marcia Horvath**
271 **1205 County Road PH**
272 **Onalaska**

273

274 “I’m here to discuss the proposed rezoning at the south end of County Road PH. Hoisington
275 Koegler Group, which is suggesting the zoning change, is in Minneapolis. They aren’t all that
276 familiar with this town or this neighborhood. They are saying our neighborhood is no longer
277 valid as R-1, but I disagree. This area is currently well-established and filled with affordable
278 single-family homes, [which is] something the city needs. There are already nearby spaces that
279 could be developed that don’t have to encroach on our neighborhood. Shopko, Payless Shoes,
280 Carlos O’Kelly’s, Bamboo House, TGI Friday’s, Hot Springs Hot Tubs, the space next to US
281 Cellular in Crossroads [Shopping] Center, and two spaces in the Bronston complex expansion
282 all stand empty – not to mention the empty spaces in Valley View Mall and the soon-to-be
283 vacated Gap Outlet Store. The residents of this neighborhood can already walk or bike to nearby
284 stores and restaurants. We don’t need more. We need to protect this neighborhood from further
285 random business encroachment. This is currently a very desirable residential neighborhood. Tax
286 valuations and selling prices of homes have gone way up here, especially in the last year.
287 What’s best for the city is for their citizens to have strong neighborhood like this one. If zoning
288 is changed from R-1, the people living here will no longer have any say about what’s happening
289 in their neighborhood – no warning of changes to come, and no place to voice their concerns
290 about those changes. MU-N zoning would put a cloak of uncertainty over the area. That doesn’t
291 seem fair to the citizens whose homes have been here for decades. There isn’t much difference
292 between MU-C, which was first proposed, and MU-N, which is now being proposed. Based on
293 the revised Principal Use Table, over 30 types of commercial businesses could still be built at
294 any time and the surrounding properties wouldn’t know they were coming or be able to voice

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295 their opinions about it. It says MU-N zoning focuses on residential, but R-1 zoning does that
296 even more so. We submitted a petition with signatures of 87 people in the neighborhood that
297 overwhelmingly want these 12 houses to remain under Single Family Residential zoning. We
298 have signatures from people in 100 percent of the affected homes, as well as many surrounding
299 neighbors. Please do not ignore an entire neighborhood telling you that it is opposed to this
300 rezoning. These are peoples' homes, not just lot numbers. Please leave the R-1 zoning in place
301 for our neighborhood. Would everyone present who wants the south end of County Road PH to
302 remain Single Family Residential zoning, please stand up. Thank you."

303

304 **Mark Shepard**
305 **1221 County Road PH**
306 **Onalaska**

307

308 "I've lived here for three years; my better half has lived here for 15 or 17 [years]. The price for a
309 house has gone up, like, 35 percent since we've been doing this. I just get the feeling that you're
310 looking to get people out of the way, and I really hope that's not what's happening. I love where
311 we live. I've improved the property massively by my works. I don't want to just walk out and
312 leave it alone, OK?"

313

314 **Kim Smith, Third District Alderperson**
315 **436 Mayfair Place**
316 **Onalaska**

317

318 "This is in my district, and it's also in my neighborhood. I spoke at the [December 10 Plan
319 Commission] Subcommittee meeting. I'm not going to repeat a lot of things other people have
320 said. I do want to thank you all for what you've been doing in your Zoning Rewrite Project, and
321 I hope that when the public comment ends that you could just kind of recap what this process has
322 involved since there are so many residents here. I think sometimes people have a hard time
323 understanding the process and what's happening. A lot of them are coming in at the back end
324 and they're worried about things that are happening, so I think it would be nice if you could do a
325 quick summary of the Zoning Rewrite Project and the map just to let everybody know. Please
326 remember that this isn't just about 12 houses; it's about a neighborhood. The neighborhood has
327 come together on this, and this is why I really believe in municipal government. I believe that in
328 this community people can come together like this and express their strong opinions over the
329 work they're doing, and a committee of well-informed people can hear that and it can make a
330 difference in the work that you're doing. As I said, I do appreciate all the work that you've done,
331 and also the consultant we had on board. I know they're working hard and doing a good job, and
332 they want the end product to reflect our community, too. Let's let our work say that we do value
333 neighborhoods. Thank you."

334

335 **Brenda Netwal**
336 **431 Mayfair Place**

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337 **Onalaska**

338

339 “I’d just like to say I grew up on Mayfair, and we just sold our house on 11th Avenue North six
340 months ago. I have six children, and we just moved back to my childhood home. I don’t want to
341 see extra cars. If we had more businesses on PH, there’s going to be more people coming
342 through. I have a 16-year-old who’s just getting a [driver’s] license, and it just adds more traffic
343 in the area. I have six kids, so I’m going to have a lot of grandkids in the future. We live on a
344 hill, and I can’t imagine ... The traffic already is more than it used to be when I was a kid. We
345 have had some things happen in our neighborhood [such as] people breaking into cars already a
346 couple times this past summer. If we add more traffic, I’m just worried about the future. Thank
347 you.”

348

349 **Roger Wagner**
350 **486 Sycamore Street**
351 **Onalaska**

352

353 “My wife and I have been residents for 35-plus years in the same house on Sycamore. We’ve
354 obviously seen changes and growth occur, [and] that’s been great. But some things are not great,
355 [including] all the traffic we’ve seen on PH and the numerous accidents. [County Trunk
356 Highway] PH and [STH] 157 is in the top 10 for accidents. Last week proved it again – [there
357 was] a fire truck, an ambulance, multiple squad cares, and a person getting loaded into an
358 ambulance. Today’s drivers have not gotten better, let’s put it that way. To the point of
359 available properties, as a crow would fly within a mile of the proposed zoning change, there are
360 numerous properties that are sitting there idle, whether it’s land or buildings that are already up.
361 Valley View Mall is probably going to get sold within the next year or so, and there are already
362 14 empty stores in Valley View Mall – three of them being large anchors. If I heard right, now
363 The Gap is closing, so there’s going to be another store. It just keeps piling up. You look
364 around and you [say], ‘OK, there are zoning changes, and they want to change the
365 neighborhood.’ Why? The residential [zoning] is working. The houses are all occupied.
366 They’re probably on the market for less than a week and they’re sold. People want to live there,
367 and people are putting money into their houses and fixing them up. The neighborhood looks
368 great. Why do you want to destroy that? Why do you want to change it? What’s going to
369 happen if you change the zoning for those 12 houses. Pretty soon people are going to start
370 giving up. Why do I want to keep my house looking good [if] somebody’s going to come in and
371 offer me a big chunk of money at some point for this place if they’re one of the 12? The rest of
372 the neighborhood is going to sit there and look at that and [say], ‘Look at all the changes.’ Is it
373 for the better, or is it for the worst? If it’s for the worst, they’re going to start leaving or they’re
374 going to start not putting money into their houses and the neighborhood will take a hit. So, I
375 plead with you to hear what we’re saying. We don’t want to see our neighborhood changed.
376 The 12 people who own those houses said, ‘We do not want to see our zoning changed.’ I think
377 that would be a key factor right there. Between all the available properties, the heavy traffic that
378 we see – Sunday going to church, for example. A car came out of Leo Bronston’s establishment.

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379 The young woman didn't even look and came right out in front of me ..."

380

381 JoAnn informed Roger he had reached his three-minute speaking limit.

382

383 Roger concluded, "... to go to [PetSmart]. You just can't keep putting more traffic in that area.
384 Thank you for your time."

385

386 **Chuck Lipford**

387 **1263 County Road PH**

388 **Onalaska**

389

390 "We've lived in our house for 21 years, and we've gone through the amount of changes on the
391 road. The road was straightened out, which helped cars go a little faster. So in order to address
392 that they put in speed bumps. Now, I can tell anybody what road I'm on and they won't know
393 where I am. [But] I'll say I live on the speed bump street, and everybody says, "I know where
394 you are now.' The speed bumps haven't reduced traffic, [and] they haven't reduced the speed.
395 When the speed bumps were first put in, I was hauling exhaust systems to the side of the road
396 weekly. There is a police car that sits on the corner often of PH West and PH to monitor the
397 traffic, and they [see] a lot of people who don't stop at those lights and pull all the way through.
398 If there is more commercial growth on that end of PH, it is just going to make more traffic as
399 they try to take that shortcut from Caribou Coffee to Target. I don't know how many more speed
400 bumps you can put in between the speed bumps that are already there, which really aren't doing
401 any good now. There is often where I will have to wait – I'm about in the middle – seven or
402 eight cars to get out of my driveway now, and I don't see it getting any better with more
403 commercial traffic going between one end of PH and the other. Thank you."

404

405 **Ron Rasque**

406 **479 Sycamore Street**

407 **Onalaska**

408

409 "I agree pretty much with all the other comments that were made, and I did have a lot of those in
410 my notes, so I'll skip those and go to one area that no one has really hit on too much yet, and
411 that's on the valuations of the existing properties and what they'll be after any of these are
412 converted to commercial. There are the 12 houses that you're talking about. If you look at those
413 being worth, say, \$170,000 or \$180,000 right now, that's about \$2.3 or \$2.4 million. If those are
414 converted to commercial, they would be at \$700,000 or \$800,000 once the commercial
415 development was completed and that would be about \$9.8 million. You'd have a valuation gain
416 of about \$7.4 million, which is great for the city. But when you take a look at the loss valuation,
417 residential properties directly adjacent to those commercial properties are going to go down in
418 value. No one wants to live next to a liquor store. No one wants to live next to a convenience
419 store. The properties next to those are also going to drop by a significant amount, and so on
420 down the line. It will be a domino effect. ... Everybody in that subdivision is going to suffer loss

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421 of valuation. We have roughly 170 properties in the Mayfair subdivision, and once you lose the
422 12 you're down to the 155 or 160 that are left. I came up with a valuation loss of about just over
423 \$3 million. The net valuation gain for the city is only about \$4.4 million. At the current mill rate
424 of 5.63 per thousand, your net gain in taxes is just a little over \$24,000 a year. With the
425 remaining residential properties in Mayfair [having] lost about \$3 million, I'm wondering, how
426 do those people make up that \$3 million? Does the city reimburse us? Do we have to file a
427 lawsuit to get that money back? If we were to win a lawsuit, do we get that money back? The
428 \$24,000 you gain a year in taxes, it would take over 100 years to make up. From a financial
429 standpoint, I just don't see where you gain by converting residential to commercial, especially
430 when it's going to result in a devaluation of everybody else's property. Thank you."

431

432 **Dick McGarry**
433 **1220 County Road PH**
434 **Onalaska**

435

436 "A lot of what I am going to say has been stated before, but I think it's worth hearing it again so
437 that we can all get our say in here. I don't know if you realize it, but if you rezone the property
438 homes along the south leg of PH, it not only creates a lot of confusion and issues, but there will
439 be a lot of stress on the people who live in those homes. We've never thought that – well, I
440 shouldn't say never, because this is a recurring event – but it does create a stressful situation.
441 And it seemingly is an unnecessary situation. I don't see the value of all the time spent
442 addressing a rezoning when we all know in our minds it isn't ultimately what you want. But
443 nevertheless, we'll go through with this. Many of the residents in that area have lived in their
444 homes 25, 40 years plus. The reason, at least in my mind, that they continue to live there is
445 because it is a very good residential area for us to live in. It's not a very showy area. It's very
446 mid-middle income, but it is nonetheless a very vibrant neighborhood. My understand is that the
447 tax rate in the Mayfair area last year went up significantly, and it was the highest rate in
448 Onalaska. Now, to do that, you have to think that ..."

449

450 JoAnn informed Dick he had reached his three-minute speaking limit.

451

452 Dick concluded, "To do that, you have to believe that the neighborhood is doing something right.
453 It is adding value to the City of Onalaska, and that is the one thing we really believe in – not just
454 financial, but as a community."

455

456 **Betsy Stannard**
457 **1224 PH West**
458 **Onalaska**

459

460 "I've been there for 47 years, and a backdoor neighbor to [Dick] for 45. I am not of the 12
461 homes, but [Dick] is, and I don't want to see any changes with those neighbors I've known so
462 long. First, this rezoning proposal came to me as kind of a big disappointment, for I only see

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12

463 these 12 homes as a residential corridor. They've been homes there for 47 years in my life, and
464 many more years for other people. I think since PH is physically separated from the City of
465 Onalaska, it's sometimes hard to think of that as Onalaska. Some of my friends [ask], 'You live
466 in Onalaska?' ... I think I'd like to see the energy that the Plan Commission spends – and I know
467 it's a lot – that it might work in a different direction rather than adding commercial to our
468 residential area, [and] to make the residential area in that corridor more visible as Onalaska. I
469 have some ideas, and I think if you threw a lot of us together we'd probably come up with even
470 more. But I think as you travel onto PH, there should be some sign there [stating] that this is
471 Onalaska. I think that's a great place to put an Onalaska sign, population – whatever. That
472 would be one suggestion. The other thing I'd like to see – and some people have put it on the
473 website – [is] that they need more lights in the residential areas on that street. The streetlamps
474 you put down Main Street are beautiful. Could they be erected down PH? In the summer, put
475 those beautiful flower pots you have that are just amazing down that road. And in the winter,
476 [put] those beautiful snowflakes with the orange lights [down that road]. It would just make that
477 whole thing fit better. I know it takes a lot of energy to do that, but I'd like to see that. Then, I
478 think Mayfair Addition has historical significance ...”

479

480 JoAnn informed Betsy she had reached her three-minute speaking limit.

481

482 Betsy said, "... and I think it should be designated that way. Then, where PH and PH West
483 meets is an open grassy area. It would be a great place for some structure sculpture. So in
484 ending, I think Onalaska needs these 12 homes on PH. And as everyone in those 12 homes has
485 shown by at least one person signing a petition, they want to stay residential. I guess I am asking
486 the Plan Commission to see PH as a residential corridor. Please hear the 12 people who say they
487 want to stay residential, and please reject this zoning change because ultimately you're the only
488 one that can help us. Thank you.”

489

490 **Steve McCombs**
491 **558 Court Road**
492 **Onalaska**

493

494 “I just don't think this is a good idea. Even though I live far away from the 12 homes on PH, I
495 think the increase in traffic and congestion at the entry points to that neighborhood would be a
496 big hassle for everybody who lives there. I just wanted to state I don't think it's a good idea.
497 I'm a new arrival to the neighborhood; I've been there only since 2005. ... One of the reasons we
498 chose to live there is because of the character of the neighborhood. It's quiet. Pretty much
499 everyone knows each other. I think that changing the zoning and even having the possibility of
500 those homes being removed and that becoming a more commercialized area would just ruin the
501 character of the neighborhood. Thank you.”

502

503 **Dan Forsythe**
504 **583 Court Road**

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13

505 **Onalaska**

506

507 “It’s a little bit off the PH main intersection that you’re dealing with, but my family moved to
508 our house on Winter Street in 1968. We moved back away again in 1980 when [Valley View]
509 Mall was being built. When I lived there as a young man, I could ride my bike without worries
510 of other cars. It was a great place to grow up as a kid. I went in the Air Force for 20 years. I
511 moved back to Wisconsin [and] back to my old neighborhood. You see things change over the
512 many years that you’ve been someplace. You go all over the world, and you end up coming
513 back home again [and you say], ‘This is different from when I was there.’ I think interchanging
514 commercial with residential housing is going to make traffic a lot worse, and it may be more
515 unsafe for children in the area. There are a lot of other places to put commercial in that
516 neighborhood, [such as] around the outside of that neighborhood. Just leave that neighborhood
517 alone. That would be great. Thank you.”

518

519 **John Beach**

520 **2009 Craig Lane East**

521 **Onalaska**

522

523 “I own 1203 County PH. That’s where my parents lived until they passed. That’s where my son
524 is currently living. I can’t see a reason for making a change. I’ve been to three meetings on this
525 project, and I haven’t heard anybody speak for it. It seems like kind of a no-brainer that you
526 wouldn’t want to change the zoning. Thank you.”

527

528 **Jeff Sharp**

529 **622 Gilster Street**

530 **Onalaska**

531

532 “I have a question. When the road was done on PH years ago ... Right now there’s no truck
533 access to it. Was it built to handle semi [trucks]? Once you go commercial in any buildings, you
534 are going to have more truck traffic through there. In the end, it means it’s going to look like the
535 intersection over by Festival Foods there where the blacktop sinks down. It’s going to cost the
536 city more in road upkeep overall with the more traffic you put on that road. Also, the more
537 traffic [that goes] through there, the less safety that’s back there. Truthfully, my garage was
538 broken into at 8:30 in the morning on a Tuesday two years ago. Some guy broke in and stole all
539 my stuff in my garage – saws [and] drills. I don’t want to see any more of this because the more
540 people you get back there, the more from that area, the more they’re going to get back in our area
541 and it’s going to be unsafe for everyone. It’s just not a good deal. Thanks.”

542

543 **Debbie Young**

544 **705 Krueger Court**

545 **Onalaska**

546

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14

547 “We have UPS trucks, FedEx trucks going down our street. We’ve called Katie. We’ve talked
548 to Zach about the lighting from the shopping center, so I caution you about asking for more
549 lights in the neighborhood. We can read magazines in our bedroom at night because the upper
550 lights at that end of the mall are so great. As far as I’m concerned, I don’t think we need any
551 more businesses, or certainly not from out of town that really don’t care about the residents.
552 Thank you for your time.”

553

554 **Dennis Stannard**
555 **1224 PH West**
556 **Onalaska**

557

558 “In 1972, I moved to PH in Onalaska. That’s almost 50 years ago. When we moved, we were
559 basically in the country. Things have changed quite a bit. But just the same, we liked where we
560 lived and we took good care of our property. We remodeled occasionally. We raised our kids.
561 We supported education and we paid our taxes. In return, we received a fair amount of security
562 and support from the city. We appreciated that. Mr. Rogers once said one reason this country is
563 great is because of the neighborhoods. I think all of the neighbors on PH would agree with that.
564 We need your support. We need your vote.”

565

566 **Julie McGarry**
567 **1220 County Road PH**
568 **Onalaska**

569

570 “Tonight, I am speaking on behalf of many of our neighbors living in and around PH who are
571 unable to attend tonight’s meeting. My husband and I have canvassed our neighborhood sharing
572 information about the possible rezoning of the south leg of PH, and speaking with as many
573 people as possible. To a person, each was very concerned about the effect on the entire
574 neighborhood. As you can see by the number of petition signatures, we were able to co-act in a
575 short period of time. These people are opposed to the rezoning of the south leg of PH from R-1
576 to MU-N. We know you, the Plan Commission, want to do what’s best for the City of Onalaska,
577 and that means what’s best for its citizens. This includes all of us along PH and throughout the
578 Mayfair area. We are a large neighborhood. Most people driving on PH don’t realize that. They
579 just see the speed bumps and the stop signs. They don’t realize how much farther back into the
580 neighborhood the homes go. We live in an affordable middle-class neighborhood where people
581 have constantly been making improvements to their homes. We also care about each other and
582 believe in preserving the integrity of our neighborhood. Homes do sell quickly often over the
583 asking price when they come on the market. If the zoning is changed on south PH, what does
584 that do to the lack of affordable middle-income single-family housing in the City of Onalaska?
585 And what message are you sending to other citizens of Onalaska, to other neighborhoods, and to
586 future citizens? The south leg of PH is not a deteriorating street with rundown homes ripe for
587 improvement with mixed use, commercial or mixed-use neighborhood development. In fact, our
588 homes have been improved over the years, and the city has identified us as being a valued area,

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589 as seen in the recent assessment and large increase in property values and taxes. If this rezoning
590 is approved, most of us will be hesitant to invest more money in our homes as we live in limbo,
591 not knowing what the future holds. At a meeting with the city staff in October, I was told that
592 PH is a commercial corridor. I said, ‘No, it’s not. It’s a residential corridor, and has been since
593 we moved there in the 70s, and years before that.’ There are a huge number of homes and
594 probably 1,000 people who live out in that neighborhood. If you want to identify a commercial
595 corridor, start at Braund Street by old Shopko and go east to Target and Walgreens. There is
596 access to both Highway 16 and County Road OS by Braund Street and Theater Road. Most of
597 you know many of us who live on PH because we’ve been here many, many times before.”

598

599 JoAnn informed Julie she had reached her three-minute speaking limit.

600

601 Julie said, “Since we were annexed in, the city has always supported us with R-1 from not where
602 Caribou Coffee is, but from then on, since 1981. That’s what we were assured we would remain.
603 If I could add just one thing. Because of the rezoning and all the meetings that are going on
604 regarding this rezoning, we as residents need clarification. There were open houses and we
605 could schedule appointments to meet with people. Then there was a Plan Commission meeting
606 last month, on [November] 13. Then there was this [Plan Commission] Subcommittee meeting
607 [Tuesday] that we did not get notification of that we could [give] input, and now this [meeting],
608 and now there’s [a meeting Wednesday] night. What’s going on [Wednesday] night with all of a
609 sudden there’s another meeting? We don’t know how to handle all that, so if you could clarify
610 these things and give us some notification ...”

611

612 Craig thanked Julie for her input, called for anyone else wishing to provide public input, and
613 closed that portion of the meeting.

614

615 Katie told those in attendance the City of Onalaska’s Zoning Ordinance was originally created in
616 1969. Once the Zoning Ordinance was adopted, the city had created a number of zoning districts
617 and a number of rules such as rules pertaining to fences, parking, landscaping, and setbacks.
618 Each zoning district had its own set of rules. Katie further explained that the City of Onalaska’s
619 population increased “at a dramatic rate” over the years and said the code was written toward
620 having more greenfield development. Katie said that in 2009, city staff had attempted on a
621 piecemeal approach to go through the Zoning Ordinance and update those rules. Katie said,
622 “They did not look at the zoning of properties. They just looked at the different districts and the
623 different rules and tried to update everything the best they could. From 2012 to today, city staff,
624 in consultation with our legal counsel, has continually gone through and updated our code
625 another 20 times, which is telling people that our code needed to be looked at from a holistic
626 approach. We had to look at everything. By the time we got started on this project, our Zoning
627 Ordinance was over 450 pages long, which is a nightmare for the public to try and understand,
628 which resulted in a lot of questions and confusion, and some of the rules not being equally
629 enforced from one property to another. That’s one of the main reasons we went through and
630 decided that we wanted to look at every page of our Zoning Code and make sure that it did fit

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16

631 Onalaska today. A lot of the uses that you found in our old Zoning Code don't exist today. And
632 there are a lot of businesses today that were never even considered back when this code was
633 written in 1970. That's one of the main reasons we started this entire process.

634
635 We've been working on the Zoning Code Rewrite Project for a year and a half. We couldn't
636 start looking at what areas of the city should be what district until after we had created all the
637 new zoning districts. Some of our zoning districts went away because they weren't being used.
638 Some of the zoning districts were changed. We had residential properties that were zoned Public
639 Institutional, and they couldn't get refinancing on their homes. We found a lot of mistakes and
640 errors and properties that were improperly zoned, so as part of this process once we created all
641 the new districts and left some alone, we went by property by property through the entire city,
642 and we wanted to make sure that the uses today matched what the new proposed zoning district
643 was. Back in October, the city staff sent out letters to everyone whose property the city proposed
644 to be rezoned from one district to another. That's where we invited people to come in on a one-
645 on-one basis to sit down with city staff and talk about those during the day. If appointments
646 were unavailable, we held an open house for those who weren't able to attend at those particular
647 times. We sent out another round of letters. After the fact, as we continued to catch errors and
648 make sure everything was as tight as we could be for the proposed rezonings, we sent out another
649 slew of letters. During that time, we originally had proposed this area as Mixed Use-
650 Commercial, and later Mixed Use-Neighborhood after talking with residents who came in.

651
652 There are other neighborhoods – not just County Road PH, but those along Main Street [and]
653 along County Road OS – that are in a similar situation that have a mixture of commercial and
654 residential, and we had proposed to Mixed Use-Neighborhood. Because of the overwhelming
655 response that we received from your neighborhood, that's why we wanted to give you an
656 opportunity to speak with our Plan Commission to tell them what it is that you would like. It's
657 our requirement as city staff to make sure that the proposed zoning puts the correct label on what
658 is already in existence. However, the Plan Commission and [the Common] Council have the
659 final say as what they want this to be. We thank you for coming in and telling us, because that's
660 the public process we need to occur. That was the purpose of tonight's meeting. There is
661 another meeting [Wednesday] at the Omni Center where we'll be having a joint Plan
662 Commission and Common Council, and there will be a presentation by our consultant that has
663 been working on this. They will be giving that presentation as an education tool to our Plan
664 Commission and Common Council. You're all welcome to attend. ... At that point it's just a
665 presentation. They're not taking any action at that meeting. Following that meeting is an open
666 house the consultant is putting on ... where you can look at all the new proposed regulations for
667 the whole code. As stated, it's been an ongoing process. It's been a long process, but doing the
668 map is the last part of it because you can't create new districts and label them until you know
669 what your districts are going to be."

670
671 Amanda said the focus of Wednesday's meeting is not on the map; rather, the first draft of the
672 entire Zoning Code.

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17

673
674 Katie said a public hearing for the Zoning Ordinance and the Zoning Map will be held at the
675 January 28 Plan Commission meeting, and ultimately at the February 11 Common Council
676 meeting.

677
678 Craig agreed with Katie that the process has been long and told those in attendance, “Nobody is
679 trying to ‘get’ anybody or ruin anybody or anything like that. But it’s important, and we
680 certainly welcome your input. That’s probably the most important thing we get out of this.
681 We’re just regular citizens, too. [We’re] homeowners who want to try to serve the public interest
682 as best we can. We collect input from our experts and our staff. And having lived here many,
683 many years ourselves, we’re trying to provide for the future of the community as best we can.
684 Obviously, their public input affects that greatly. Again, we thank you for that.”

685
686 Motion by Steven, second by Jan, to recommend not rezoning the 12 parcels identified along
687 County Road PH from Single Family Residential (R-1) to Mixed Use-Neighborhood (MU-N).

688
689 Steven noted approximately half of the residents who had addressed the Plan Commission had
690 mentioned the area of County Road PH being converted to commercial and stressed that is not
691 what the recommendation is. Steven said, “It’s not what happened. It’s not what we would want
692 ourselves because we know that’s a valuable neighborhood there. It was Mixed Use-
693 Neighborhood is specifically what the rezoning would be. That’s quite different that converting
694 it to commercial. However, as was stated earlier, the zoning rewrite serves a lot of purposes,
695 including clarifying and consolidating the previously existing code, and also to update to reflect
696 the actual existing conditions. I think that’s where we are with this one right now. Our
697 perspective is that in that area, it basically already meets what is a mixed-use neighborhood
698 definition, so we were putting the proper zoning label on it, if you will, which I supported and I
699 personally still think is proper.

700
701 That said, at best, we haven’t convinced the citizens in the area of the necessity to do this, and at
702 worst we’re wrong. I think it’s the former. I think we haven’t been able to express why this is
703 necessary. And that’s important though, too. There’s a benefit out of this that would reflect the
704 existing conditions and clarify the code. But the cost, if we move forward under the current
705 conditions having not expressed ourselves and convinced the residents who actually live there of
706 the necessity to do this, the cost would be a significant loss of confidence in the city Plan
707 Commission, specifically. I just don’t think that we should be moving forward with this until we
708 can appropriately express why this needs to be done.”

709
710 Skip said, “I think that looking at this from a long-range planning standpoint, this is the right
711 move. However, from listening to all of the comments, I don’t know if we have enough
712 information right now to say, ‘Yes, this is the right move.’ I have a gut feeling that looking at it
713 long range – and I’ve been in long range planning for 70 years – this is the right thing. But
714 again, I have to agree with Steve that I don’t think we have enough information right now to

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18

715 move forward on it.”

716

717 Craig said, “My perspective on it is I believe this is the right zoning classification for this area.
718 It fits the descriptions that go along with that. I think that down the road that may be borne out.
719 But by the same token, I don’t see a real compelling reason to recommend the change at this
720 point in time. That doesn’t mean it might not be addressed someday, because again, I think that
721 area is an area that may get developed. But right now, I don’t see the compelling need to change
722 that zone.”

723

724 Steven said, “I also think it’s the right move. But that’s moot at this point. I don’t see how we
725 can move forward if we can’t express why and convince the residents of the necessity for this.”

726

727 Jan stated she agrees with both Steven and Craig and said, “I think down the road, possibly
728 beyond my lifetime, this may come to fruition. It’s already started there with some of the
729 smaller businesses that are in the neighborhood. But I’m going to look at this from a historical
730 perspective. I’ve been on the Plan Commission a long time. We have done mass rezonings
731 before such as this, [including] over on Schroeder Road, which is where you now see a Kwik
732 Trip, Burger King, Tires Plus – various things over there – except for the one gentleman who
733 still lives there. We did a mass rezoning of that whole area at the time. That was because we
734 had a developer who wanted to purchase the entire area and had a specific development in mind.
735 Kwik Trip was already going to be in place for the corner lot there, so that was done. We’ve also
736 done it when we deleted the R-160 zoning district. We just deleted the whole zoning in our
737 zoning code, and that’s a testament to these people who’ve been working extremely hard for an
738 extremely long time on this rezoning. Our zoning code is difficult to understand even if you
739 know what’s going on.

740

741 We have done this in the past, but slowly, this neighborhood has had pockets that have rezoned.
742 A property has sold here to Caribou Coffee, to Dr. Bronston. A property sold there to [Olive
743 Juice Quilts]. This is a _____ on a slow, methodical basis – on a property-by-property transfer.
744 I agree with many of the residents saying there are vacant properties in the area that could take
745 development, and I just don’t see us doing the whole section at once. I would rather see it if one
746 property comes in, we deal with it on a property-by-property basis.”

747

748 Craig said, “One of the things we need to remember, in all fairness, is a lot of those properties
749 that theoretically everybody says, ‘They’re empty,’ those aren’t in Onalaska. Those are in La
750 Crosse. We can only deal with what we’ve got in front of us here in Onalaska. We can’t force
751 La Crosse to develop differently. We have no control over that.”

752

753 On voice vote, motion carried, 4-1 (Skip).

754

755 Skip said, “I would have rather have that we had had a positive vote and voted it down rather
756 than a negative vote and voted it up. That’s why I voted against it.”

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19

757
758 Amanda noted there will be a joint Plan Commission and Common Council meeting Wednesday
759 at the Omni Center, with HKGi giving a presentation on the first draft of the Zoning Code
760 rewrite. An open house will follow the presentation.

761
762 **Item 7 – Consideration and Approval of 2020 Plan Sub-Committee and Plan Commission**
763 **Meeting Schedule**

764
765 The Plan Commission will meet the fourth Tuesday of the month from January through October,
766 and the third Tuesday of the month in both November and December. The Plan Commission
767 Subcommittee will meet the second Tuesday of the month from January through December.

768
769 Motion by Steven, second by Skip, to approve the 2020 Plan Sub-Committee and Plan
770 Commission Meeting Schedule, as proposed.

771
772 On voice vote, motion carried.

773
774 **Adjournment**

775
776 Motion by Skip to adjourn.
777
778 Craig adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

779
780
781 Recorded by:
782
783 Kirk Bey