

**Special Plan Commission
of the City of Onalaska**

Tuesday, June 12, 2018

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1 The Special Meeting of the Plan Commission of the City of Onalaska was called to order at 2:00
2 p.m. on Tuesday, June 12, 2018. 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: City Engineer Jarrod Holter, Jan
6 Brock, Paul Gleason, Skip Temte, Craig Breitsprecher. Steven Nott arrived with the meeting in
7 progress.

8
9 Also Present: City Administrator Eric Rindfleisch, Deputy City Clerk JoAnn Marcon,
10 Planner/Zoning Inspector Katie Aspenson, City Legal Counsel Amanda Jackson, Fire Chief Don
11 Dominick

12
13 Excused Absences: Mayor Joe Chilsen, Ald. Jim Binash

14
15 **Item 2 – Approval of minutes from previous meeting**

16
17 Motion by Skip, second by Craig, to approve the minutes from the previous meeting as printed
18 and on file in the City Clerk’s Office.

19
20 On voice vote, motion carried.

21
22 **Item 3 – Public Input (limited to 3 minutes per individual)**

23
24 Skip called three times for anyone wishing to provide public input and closed that portion of the
25 meeting.

26
27 **Consideration and possible action on the following items:**

28
29 **Item 4 – Discussion & Consideration of the Onalaska Unified Development Code**
30 **(UDC)/Zoning Rewrite Project Kickoff:**

31
32 a. Introductions

33
34 Katie said the Plan Commission originally recommended Hoisington Koegler Group INC.
35 (HKgi) to work on the project with the City of Onalaska, and the Common Council had approved
36 the recommendation. Katie introduced Jeff Miller and Rita Trapp of HKgi and said both will be
37 working with the city on the project.

38
39 Jeff said he and Rita had traveled around the city Tuesday morning and examined the different
40 types of development that have occurred over time so that they could determine where there are
41 issues and where there are opportunities that might be related to updating or rewriting the city’s
42 UDC. Jeff said he is a planner who will be serving as manager for the project, and he told

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43 commission members he and Rita, who also is a planner, have worked together in the past as co-
44 managers on similar projects. Two other planners, Jesse Thorsen and Beth Richmond, are
45 Wisconsin natives who will be assisting with the project.

46

47 Rita noted she has been with HKgi since 2003 and said she performs planning services for
48 communities as a staff planner. Rita also noted she does zoning ordinances and comprehensive
49 plans as well as parks and trail plans and grant writing for HKgi. Rita said she typically serves
50 communities that are suburban to small towns outside the metropolitan area throughout
51 Minnesota, and into both Wisconsin and Iowa.

52

53 Jeff, a Wabasha, Minnesota native, noted he has been with HKgi since 2005 and described
54 himself as the “urban planner,” having done zoning work and several comprehensive plans.

55

56 Item ‘c’ was addressed next.

57

58 c. Expectations of Plan Commissioners

59

60 Jeff stated the following expectations of Plan Commissioners:

61

- 62 • Advise HKgi on the intent of the Comprehensive Plan’s goals, objectives, and policies.
63 Jeff said it will be very helpful to HKgi if there are individuals present who worked on
64 the City of Onalaska’s Comprehensive Plan.
- 65 • Advise on zoning and development matters relating to potential update needs. Jeff said it
66 would take a long time to rewrite everything in the UDC, and he told commission
67 members HKgi is looking to them to communicate what is important. This will help
68 HKgi focus on what will have an impact by rewriting it.
- 69 • Read the background materials and information HKgi distributes during meetings.
- 70 • Assist in identifying stakeholders.
- 71 • Assist in identifying public participation methods, and also assist HKgi in facilitating the
72 outreach to citizens who the Plan Commission believes should care about the project.
- 73 • Encourage others to become involved by interacting with people and groups that are
74 relevant to the project, and then promote interest and involvement in it.
- 75 • Assist HKgi with the language when consultants are speaking to ordinary citizens so that
76 they may speak in terms citizens can comprehend.
- 77 • Review any commenting, and also recommending the updates to the UDC/Zoning Code.
- 78 • Forward the UDC/Zoning Code rewrite to the Common Council for adoption.

79

80 Amanda said she is under the impression the city is doing an entire code rewrite, and she asked
81 Jeff what he means when he says the Plan Commission and HKgi will “prioritize and pick.”
82 Amanda asked, “We’re not going to have an entirely new code? Or we’re going to focus more
83 heavily on certain areas than others?”

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84

85 Jeff said, "Even if we didn't update everything we're going to touch everything."

86

87 Rita said once the process begins there might be topics Plan Commission members decide they
88 want to discuss more in-depth at a separate point or editing them after the project has been
89 completed. Rita said. "Everything will have to get moved around and shifted and reviewed and
90 read. But in the process or through these discussions you may decide that given everything else
91 you're going to be doing that you don't want to tackle changing that and going through the
92 public process on that topic, so you may find it more beneficial to wait." Rita cited the example
93 of city staff handling the rezoning process separately, noting it originally was going to be part of
94 this project. Rita said there might be topics that in the beginning the Plan Commission might
95 decide it wishes to address in detail. However, as discussions progress perhaps commission
96 members will decide they do not wish to address certain topics as in-depth as they originally
97 thought and instead choose to address another topic in-depth.

98

99 Item 'b' was addressed next.

100

101 b. Project Phases & Timeline

102

103 Rita said HKgi had talked about five phases in its proposal:

104

- 105 1. **Initiation:** This includes developing a public participation plan, meeting with city staff,
106 touring the city, collecting background information, and organizing the process.
- 107 2. **Review and Evaluation:** This is the detailed review of the UDC, identifying issues,
108 starting the first phase of public participation. This phase will occur in late summer and
109 last into early autumn.
- 110 3. **Outline:** Rita said the outline will be beneficial in determining and reaching an
111 agreement on how to organize the code and determine where the changes are going to be.
112 Rita said that while in some respects it might not feel like the code is actually being
113 written, because of the outline the commission will be attempting to identify approaches.
114 The commission will feel during this process that HKgi is making recommendations and
115 those involved will be making decisions as to where things will be. Rita noted that every
116 single line item will not be described during the outline process. This phase will occur
117 over the winter, with the goal of establishing the framework for the update by early 2019.

118

119 Jeff said it is possible there are items in the current UDC that could be relocated outside of it.

120

121 Katie said there currently are parts of the Zoning Code that might not belong there. Katie said,
122 "Part of this may be taking that language and still keeping it as an ordinance, but just not part of
123 this Title 13." Katie noted there are 16 different sections and pointed out there are several Public
124 Works-related sections present. Katie suggested that perhaps some of the mobility sections in
125 terms of cul-de-sacs and traffic engineering are removed from the Zoning Code and reinserted

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126 within the Public Works Code. Katie said one of the questions that will be asked during the
127 process is if something belongs in the Zoning Code or elsewhere.

128

129 4. **Draft the Code:** Rita said it will be done in sections because it will be easier to draft in
130 sections. Rita cited the example of going section-by-section with the districts (uses,
131 development standards, etc.). Rita said, “As we work through ideas of what we think
132 we’re going to do with the code, that’s another chance to go out and talk with the
133 community and do public participation.”

134 5. **Adoption Process:** This will occur during the fall of 2019, and it will include an open
135 house and a public hearing, which will lead to the final code adoption and the end of the
136 project.

137

138 d.Key Project Objectives

139

140 Rita shared the key project objectives with the Plan Commission:

141

- 142 1. Make the development code easier to understand and utilize.
143 2. Implement the 2016 Comprehensive Plan (address inconsistencies, and revise, create and
144 eliminate zoning districts, as needed, to match and implement the 2016 Comprehensive
145 Plan).
146 3. Update the zoning map (minimize nonconforming uses and structures).
147 4. Modernize the development standards to achieve high-quality context sensitive projects
148 (allow for mixed use in a different way, incorporate form-based provisions).

149

150 e.Community Engagement

151

152 Rita said there are three phases of community engagement:

153

- 154 1. **Code issue identification:** What are the issues of the code today that need to be
155 addressed?
156 2. **Review and diagnosis:** Visual preference surveys may be utilized. Rita said it is likely
157 that at certain points community engagement will be “higher level and more detailed.”
158 Rita also said, “We’ll be trying to focus in on the really important aspects that have an
159 impact on [citizens’] lives or they may have the ability to have an opinion on.”
160 3. **Code drafting:** Review the recommended changes.

161

162 Rita next addressed the parties that should be involved in the process in addition to the Plan
163 Commission, which is taking the lead on the project:

164

- 165 • The Common Council
166 • The general public
167 • Advisory boards and commissions (Community Development Authority, Board of

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168 Zoning Appeals)

169

170 Paul said he believes the La Crosse Area Realtors Association should be included.

171

172 Jarrod said the La Crosse Area Builders Association should be included.

173

174 Katie suggested adding the Hilltopper Rotary and the Valley View Rotary.

175

176 Jarrod asked Katie to look into the fact there might be a third rotary club in the Onalaska Rotary.

177

178 Katie asked Rita to include Centering Onalaska, and she suggested involving nonprofit groups
179 such as the United Way.

180

181 Rita next discussed how to involve groups during different phases of the project:

182

- 183 • HKgi will assist staff with creating a page for cityofonalaska.com. There also will be
184 news blasts and email blasts.
- 185 • Hold stakeholder meetings and listening sessions – invite individuals to a meeting and
186 discuss what is and is not working. This is very helpful for the issue identification phase
187 as well as the code review and diagnosis part of the project.
- 188 • Hold an open house at which citizens may view the actual project. Rita said the open
189 house typically is not a successful format regarding the code issue identification as
190 citizens do not know why they should be passionate about it. Rita suggested holding
191 open houses when the group either has ideas or the code is in place.
- 192 • Possibly hold popups in kiosks and inform the public about the project at community
193 events. Rita again suggested not addressing the code issue identification during popups
194 as citizens typically do not know how the code is working for them. Rita also suggested
195 waiting to hold popups until citizens have something to react to, giving them a visual
196 preference or asking their input regarding a specific topic area.
- 197 • Provide surveys and interactive technology. Jeff said perhaps citizens would react to
198 surveys pertaining to specific topics that affect them.

199

200 City Administrator Rindfleisch said he believes there would be a greater response at popups and
201 open houses if there are survey-type questions that indicate potential problems. City
202 Administrator Rindfleisch noted the majority of the city's popup opportunities occur during the
203 summer months and said the city is not yet prepared. City Administrator Rindfleisch suggested
204 that having some prepared questions regarding the project will save time.

205

206 Jeff said there might be some fall events HKgi can target.

207

208 Rita said it would be helpful to HKgi to know the type of events are occurring and when they

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209 will occur.

210

211 Craig said, “I think your point about focusing at what points you receive input, I think just
212 throwing it out there, nobody knows what to say. I think we need to start that discussion and
213 start that process, and once we get into that I think those areas that may be of concern are going
214 to identify themselves pretty quickly.”

215

216 Rita said HKgi will work with staff on identifying opportunities, and also work on allowing
217 citizens to provide input immediately via cityofonalaska.com.

218

219 Craig said he assumes HKgi has other communities from which to draw and do comparatives
220 regarding areas of concern.

221

222 Jeff and Rita both said the Plan Commission will be able to examine that data.

223

224 f.2016 Comprehensive Plan Guidance

225

226 Jeff said he had not read the entire 2016 Comprehensive Plan and instead focused on the Land
227 Use chapter. Jeff said one of the first things HKgi will examine is the Future Land Use Map and
228 how it is guiding land going into the future. Jeff said it appears that the city is interested in
229 mixed-use areas both downtown and in the smart-growth areas. Jeff said HKgi has not seen that
230 many land use categories in the Comprehensive Plan, which is “usually better.” Jeff said HKgi
231 wants to examine Mixed Density Residential as the city has multiple residential zoning districts.
232 Jeff noted the Comprehensive Plan shows that Residential is a more general type of land use, and
233 he said he anticipates a “really good discussion” regarding residential development.

234

235 Craig said he believes that topic will generate public discussion and stated he believes the city
236 has done a satisfactory job with the mixed density/mixed use concept. However, Craig also
237 asked, “How can we do that better, and what does it hold for the future?”

238

239 Jeff said the city’s zoning map is in some ways different as there are many zoning districts. Jeff
240 referred to the Medical Campus Zoning District, which has not yet been applied, and said HKgi
241 likely will not spend a significant amount of time on thinking through it. Jeff noted the Land
242 Use chapter has five goals, with objectives for each goal, and 36 policies. There is a focus on
243 revitalizing downtown Onalaska and the waterfront, as well as high-quality development
244 character. The chapter also states a goal of enhanced transportation corridors and high-quality
245 development character. Jeff asked what high-quality development character means to the Plan
246 Commission.

247

248 Amanda said one of the things the Plan Commission likely will focus on is eliminating
249 Conditional Uses and focusing more on implementing them in the code itself.

250

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251 Jeff said the standards would be clear up front.

252

253 Jarrod said, “That can be difficult looking at how many zoning districts we have now and saying
254 it looks like we could combine some of these. The problem is, you’ve lost your flexibility with
255 the Conditional Use Permit. Now you’re trying to get areas of the zoning code that, ‘You’re in
256 this zoning district so you can do these things and this is what we want you to do.’ It almost
257 lends itself to have more zoning districts because you can more different things going on.”

258 Jarrod cited the examples of PH and the State Trunk Highway 16 corridor and said they are two
259 different areas. Jarrod asked, “If you only have one commercial zoning district, how do you
260 label what they can and can’t do?”

261

262 Craig told Jarrod increased zones create flexibility.

263

264 Jarrod said it then confuses the plan and the reason the Plan Commission is going through the
265 plan is to decrease confusion and usability.

266

267 Jeff said another possible approach is to permit uses in districts, but the use has specific
268 standards.

269

270 Jarrod described them as “subsets.”

271

272 Katie said to some degree it replaces the Conditional Use Permit.

273

274 Rita said, “It really focuses on trying to figure out what are the impacts, or what are you trying to
275 mitigate from a particular use.” Rita said the city is not mitigating the same types of impacts
276 from a daycare as it is from an industrial building. Rita said, “By doing it by use, you’re
277 allowing some of that differentiation in both of them, and in some cases it could be in the same
278 zone in the same area. But they really are different in what you’re trying to deal with.”

279

280 Craig said he believes the city followed that path in regard to the Medical Campus Zoning
281 District in that the city attempted to examine those special uses and provide for them.

282

283 Jeff said it will take time to determine what level of standards to establish, adding, “When we
284 say something like ‘permitted, with standards,’ the standards are just there. There really isn’t an
285 entitlement process. If you are applying to do something and you meet the standards, then you
286 don’t go through the Conditional Use process. It increases the entitlement somebody has, but
287 there are still standards.”

288

289 City Administrator Rindfleisch said it is not the zone that requires it, but rather the particular use
290 within that zone.

291

292 Paul asked, “Can you do the same thing with Conditional Uses, [meaning] this is a Conditional

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293 Use under this zone, but this Conditional Use has ‘a’, ‘b’, ‘c’, ‘d’, ‘e’ standards that have to be
294 met? Then you’re not doing anything discretionary.”

295

296 Amanda told Paul it might be possible.

297

298 Jeff asked if conditional always will be discretionary.

299

300 Amanda said yes and stated it still will be necessary to obtain a CUP, thereby making the process
301 longer, as opposed to it being built in the code.

302

303 Rita said it might be a matter of attempting to reduce the number of CUPs “and leaving it to just
304 those really critical uses that you do want you to review so that if you need higher standards you
305 have the ability to set the stage for why.”

306

307 Paul noted the change in the state law no longer gives the city much discretion over Conditional
308 Uses and said, “If there were Conditional Uses, and in the code they had this set of 12 standards
309 that had to be met, then you could approve it. But there are prewritten standards that must be
310 met, and it’s not discretionary anymore. The Plan Commission isn’t on the spot putting on
311 additional conditions.”

312

313 Amanda said it would be permitted, with standards.

314

315 Katie said she does not believe the discussion revolves around eliminating every CUP, stating in
316 some cases it is relevant because there are instances when public input is desired.

317

318 Paul said the discussion involved doing it with permitted uses, “and I’m extending that to
319 Conditional Uses, that thought processes.”

320

321 Craig said he believes the city will utilize the term “Conditional Use” less and refer to many of
322 those that used to be Conditional Uses as “standards.”

323

324 Amanda noted there are several daycares in the City of Onalaska and said they all should have a
325 CUP under the city’s current code. Amanda said a daycare likely should be a permitted use in
326 multiple districts, with standards, as they have the same features (parking, fencing, hours of
327 operation, green space). Amanda said she believes it is more logical for daycares to be a
328 permitted use with conditions in the code.

329

330 Rita said she believes the city will retain some of the types of industrial uses that are true
331 industrial where it chooses. Rita also said public input will give the city the opportunity to
332 determine if it may add a condition, although the city is limited in what it may do.

333

334 Paul said the limitations are “pretty severe” as the state has removed all consideration of the

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335 public input the Plan Commission typically receives.

336

337 Craig said there still is the opportunity to accumulate expert-type evidence that will allow the
338 Plan Commission to place conditions on a request with sufficient evidence.

339

340 Amanda told Craig he is correct and said, “It’s just less public opinion without the backup of the
341 actual evidence.”

342

343 Rita said, “It also would set the stage if ever there was a change back or litigation would clear
344 that up so that it doesn’t become an issue. You’re still keeping the ones that you really have
345 concerns about in that CUP bucket.”

346

347 Steven referred to the key objectives and said he would place compliance first because it sets the
348 tone for the public.

349

350 Amanda said there are three compliance-related objectives to focus on today:

351

352 1. Act 67

353 2. The Developers’ Bill, a comprehensive legislative update that touches many aspects of
354 development. The city’s ability to regulate certain things is limited. However, it is
355 opened up in other areas.

356 3. The city has not done a statutory evaluation of the code in quite some time, meaning
357 going line by line and checking the statutory references to ensure they still are valid and
358 accurate. Amanda said this likely should be done now.

359

360 Jeff addressed transportation corridors, noting there are objectives to enhance commercial
361 districts, encourage higher-density housing in appropriate locations, manage growth while
362 preserving community character, protect environmentally sensitive areas, have compatible infill
363 development and redevelopment, and having quality urban design. Jeff asked how many
364 members of the Plan Commission had worked on the Comprehensive Plan update.

365

366 Katie told Jeff that everyone on the Plan Commission with the exception of Steven had worked
367 on the update. Katie also said the Long Range Planning Committee had been charged with
368 updating the Comprehensive Plan and suggested it might be added to the list of committees to
369 participate in this process. The Plan Commission reviewed and revised chapters of the
370 Comprehensive Plan as the Long Range Planning Committee finished them.

371

372 g.Issues with UDC/Zoning Ordinance/Zoning Map

373

374 Jeff distributed a handout titled “Identifying Issues and Opportunities,” which had the following
375 questions:

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- 377 1. What parts of the City’s current development codes have been challenging to understand
378 and use?
379 2. What parts of the current development codes are outdated and/or may not be needed?
380 3. Where might there be inconsistencies between current development codes and the City’s
381 adopted plans and policies?
382 4. What opportunities might there be to simplify development application and approval
383 processes?
384 5. What physical areas of the City seem to have the most issues related to the current
385 development codes?
386 6. What types of changes or additions to the current development codes would make them
387 easier to use?
388 7. What potential updates to the Zoning Map should be considered?
389

390 Jeff said he and Rita are “a little confused” by the city’s zoning districts and told the Plan
391 Commission one of the zoning districts its members likely discuss frequently, the PCID, is not
392 listed.
393

394 Katie explained that the PCID was done in the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s, and she told Jeff it
395 had been repealed and no longer is in effect. Katie said PCIDs are primarily located in the
396 industrial area, and she told Jeff the Plan Commission and Common Council used to review site
397 plans, but now city staff performs those duties. Katie said PCIDs have similar conditions of
398 approval to Planned Unit Developments and site plans in that dumpsters must be screened,
399 lighting must be downcast, and parking must be set back 5 feet from the property line. Katie
400 cited the example of the former Old Country Buffet building and said this property had to be
401 treated like a PUD when an applicant wanted to raze the building and construct two new ones.
402 Katie said staff treats all PCIDs as PUDs. Katie also referred to the city’s PUD Code and said
403 there are rules stating a tract of land must be at least 5 acres, but a majority located within the
404 PCID are not 5 acres because it was not intended to be utilized that way. Katie said it must be
405 determined how the original approvals will be tracked because they still are valid. Katie said it
406 also must be determined if the district should be eliminated or renamed. Katie noted the PCID
407 acronym is not located anywhere in the city’s code and said the city has chosen to manage
408 PCIDs as PUDs without having any authority to do so.
409

410 City Administrator Rindfleisch said he believes that speaks to some of the concerns identifying
411 issues and opportunities as the code is very complex. City Administrator Rindfleisch also said
412 developers are uncertain where to look in the code and that he is seeking simplification. City
413 Administrator Rindfleisch said, “Conceptually, I understand that the days of annexing the nearby
414 field and constructing commercial or residential are over for Onalaska [because] we’re getting to
415 our geographic boundaries or the ones that make sense. To me, the code only needs to speak to,
416 yes, the further areas that we do have [such as] the Mayo property and the medical centers, but
417 also, as a developer we want you to focus on the infill and the redevelopment opportunities that
418 we have in the commercial districts and the residential districts as well. We want the

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419 homeowner to be focusing on, how do I update, expand or improve my property?"

420

421 Skip said he has read articles discussing a significant shortage of housing in the United States,
422 and this shortage is attributed to the cost of regulation driving up the cost of constructing houses.
423 Skip said there is a significant shortage of low-cost housing and stated he believes the Plan
424 Commission must examine this issue from a regulation standpoint in terms of which regulations
425 could be abolished to provide assistance to developers and builders. Skip cited California as an
426 example of a state with a significant number of regulations and said his daughter's house in
427 California, a two-bedroom ranch house on a slab, was appraised at \$650,000. Skip said the
428 country of _____ is the approximate size of La Crosse County and seems to be well-developed,
429 and he also said there is no regulation in South Africa, noting some individuals reside in
430 structures similar to storage sheds and have no electricity or running water. Skip said that while
431 he understands there must be regulations, he asked if perhaps there are regulations that possibly
432 could be eliminated. Skip said it seems to him there are many instances when regulations are
433 made in city codes and they belong in homeowners' association covenants.

434

435 Craig said he believes that in the time he has served on the Plan Commission its members have
436 been fairly diligent about evaluating, changing and updating the ordinances "where we see they
437 needed to be." However, Craig also said he believes that "our preponderance of those
438 ordinances is still based on what was 1970s housing trends. The housing trends have changed.
439 Single-family houses and that market versus condos, it's a different world today than it was 40
440 years ago. Maybe Skip is right – do some of those things go away?"

441

442 Paul said that while he does not disagree, "I think that the burden should not be put on private
443 developers to control things that the city wants controlled. Private covenants are an entirely
444 different animal than city ordinances are, and most of you know I've been involved in a lot of
445 them. But they are put in place primarily to control the initial development of an area, and to
446 develop it in a way that is in line with what the developer sees for the area."

447

448 Craig asked if the homeowners' association takes over responsibility.

449

450 Paul said there is virtually never an association, noting he is speaking about single-family
451 residential neighborhoods. Paul said that while there is a possibility that the homeowners could
452 form an association to carry on, "I've never seen an instance where they do. ... The things that
453 the city wants to be controlled in some manner that are important to health and welfare or
454 whatever standards we use, those have to be in city ordinances. You can't rely on those being in
455 private covenants."

456

457 Amanda said they also are not uniform because a homeowners' association may do as it pleases.
458 Amanda also said if there is something the city wants regulated uniformly, it would have to be
459 included in a city ordinance.

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461 Skip said that uniformity does not always apply across the entire city, and the result is it is out of
462 place and in the past several CUP requests have come before the Plan Commission. Skip said
463 homeowners who have had to live under a covenant no longer agree they want it when it
464 disintegrates. Skip said, “Therefore, having it an ordinance, they’re being forced to have it when
465 they no longer want it.”

466
467 Craig said having to follow city ordinances as opposed to a covenant might inhibit development
468 or reinvestment. Craig said he realizes there must be some structure in place. Craig also said he
469 does not believe the City of Onalaska is overregulated and that “I think we can probably organize
470 that better and make better sense of that. I think that’s part of this process. I’m looking at it as
471 being a very business- and organization-friendly community. ... We don’t have a lot of
472 preferential targets out there. Within reason, I think we’ve been open to everybody.” Craig said
473 he believes the Mixed Use District is “one of the magical things that has made this community a
474 little less void of pockets.” Craig said that he understands that there are aged areas within the
475 city, it does not have severely blighted areas. Craig added he believes some of the mixed use and
476 mixed density philosophies have paid dividends for the community.

477
478 Paul returned to Skip’s point and said he believes this is the right time to examine everything in
479 the code critically and ask what is needed. However, Paul also said, “We don’t want to leave
480 things to private covenants and private developers to regulate things that the city does believe
481 should be regulated. That should be on the city. But we can look critically at every requirement
482 there and ask, ‘Is there a good reason for this to be here?’ If not, maybe we leave it out.”

483
484 Katie noted there are several things that are regulated and not within this code. Katie cited the
485 example of property maintenance and said she believes there is a perception that many of the
486 city’s rules and regulations are part of this code. However, Katie pointed out that, “Very few
487 sections of property maintenance are actually tied here.” Katie also said she would argue that
488 property maintenance is more governing directly on private property on the city’s residence,
489 adding they likely feel that control, but likely not through this actual section in this chapter.
490 Katie said this is not part of today’s discussion and that the city could examine this subject at a
491 different time. Katie also noted the Building Code is not part of this code and said, “This one is
492 more about, what uses can you do? Do we have specific setbacks? Are there overlays? Do we
493 want to allow flexibility in some areas and less in another? I think we might have an idea of
494 what the Zoning Code is going to look like until we actually sit down and read the code and find
495 out what it is that we have the ability to change.”

496
497 Steven noted this is about the future.

498
499 Katie agreed with Steven and said the Future Land Use Map is not only looking at today. Katie
500 reminded the Plan Commission the Comprehensive Plan is the vision for the City of Onalaska 20
501 years from now, whereas the Zoning Code addresses how the city will implement and facilitate
502 the vision.

Reviewed 6/19/18 by Katie Aspenson

**Special Plan Commission
of the City of Onalaska**

Tuesday, June 12, 2018

13

503
504 Katie addressed the Interstate 90 Economic Development Overlay and said any rezoning the city
505 has done in this area has been to remove that particular standard, so therefore it might not be the
506 most relevant. Katie said the Airport Overlay Zoning District is a requirement the city must have
507 with the La Crosse Regional Airport and noted this code cannot change as it is the City of La
508 Crosse's code. Katie noted the Medical Campus Zoning District is newly created, and she
509 suggested perhaps examining the PUD in terms of, is the city looking at the right things within
510 the PUD stage. Katie next addressed the Bluff Protection Overlay District and noted it is not
511 defined anywhere in the code. Katie asked Jarrod about the Municipal Well Recharge Overlay
512 Area.

513
514 Jarrod said the Municipal Well Protection Plan was required by the Wisconsin Department of
515 Natural Resources. Jarrod said the aquafer from which the city obtains its drinking water is all
516 sand and an unconfined aquafer. The aquafer is susceptible to the inflow of contaminants such
517 as gas and fluids. Jarrod explained there is a five-year recharge area defined on a map that is
518 based upon computer modeling. Jarrod said staff looked what risks there were within the map,
519 and the code states that construction of a gas station is not allowed unless certain conditions are
520 met.

521
522 Katie addressed Traditional Neighborhood Development and said it is similar to a PUD, but it
523 has additional standards. Katie addressed Conservation Cluster Development and said nothing
524 has occurred within that particular district over the last five years. Katie noted there are two
525 types within the Downtown Form Based Code: the Residential Neighborhood, and the
526 Downtown PUD. Katie explained that the intent of the Downtown PUD is to put forth
527 redevelopment opportunities to prime the area for that, whereas the Residential Neighborhood is
528 areas that could be primed for future redevelopment. Katie noted there previously were several
529 extra standards related to architecture in the Residential area (single family). Some of these
530 standards were removed. Katie said some of the standards were relaxed and citizens were
531 allowed to opt in so the codes may be utilized and they have more flexibility in certain areas.
532 Katie said it is directly tied to downtown Onalaska and noted there are citizens who wish that the
533 older neighborhoods retain their aged look. To be specific, the original integrity and character of
534 the neighborhood is retained.

535
536 Rita shared the preliminary discussion items HKgi has from city staff:

- 537
- 538 • The idea of uses in relation to daycares, mobile homes, urban farming, mobile food
 - 539 vendors, and home occupations.
 - 540 • Development character in relation to fencing, parking, impervious surface, and
 - 541 landscaping.
- 542

543 Katie noted the code only speaks to landscaping in two locations, and that is in the parking lot
544 development. Katie said she wants to see a section devoted to landscaping as a development

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545 standard. Katie said she typically is asked about the city's sign code, its parking rules, and if it is
546 screening and landscaping. Katie also said she anticipates a significant discussion about parking
547 in terms of updating the table and ratios. Katie noted impervious surface maximum has been
548 discussed a couple of times, and she said Multifamily and the Economic Development Area are
549 the city's only two districts that have anything related to impervious district. In theory, in every
550 other district, except for a 3- or 5-foot buffer of the grass strip along the property line, a citizen
551 may pave his/her entire lot.

552

553 Jarrod said the converse of that is green space and noted that while it is worded for storm water
554 runoff, it also is green space. Jarrod said, "Do you want to see grass? Do you want to see non-
555 buildings, non-parking lots? It's the same outcome; it's just they have two different reasons
556 here."

557

558 Craig said this is an area that needs to be carefully reviewed and stated that while the city wants
559 to make it user-friendly, it also has to be sensitive of the area.

560

561 Amanda noted the city currently has park fees and has had development fees in the past.
562 Amanda said one of the reasons the city went from development fees to park fees is because of
563 changes to the law. The laws have since changed, and Amanda said perhaps the city would like
564 to continue park fees and land dedication. However, Amanda also said perhaps it would be more
565 logical to have certain development fees and not have park fees. Amanda said she believes the
566 code rewrite makes this conversation relevant.

567

568 Katie said staff has wondered why the bulk of the city's commercial area is zoned Light
569 Industrial. Katie said she believes staff would like to see some changes made in this area. Katie
570 noted the area located along STH 16 is different than the area located along Midwest Drive, and
571 she suggested that perhaps one area is more focused on big box retail while another is more
572 focused on office park. Katie said staff has discussed the city's churches, which are zoned a
573 variety of Residential, Public, and Institutional, and she asked if perhaps it would be logical for
574 churches and schools have different regulations than government structures versus a commercial
575 business. Katie said a CUP is necessary for any work that is to be done in a P-1 District, and she
576 noted this no longer works. Katie asked if perhaps the Plan Commission wishes to either create a
577 new district or rewrite the current district because "how we treat our parks should be different
578 than how we're treating our schools." Katie noted they all are currently "lumped in together" in
579 that the only outright use allowed in a P-1 District is have a park. Everything else requires a
580 CUP. Katie suggested it would be good to have some permitted with standards in relation to
581 what the city wants to see with its churches and schools.

582

583 Craig noted Industrial and some Commercial is all zoned the same.

584

585 Katie said the areas zoned M-2 and M-3, the city's true industrial areas, have different setbacks
586 and standards. Katie noted that while some of the areas zoned Light Industrial have a minimum

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587 lot size of 100 feet, the city's Commercial districts do not.

588

589 **Adjournment**

590

591 Motion by Skip, second by Craig, to adjourn at 3:30 p.m.

592

593 On voice vote, motion carried.

594

595

596 Recorded by:

597

598 Kirk Bey