



City of La Crosse, Wisconsin

City Hall
400 La Crosse Street
La Crosse, WI 54601

Meeting Minutes - Final

Neighborhood Revitalization Commission

Wednesday, August 2, 2023

6:00 PM

Council Chambers- City Hall- 400 La Crosse St

Members of the public will be able to attend the meeting in person in the Council Chambers at City Hall located at 400 La Crosse St in La Crosse or online via video conferencing with the links below.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://cityoflacrosseorg.zoom.us/j/82155464093pwd=aGw1NWRRUE4xM1RxajJxaTM0QkNUQT09>

Meeting ID: 821 5546 4093

Passcode: 543969

Participate by phone: 1-312-626-6799

Call to Order

The Meeting was called to order at 6:00pm.

Roll Call

Present: 9 - Vacant 1, Ralph Geary, Will Kratt, Jim Bagniewski, Larry Sleznikow, Jennifer Trost, Jessica Stanton, Sean Hurtubise, Robert McDonnell

Excused: 1 - Greg Clark

Absent: 1 - Steve Nicolai

Approval of Minutes

Approval of the July 12, 2023 Meeting Minutes.

Ralph Geary moved to approve the minutes. Larry Sleznikow seconded. The motion passed 8-0 by voice vote.

Agenda Items:

1. [23-0906](#)

Jennifer Trost provided an overview of why this item was on the agenda. Jennifer stated that the Neighborhood Revitalization Commission is an advisory and policy recommendation board and items like this are what the NRC would typically work on. Larry Sleznikow stated that urban heat islands

are becoming more of an issue nationwide, especially with recent high temperatures. He stated that it is important to look at the study and understand how addressing this issue could benefit La Crosse. The City should be looking at practices to reduce heat islands whether it is through new buildings or increasing tree plantings. Plans for tree maintenance and increasing plantings in boulevards is a question for the Parks Department.

Jim Bagniewski agreed that trees are important. He asked if they are a part of the Climate Action Plan? Larry Slezniak stated that there are actions in the plan. Jim stated he would like to hear from Lewis on how the NRC could help with this action.

Ralph Geary agreed that nationwide temps are high. He stated that new technology for concrete that has an additive that can help reduce the heat effect in cities. Jennifer Trost stated that the City and NRC can look at that technology through the Capital Improvement Program.

Jessica Stanton asked about the City's actions to remove all of the ash trees and if they had all been replaced. Jennifer Trost stated that she will look into it.

2. [23-0910](#)

Jennifer Trost showed the NRC the City's Green Complete Streets ordinance, including the examples regarding street design and sidewalk treatments. A new revision to the ordinance requires that street projects in the CIP must be reviewed by the BPAC and CCD to ensure that these principles are included. Jennifer stated that she was bringing this to the NRC as many themes in the draft comprehensive plan support these practices and initiatives.

Jim Bagniewski asked if this policy applies to any time streets are repaired or build new. Jennifer stated yes. Jim also asked if any other cities do this and how has it been working. Will Kratt stated that Wisconsin used to have a complete streets policy but it was repealed. Street projects used to be discussed one by one during the CIP process but that has changed. Process works well when larger infrastructure projects are included as well as trees. Will suggested referring to the National Organization of City Planning Officials for guidance. He also stated that the Urban Stormwater Guide has lots of principles and policies being discussed. He recommended adopting it as a design manual. Chris Kahlow recommended looking at Madison and their green streets guide as it is understandable and easy to read. Madison used a consultant and suggested La Crosse should use one. Jennifer Trost stated that her intent with this item was to show the NRC some existing policies that are in place that can help them advocate for making their neighborhoods accessible.

3. [23-0911](#)

Jennifer Trost showed the letter sent to the City regarding recommendations for zoning code changes that could help with constructing affordable housing. These include lot size, setbacks, and parking.

Will Kratt stated that he thought they were great ideas and suggested that the Commission keep pushing on eliminating all parking requirements. Jim Bagniewski clarified that Will was suggesting that the developer determines

what they want. Will said yes. Parking on streets is a traffic calming measure which contributes to the green complete streets philosophy. Jim Bagniewski asked where the City was at with the parking districts that was supposed to help with this. Staff stated that they were unsure of where that program was at. Jim asked for a future report on the parking districts. Jennifer Trost said she would get one. Jennifer stated that there is not one around UWL but was one around the Downtown. Jim stated that this change would be preferred over using farmland and to help minimize sprawl. Larry Slezniak asked what cities do. Staff stated that amending their zoning codes is becoming a nationwide trend. Jessica Stanton asked what the process was for the smaller lots as the former Navy Reserve site. Staff stated that the smaller lots were permitted through special zoning.

Jennifer Trost also stated that she received a letter from AARP indicating what they can provide the City to assist with these efforts. She also stated that all of the items on the agenda were intended to give everyone knowledge on moving forward with developing neighborhoods that are accessible. Sean Hurtubise asked why the city has the lot size and setback requirements they do now. Staff was unsure but stated that it was likely a product of the time. Larry Slezniak stated that he would like to create green space requirements. Jim S., former Board President of Habitat for Humanity, stated they he was looking at how to get these issues out in the neighborhoods and created a committee to advocate for change. Will Kratt stated that the City needs to take radical steps. Housing density should be discussed. Hard to build in La Crosse. Thinking about green is good but density also helps reduce transportation.

4. Updates (Comprehensive Plan, Neighborhood Reports, Community Tree Workshop, CIP Approval).

There will be a Community Tree Workshop on September 25th. There was one in July but it was for businesses.

Staff stated that there is currently a public comment period for the whole comp plan. Go Forwardlacrosse.org to participate.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:59pm.

Notice is further given that members of other governmental bodies may be present at the above scheduled meeting to gather information about a subject over which they have decision-making responsibility.

NOTICE TO PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY

Requests from persons with a disability who need assistance to participate in this meeting should call the City Clerk's office at (608) 789-7510 or send an email to ADAcityclerk@cityoflacrosse.org, with as much advance notice as possible.

Neighborhood Revitalization Commission Members:

CM Jennifer Trost, CM Larry Slezniak, Jessica Stanton, Jim Bagniewski, Greg Clark, Ralph Geary, Robert McDonnell, Sean Hurtubise, Steve Nicolai, Will Kratt