



City of La Crosse, Wisconsin

City Hall
400 La Crosse Street
La Crosse, WI 54601

Meeting Minutes - Final

Neighborhood Revitalization Commission

Monday, November 2, 2020

6:00 PM

3rd Floor Conference Room

In an effort to keep members of the public, City staff and Neighborhood Revitalization Commissioners as safe as possible from the spread of COVID-19, City Staff highly encourages the public to submit any comments, concerns, questions, or support in writing ahead of the meeting to Tim Acklin at acklint@cityoflacrosse.org.

The meeting will also be conducted through video conferencing and may be viewed and accessed with the following link:
<https://stream.lifetimesizecloud.com/extension/4796124/c7d43560-fea7-4613-9625-63af875bee87>

Members of the public will also be permitted to ask questions or provide statements via video conferencing.

Call to Order

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

Roll Call

Present: 10 - Tim Kabat, Linda Lee, Steve Nicolai, Ralph Geary, Jennifer Trost, Jim Bagniewski, Nora Garland, Larry Sleznikow, Janet Allen, Christopher Woodard

Excused: 1 - Will Kratt

Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of the September 28, 2020 Meeting Minutes.

Chris Woodard moved to approve the minutes. Larry Sleznikow seconded. The motion passed by voice vote 10-0.

Agenda Items:

2. [20-1489](#) Resolution opposing U.S. Highway 53 corridor alternative 5B-1 and requesting the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's Transportation Projects Commission (TPC) to remove the project from the list of major highway projects.

Mayor Kabat provided a brief background for the Commission. He informed them that there has been a long effort to construct a north-south road through

the marsh. Citizens had voted down the project through a referendum and the City has since adopted an updated Transportation Vision that focuses on improving our existing corridors and making them viable for people, bicycles, transit, and vehicles. The WisDOT still lists this project in their list of major highway projects and the Mayor feels that there is still little support for it. He also feels that is time to let them know that it is time to remove it from their list. The Mayor stated that Livable Neighborhoods was the organization that reached out to him regarding this effort and to ask the State to remove it. Ralph Geary asked if there was money earmarked for this project, or if it was just a project. The Mayor stated that they have identified approximately \$143 million but has not allocated any funding to it at this time. Ralph stated that he was not in favor of the project but would support using the funding for other road improvements in the City. The Mayor stated that the resolution does request that. Linda Lee asked if \$143 million was an older cost estimate. The Mayor stated that it was from 2016. Any difference in actual cost would fall on the City tax payers, which is another reason for this resolution. Jennifer Trost stated that she was happy to see this resolution on the agenda. Neighborhoods are not interested in making the journey of commuters easier and at the expense of neighborhood revitalization as new lane miles do not benefit the City. Steve Nicolai stated that he remembers people against this project in order to protect the marsh and not build in it. Larry Sleznikow stated that he is supporting this Resolution in order to protect the marsh. Linda Lee added that the route for this project would go right by Hamilton Elementary, a school that is currently being invested in, and it makes no sense to develop a highway immediately adjacent to it. Linda Lee moved to adopt this Resolution. Larry Sleznikow seconded. The motion passed by voice vote 10-0.

3. Update on the Comprehensive Planning Process.

Staff provide an update to the Commission. The background data piece that includes collecting demographics is fairly complete. Staff is working with our GIS Coordinator and Karl Green from UW-Extension on developing an online mapping and infographic site to present this data. We are also planning on being able to incorporate our new 2020 Census data once it becomes available. Planning Staff is concerned about the current form of public participation and the lack of interest from the public in past planning efforts. Staff spent a considerable amount of time surveying community leaders, organizations, and members of underrepresented populations to understand what it would take to get them involved and interested in the process. The feedback was overwhelming with ideas that included going to their meetings, utilize community members to lead meetings and focus groups, develop an education piece to explain why this is important, utilize this effort to unite the community, and address several environmental issues currently facing La Crosse. Staff is also determining what funding is currently available and developing a budget. What direction and process to use is also currently being evaluated in regards to public engagement strategies and the use of consultants. In order to assist with evaluating this staff has been meeting with other communities who have recently completed their comprehensive plans and learning what they did, what worked, and what didn't. Staff also met with a consultant group who was able to provide some creative ways to fund portions of the comprehensive plan rather than the entire document. Larry Sleznikow stated that if staff felt they have the time and resources to do it internally he fully supports that effort as well as the strategy to network with community leaders to help lead the process. Ralph Geary stated that there are

five other entities in the County and the City should not be doing this on their own. There should be some coordination on a regional level. Staff stated that there is an intergovernmental cooperation component in the comprehensive plan that should guide regional planning efforts such as transportation, economic development, and infrastructure, but the other entities plans will not address the detail we will want in our own City. Comprehensive plans are citizen driven and should reflect their vision. Our comprehensive plan should not be the vision of West Salem and these communities likely did not engage our citizens. Larry Slezniak stated that he thought it would be important to have an abridged or executive summary of the final plan so it is easy for the citizens and elected officials to use. Staff stated that shortening the plan to a user friendly size is a priority. Staff stated that the next steps is to make some hard decisions on what approach to take and develop a draft budget, public engagement plan, and timeline. Nora Garland suggested a schedule that can adapt to change. Staff agreed. Jim asked if there was an analysis that shows what was accomplished from the last plan and what still needs to be done. Staff stated that we had also heard that from the public and intend to develop that analysis. Mayor Kabat stated that the Commission looks forward to being involved in this process.

4. [20-1567](#)

Discussion and possible action on parking minimums and maximums and the NRC Statement to eliminate Off-Street Parking Requirements.

Staff stated that they had sent several links to resources that discuss parking minimums and maximums to the Commission. Staff felt there was an education piece for both the Commission and staff on this concept. Staff also stated that they provided the Commission with the City's current off-street parking requirements. Jennifer Trost stated that the recent parking study has indicated that there is enough parking both off-street and on-street. Jennifer then stated that it does include the data that is needed to make some bold decisions on eliminating requirements for levels of parking and that those decision can be left up to the developers and landlords. The one space per bedroom requirement for new multi-family development seemed to be a result of a small contingent of landlords. The concern is trying not to choke our neighborhoods with parking. Mayor Kabat stated that he was looking at the maps in the parking study and agreed that it looks like there is more than enough parking and it is time to re-evaluate our parking requirements. This is especially important when looking at the public parking spaces as they are expensive to build and expensive to maintain. Janet Allen asked if the alternate side parking would affect the elimination of the one to one requirement. Mayor Kabat thought that the students have generally adapted to alternate side parking over the last several years. Nora Garland stated that Greg Olsen attended the GENA meeting last month and they are considering becoming a parking benefit district to help with this concern. Jim thanked staff for the resources and suggested a small committee is formed to work on this initiative. Jim also asked what Steve thought about this effort. Steve stated that things also keep changing. He feels that a good product is the key. Jennifer added that the cost of parking can free up resources to put back into their building. CM Kahlow stated that she is 100% in favor of reducing surface lots and that if you provide a good product with other amenities they will be successful. Mayor Kabat also suggested that this Commission look at the off-street requirement for commercial and office uses. Jennifer Trost moved to adopt the proposed NRC statement to eliminate parking minimums for multi-family and review the requirements for commercial and office use. Linda

Lee seconded. The motion passed by voice vote 10-0. Jennifer stated that she would look into the commercial requirements.

5. November 30, 2020 Meeting Agenda Items.

CM Larry Sleznikow stated that he has been hearing a lot about City streets and speeding, particularly on Cass Street. Larry stated that he was interested in hearing how street design and function is approached by the City as well as safety for pedestrians and bicycles. Mayor Kabat stated that this Commission would be appropriate for this topic. He suggested our Engineering Department be invited to a future meeting to discuss what they look at when designing our streets. Jack Zabrowski, staff for the BPAC, could also be invited to the next meeting, as well as the Police Department. Jim asked Larry if the increase in traffic on Cass Street was due to nearby streets being closed for repair. Larry stated that it seemed like it was but it has not decreased when the repairs were completed. Chris Woodard stated that they are experiencing similar speeding concerns along 5th Avenue. Mayor Kabat stated that this would be a great discussion with the Engineering Department about the infrastructure design used to deal with this concern.

Adjournment

Chris Woodard moved to adjourn the meeting. Larry Sleznikow seconded. The motion passed by voice vote 10-0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:29pm.

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.