

**ANOKA PLANNING COMMISSION
WORKSESSION MEETING
ANOKA CITY HALL
TUESDAY, APRIL 19, 2022
5:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER:

The worksession meeting of the Anoka Planning Commission was called to order at 5:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Planning Commissioners present: Chair Don Kjonaas, Karna Brewer, Borgie Bonthuis (attending virtually), Nancy Coleman, Shari Nemec, and Peter Rech

Planning Commissioners absent: James Cook.

Staff present: City Planner Clark Palmer and Community Development Director Doug Borglund

DISCUSSION – IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, MRCCA ORDINANCE UPDATE

City Planner Palmer reviewed background information on the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA) rules update by the DNR. He explained that all communities within the corridor will be adopting new MRCCA zoning standards consistent with the 2017 MRCCA rules and local MRCCA plans. He reviewed the proposed timeline for the draft ordinance process and related zoning changes.

Commissioner Brewer stated that the river is a type of “highway” with users from different communities. She understood that this is how the land would be treated and asked how the City would inform the users of the river related to the treatment of the land along the river.

Community Development Director Borglund replied that this applies to land use and the individual landowners along the river and does not apply to someone navigating the river or docking their boat.

City Planner Palmer used the highway reference and noted that drivers on a highway are likely not aware of the zoning restrictions for the properties adjacent to the highway as it does not apply to them. He provided an overview of the new local government MRCCA zoning regulations including new terms and regulations. He identified the bluff impact zones noting the additional regulations that would apply to those areas. He stated that it does not appear that Anoka is over encumbered by bluff impact zones or native plant or vegetive stands. He reviewed details related to permitting requirements.

Commissioner Nemec referenced her existing retaining wall and noted that if that were needing replacement, she would think that would not meet the setback standards and asked how that would be handled.

Community Development Director Borglund replied that it could be done within existing nonconforming standards. He noted that the retaining wall could be replaced as is under those standards.

City Planner Palmer and Community Development Director Borglund provided answers to example scenarios provided by the Commission.

Community Development Director Borglund reported that this was meant to be a kick-off to the process as more work will evolve throughout this year. He stated that the new rules were meant to address deficiencies and provide clarity to City staff and residents.

Commissioner Brewer commented that it is her understanding that these regulations are meant to support the intention of having natural settings along the river to create that aesthetic for river users. She asked if staff is preparing for that clash that might occur between the City wanting to take advantage of the river amenity and the desired privacy of property owners along the river.

City Planner Palmer stated that the City plans to hold three neighborhood meetings with the different stakeholder groups. He believed that these rules address and allow for all of those activities.

Community Development Director Borglund stated that this would apply to land use adjacent to the river and would not impact the use of the river. He noted that the regulations are more technical in looking at the use of the land, areas with difficult topography, and vegetation. He stated that staff will meet with Commissioner Bonthuis and Councilmember Weaver in order to gain more history on the previous discussions that occurred on this topic related to the Friends of the Mississippi.

Commissioner Bonthuis stated that the Friends of the Mississippi does not like suburban development and would prefer natural vegetation over mowed yards. She stated that it was too late for those desires to be incorporated as the land has already been developed. She believed that group was heavily involved in the Champlin discussions which may have contributed to the length of that process.

Mr. Bonthuis provided background information on the task force that was formed related to the dam replacement in Coon Rapids. He stated that it was eventually determined that the Coon Rapids Dam was the last barrier that would stop the spread of Asian carp if they reached this point on the Mississippi and that was the driving force behind reconstruction of the dam.

City Planner Palmer stated that in the initial review of staff, nothing jumped out as being overly restrictive. He noted that one item that stood out was a suggestion that river owners would have the option to leave grass long within the shoreline impact zone, that would conflict with the City's long grass ordinance.

Commissioner Coleman asked if there were any restriction that would prevent residents from drawing water from the river to water their yards.

Community Development Director Borglund replied that there is nothing of that nature in this as this applies to land use. He noted that activity related to the river itself would be regulated by the DNR but did not recall seeing anything that would prevent that activity.

OTHER

Commissioner Nemec asked for an update on the Greenhaven Parkway project and whether there is a timeline for that project. She asked if that property has been sold to a builder/developer.

Community Development Director Borglund commented that there is not a timeline as the project has been on hold to accommodate the golf course redesign. He stated that the Council will be discussing this item at its May worksession meeting. He explained that depending on the layout of the course, it would provide different areas available for housing development. He also provided a brief update on the concept of the social district, explaining that it would apply to certain events such as the food truck festival. He noted that it would allow customers to purchase a beverage from a local restaurant and then go out into the event rather than allowing drinking outdoors 24/7.

ADJOURNMENT:

Time of adjournment: 5:58 p.m.

Submitted by: Amanda Staple, *TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*