Village of Fox River Grove

PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 16, 2016

CALL TO ORDER
Chairperson Melissa Schladt called the meeting of the Planning and Economic Development Commission to order at 7:02 p.m.

ROLL CALL
Present were Chairperson Schladt and Members Tom Cramer, Jim Hartshorn, Marc McLaughlin and John O'Meara. Also in attendance were Village Administrator Derek Soderholm and Assistant Steve Bechler as staff to the PEDC, and Secretary Alison Dal Compo. Ron Hameetman was absent.

RESIDENTS COMMENTS
Chairperson Schladt welcomed Village President Nunamaker and Trustee Andrew Migdal.

APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 17, 2015 MEETING MINUTES
A MOTION was made by Member O'Meara to approve the November 17, 2015 meeting minutes as presented. Seconded by Member McLaughlin. Motion Carried.

NEWS AND UPDATES
Former Five O'clock Steakhouse Location: Member O'Meara asked for an update. Administrator Soderholm explained that a 15,000 square foot banquet facility is being planned for this location. The Village is looking to establish a business district there. The owner of the land will post the financing for the study. The owner is also looking to move the main entrance further down Route 14. The facility is expected to bring in about $2-3 million per year.

Member O'Meara asked if they are thinking of developing other businesses in the same area. Administrator Soderholm said that they may also bring in another breakfast type restaurant, and also possibly a fast food type restaurant towards the front of the property.

Member O'Meara asked if IDOT has been involved in the potential move of the entrance. Administrator Soderholm said that this idea was explored a few years ago, but IDOT did not want a second full entrance. They did, however, want right and left hand turn lanes. Village President Nunamaker added that he had been in touch with IDOT, and they were happy to hear of such a potential change. The cost would likely be $600,000-$700,000.

Chairperson Schladt asked if the owners have a target date. She was told August 2016. Village President Nunamaker said that the Village was also approached by an individual looking to build a senior living complex at the location.

Administrator Soderholm said that Walgreens recently obtained a spirits liquor license to sell hard liquor.

DOWNTOWN RE-DEVELOPMENT

Administrator Soderholm reported that the developer is still trying to close their land contracts. There was a setback in the process and one owner would not sign the contract. The other contracts had to be canceled to be re-signed at a later date. Chairperson Schladt asked if there is a new time line now. Administrator Soderholm said that they will try to close the contracts again between August and October.

Member O'Meara asked about the traffic study for the downtown redevelopment. Administrator Soderholm said that the traffic study was completed, and it was found that the development would not change traffic flow substantially.

Village President Nunamaker said that he gave a State of the Village address to the Chamber of Commerce recently. The collection of sales tax in the Grove is ahead of the U.S. rate. The new Jewel and Auto Audits have been a big part of this, and have been doing more business quarter by quarter.

The owners of Jewel, Ace Hardware and the new banquet hall have all inquired as to whether the new apartment complex will actually happen.

DISCUSSION: SIGN ORDINANCE

Administrator Soderholm had provided the proposed sign ordinance document to the members prior to the meeting. It was decided that rather than go line by line, the members should talk about any specific concerns they had. The Village Board had expressed interest in revising the sign code about a year ago.

Member O'Meara asked how the new code would be enforced. Administrator Soderholm said that it would be the responsibility of the building code official. Member O'Meara further pointed out that there a number of businesses that are non compliant to the Code.

Member Hartshorn asked about issue #2 (interior signs.) He was told that business owners have up to two years to comply. If there isn't a specific date mentioned, then the change is effective immediately. Administrator Soderholm said that in some cases, the enforcement would be when the business changes hands.

Member Hartshorn asked about issues #3 and 4 (blinking/electronic lights). Assistant Bechler said that those changes would be immediate. Administrator Soderholm said that the focus of these items is for stand alone signs or those mounted on a building. Member McLaughlin noted that the ordinances would have a sunset clause.

Chairperson Schladt asked about issue #12 (lettering height). Administrator Soderholm said that the ordinance differentiates between the downtown district and the rest of the town. Chairperson Schladt further noted that it had been previously decided to tie in the architectural guidelines. Administrator Soderholm stated that the ordinance is memorializing those guidelines.

Chairperson Schladt said that the example for issue #7 (window borders) seems like it doesn't meet the 33% criteria. Administrator Soderholm said that it does actually meet the criteria if you see it in person, its just that the picture doesn't capture it all.

Administrator Soderholm said that the ordinance would continue to allow certain signage with the intent of blocking interior shelving.

Chairperson Schladt asked about billboards. Administrator Soderholm noted that there are pre-existing billboards by the small engine repair shop on Rt. 22, as well as by the hotel and by Ringers. Chairperson Schladt asked who owns the billboards; she was told they are owned by Clear Channel. Member Hartshorn explained that they most likely have existing leases, so maybe the ordinance could be enforced by saying that the leases cannot be renewed unless the signs are compliant. Administrator Soderholm commented that this can be complicated due to their legal team and the length of the leases. Given a reasonable length of time, however, it might be possible to make them compliant.

Village President Nunamaker said that you can put limits on signs, but you cannot affect First Amendment rights. Administrator Soderholm added that this means you can regulate the size of a sign, but not necessarily the content. Chairperson Schladt asked what the life span of the permits for billboards would be; Member McLaughlin said they last indefinitely.

Member McLaughlin asked about situations where multiple businesses share the same sign location. Administrator Soderholm explained that Jewel, for example, has a special use/variance for their sign.

Chairperson Schladt commented that the revisions seem to address the shortfalls of the existing code.

Member McLaughlin said that clause "C" on page 26 regarding cabinet signage and backlighting allows for back lit individual letters. Administrator Soderholm explained that the purpose was to limit to one per business, but said that the wording could be tweaked there.

Member Cramer asked about the current Grover's sign. Administrator Soderholm said that they also went for a variance. The Village has asked them to turn the brightness down on the sign. If there is a public safety issue, this is an angle to pursue. Chairperson Schladt noted that she personally finds it distracting.

Box signs are not permitted in the downtown area.

Member McLaughlin asked how many monument signs are allowed per lot or parcel. Assistant Bechler said that the limit is one.

Member Cramer noted that the limit for temporary signs is 14 days. Administrator Soderholm said that a permit is needed for temporary signs, and the permit limits to 14 days. For example, the new business Vapes put up temporary signs but he is not sure they had a permit. He will check into it.

Member Hartshorn asked if Grover's is considered to be in the downtown redevelopment area; he was told no. He was further told that the variance for the Grover's sign only applies as long as the same owner has a business with the same name at the same location.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chamber Of Commerce April Showcase: Chairperson Schladt asked if the Village will have a booth there; she was told yes. Village President Nunamaker said that anyone who was willing to help out should let him know.

Parks Fundraiser: Chairperson Schladt reported that this year's fundraiser is being held on March 12 at 7 p.m. It will be at Brunch Cafe. There will be Village memorabilia up for auction.

Village President Nunamaker said that he had suggested putting up the old Village signs at Picnic Grove Park and Lions Park. The Parks commission is helping to choose the exact locations on the premises. The PEDC members agreed this was a great idea.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 15, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Member O'Meara and seconded by Member Hartshorn to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 p.m. All were in favor.

Chairperson Melissa Schladt

Alison Dal Compo, Secretary

4/19/16
Date Approved