

PLAN COMMISSION MEETING

March 18, 2020

Present: Pepler, Splitt, Will, Julian (via phone)

Absent: Hoch, Pollesch

Others: Public Works Director Ehrenberg, City Administrator Rich, City Attorney Wurtz

Mayor Will called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Approval of agenda

Pepler moved and Splitt seconded a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried 4-0.

Approve meeting minutes – January 15th

Will moved and Splitt seconded a motion to approve the January 15th, 2020 minutes as presented. Motion carried 4-0.

Action item

Declaration of surplus property – Akin Street

Will explained that the common council discussed vacating Akin Street two to three years ago, and a subcommittee was formed back then to look at the area. The council has been discussing the Tygert Street stream crossing area recently, and because the subcommittee idea was not working, being down to six council members, the mayor reached out to staff. The Police Chief, EMS Chief, and Fire Chief are all supportive of vacating Akin Street. The council discussed vacating Akin Street at their last council meeting and gave a thumbs up to direct the item to Plan Commission for a recommendation. Wurtz explained that the required next step is a recommendation from Plan Commission acknowledging that Akin Street is no longer necessary to maintain as a street, as required per Wisconsin Statute 62.23(5). Will shared some history regarding Akin Street, and how utilization increased significantly after the Tygert Street stream crossing was closed to due public safety concerns. The employees of Alliance Laundry were the main users of Akin Street. Akin Street was then changed to a one way only street going north. The road is basically just an asphalt alley, with no substructure below. Recently the council has been looking into narrowing Tygert Street up to the stream crossing, to be used only as a pedestrian crossing. The two adjacent homeowners require access to Akin Street, and both are in favor of the city vacating Akin Street. Rich explained the vacation process. A minimum of 40 days after the council approves the resolution initiating the proposed discontinuance of Akin Street a public hearing must be held. Plan Commission's recommendation would go to council on March 23rd. Wurtz stated the tree just to the west of Akin Street would stay, as it would be on city property. The property would be split along the western edge of the blacktop. The grassy area would belong to the city. Will stated no objections have been received at this point. Will moved and Pepler seconded a motion to recommend to the common council the vacation and discontinuance of the right-of-way known as Akin Street. Motion carried 3-0-1 (Splitt abstain).

Discussion item

Comprehensive plan update

Ria Hull, Senior Project Planner with MSA Professional Services, joined the meeting via phone at approximately 7:15 p.m. Hull explained how MSA can assist the City with its comprehensive plan update. The State adopted comprehensive planning legislation (Wis. Stats. §66.1001) in 1999. This legislation states that if a local municipality enacts a zoning ordinance, official mapping, a subdivision ordinance or a shoreland/wetland zoning ordinance it must be consistent with the comprehensive plan. It also states that plans are required to be updated at least once every ten years, hence why MSA is here, and dictates that the plans must include these 9 required elements or topics:

- **Issues and Opportunities.** The data collected is generally from the most recent census data. This data would be taken out of the main plan and put in an appendix.
- **Land Use.** This is the meat of the plan and where the Commission would dig into the future vision for the City of Ripon.
- **Housing**
- **Transportation**
- **Utilities and Community Facilities**
- **Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources.** This would include historical buildings as well as the overall history of the City of Ripon.
- **Economic Development**
- **Intergovernmental Cooperation.** Includes the Town of Ripon, Ripon Area School District, and Ripon College.
- **Implementation.** Identifying grants, and for use in the annual budgeting process.

Hull explained the comprehensive plan is important as the legal basis for zoning and land division decisions and also budgeting decisions; land use predictability – for property owners, developers, and residents; readiness for opportunity – development proposals, grant funding; foundation for other plans – neighborhood plans, parks plan, downtown plan, etc.; and the basis for annual budgeting priorities.

Hull also explained the two options for updating the comprehensive plan. The traditional process, which is used by larger cities like Madison and Milwaukee, has a higher level of commitment and involvement from City staff and the Plan Commission; multiple meetings with City staff and the Commission to review individual plan elements; two separate public input meetings; and a public hearing at the Plan Commission, and adoption by Plan Commission and Council. All maps are updated. With the simplified process the plan writing is guided to a greater extent by MSA staff and a lower level of commitment and involvement

from City staff and Plan Commission; one Plan Commission meeting to review goals, objectives, polices and future land use map; a second Plan Commission meeting to review draft of completed plan and map; no separate public input meetings, but public can input at either of the two Plan Commission meetings; and a public hearing and adoption by Commission and Council. Not all maps are updated. For example, the soil in Ripon has not changed in 10 years, so that map would not be updated. Hull has already received data for Ripon's update from the East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

Hull explained the first meeting could be held much like today's meeting, remotely via phone. The update process takes three to four months, and by then maybe Hull could meet with the Plan Commission in person to review the draft. Will thanked Hull for the information, and Hull left the meeting. Splitt inquired about the cost of the traditional process versus the simplified process. Rich shared the cost of the simplified process is approximately \$15,000, while the cost of the traditional process is \$20,000 to \$25,000. Will moved and Splitt seconded a motion to recommend the simplified process for the required update to the City's comprehensive plan, at a cost of approximately \$15,000 to be funded from Contingency. Motion carried 4-0.

Project updates and staff reports

Nothing to report at this time.

Agenda items for future meetings

Contact Rich or Mayor Will with other agenda items.

With no further business before the Commission, Splitt moved and Pepler seconded a motion to adjourn. Motion carried 4-0. Mayor Will declared the meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lori Rich, City Administrator