



**CITY OF LONG LAKE
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
January 12, 2016**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Erickson.

Present: Commission Members Adams, Erickson, Hughes, Keating and Jerde.
City Administrator Weske; City Planning Consultant Lewis.

Absent: none.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

APPROVE AGENDA

*Commissioner Jerde moved to approve the agenda with the above changes noted.
Commissioner Keating seconded. Ayes: all.*

CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes of the December 8, 2015 Planning Commission Meeting

Commissioner Jerde moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Commissioner Keating seconded. Ayes: all.

OPEN CORRESPONDENCE

None.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Recommended Appointment of Planning Commission Chair and Chair Pro-Tempore Positions for 2016

The commission discussed term limits, noting the Commissioner terms expire in November of 2016. The current chair is Commissioner Ericson and current Chair Pro-Tempore is Commissioner Adams.

*Commissioner Keating moved to recommend the re-appointment of current Chair Ericson and current Chair Pro-tempore Adams, for the 2016 Planning Commission.
Commissioner Hughes seconded. Ayes: all.*

B. Continue Discussion of Sign Ordinance Revisions and Process for Preparation of Sign Ordinance Amendments

Planner Lewis reviewed the background of the current ordinance.

Staff has identified the following issues with the sign ordinance for further discussion and recommends the Planning Commission provide further direction on how to proceed with potentially amending the sign ordinance.

- The sign ordinance is currently in Chapter 8 – Buildings and Building Regulations. For organizational purposes, staff recommends the sign ordinance be moved to the zoning section of City Code.
- Anything regulating sign content should be removed. The US Supreme Court recently ruled that it is not legal for cities to regulate sign content.
- Sign copy is referenced when referring to permitted area of a sign, however, “sign copy” is not defined and brings into question whether this includes the entire sign cabinet or any bordering or if it is just the sign lettering.
- The table in Section 8-233 regulates sign type, area and height by zoning district but elsewhere in the chapter there are references to special sign districts that appear to be left from an outdated version of the code and these special sign districts no longer exist.
- There are inconsistencies with where certain types are permitted. For example, the chart in Section 8-233 say that freestanding signs are permitted in the B-2A, I-1 or I-2 districts but monument signs are not; however the text in Section 8-235 says that freestanding signs in these areas must be monument signs. Monument signs have different dimensional regulations than freestanding signs so it is unclear what type of signs are permitted and what dimensional requirements they should be held to.

Chair Ericson opened the discussion asking staff how the Commission should proceed.

Staff recommended that three commissioners serve on a sign ordinance steering committee to work on these changes.

Chair Ericson agreed and said he further agreed with the bullet points noted above in the background provided by Staff.

Staff suggested the steering committee would do in-depth review and discussion of the ordinance, and present their recommendations to the Commission at the next meeting. After final review, the recommendations would be presented to City Council.

City Administrator Weske noted also that the Council would prefer the new ordinance to be simple and basic, in order to allow staff to be able to issue permits with more ease, and less review.

Commissioner Keating noted he has spoken to several Long Lake merchants, noting there is some confusion with the current ordinance, and inconsistency on what qualifies and what does not qualify as correct signage. He added this is an opportune time to clean up the ordinance language and make it basic and easy to understand.

Commissioner Adams agreed, adding the ordinance cannot include reference to religious signs. Also, in terms of copy, the ordinance must address the whole sign, not just the letters on the sign.

Chair Erickson stated he reviewed the current ordinance and provided suggested changes and edits to Staff. He noted also he likes the regulation by zoning district portion of the ordinance saying it makes sense to follow the zoning district, which is very rational.

He also agrees with reducing the verbiage of the ordinance and simplifying, especially under the temporary signs section. He added under Section 8.237, he prefers to call it a sign variance, and also prefers language that gives the City a stronger position. He stated the City has many old signs out of spec at this time, and it would be helpful to work on this also, so that when a sign variance is granted, all non-conforming signs should be eliminated or brought into the variance. He stated he looks forward to the subcommittee working further on this.

OTHER BUSINESS

Council Liaison Report

City Council member Curt Kaminski reported. He noted the following items:

- Watertown Road construction will begin in April 2016.
- Council wants to address water meter issues
- Council wants to resolve the vacant building ordinance by first quarter
- Council want to work on the rental license ordinance
- Council wants to address the sign ordinance and work closely with the Planning Commission on this issue

Commission Member Business

Commissioner Keating expressed concern over legalese in various ordinances, and that they are difficult for citizens to decipher. He would like to see better written ordinances going forward with easy language, in order to help others understand them better.

Commissioner Jerde noted the Snowball Open will offer a bus to shuttle people back and forth from downtown to the site of the event.

Commissioner Adams stated he checked the ice on the lake today and it is 12 inches of solid ice currently, noting this should allow the event to be set up on the ice with no problem, and not on the Nelson Park shoreline. He explained the event will be in front of Birch's now. After 30 years, this is a change, but there is hope that the event will be better controlled, and there will be the ability to better gather participation fees, which are \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door.

He added permits were purchased from the Cities of Orono and Long Lake, in order to allow for more beachfront for the event. He added security will be there, and folks can arrive by car, or snowmobile. Additionally, directional and do not park signs will be posted near Birch's entrances, and temporary steps will be built for the event, for better access.

He noted that Winterfest will be in downtown Long Lake in February.

Chair Erickson noted the zoning map on the City website needs updating.

Staff Business

City Administrator Weske asked for three members of the Planning Commission to serve on the sign ordinance subcommittee. He noted their work would be considered “work sessions”, not official meetings. The following Commissioners volunteered to serve on the sub-committee: Keating, Hughes, and Erickson. Staff will follow up with them regarding the setting of meeting dates.

Adjourn

*Commissioner Keating moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:13 p.m.
Commissioner Adams seconded. Ayes: all.*

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Weske
City Administrator