

Minutes of the City of Ashland Plan Commission

A meeting of the Plan Commission was called to order on **Tuesday, February 20th, 2018**
at 6:30 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers.

PRESENT: Mayor Lewis, David Mettille, Ernie Bliss, Mike Amman, Charmaine Swan, John Beirl
EXCUSED: Katie Gellatly
STAFF: April Kroner, Megan McBride
OTHERS:

MEETING AGENDA ORDER

1) Call to Order and Roll Call

Mayor Lewis called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

2) Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the Agenda by Ernie Bliss. Seconded by David Mettille. Passed unanimously.

3) Consent Agenda

Motion to approve minutes from February 6th by Mike Amman. Seconded by David Mettille. Passed unanimously.

4) Public Comment

No public comments.

5) Action Items

- a) Public Art Permit request for the installation of a mural on the west side of Star Liquor, 823 Main St. W (Applicant: Sue Martinsen, Ashland Mural Walk).

Megan McBride provided background information about the project, criteria of approval from the staff report, and staff's recommendation for approval of the Public Art Permit request.

Sue Martinsen explained that there is a possibility for the architectural pieces and lighting fixtures currently displayed with the mural on the side of the former co-op building to also be relocated for display with the mural in the new location. She clarified that the lights will not be utilized for illumination and will only be displayed decoratively.

Mayor Lewis asked what the purpose is of Plan Commission review of Public Art Permit requests.

April Kroner explained that the UDO designates power of approval for Public Art Permits to Plan Commission to ensure that the public art being installed contributes to the City's visual character, enhances the area in which it is proposed to be located and creates a unique sense of place.

Motion to approve the public art permit request by David Mettille. Seconded by Charmaine Swan. Passed unanimously.

- b) Public Art Permit request for the installation of a “De Padua” mural on the west side of Super H Foods, 511 Main St. E (Applicant: Sue Martinsen, Ashland Mural Walk).

Megan McBride provided background information about the project, criteria of approval from the staff report, and staff’s recommendation for approval of the Public Art Permit request.

Sue Martinsen explained the historical significance behind each building that will be represented in the mural and explained that the project will be funded similarly to other Mural Walk projects, with spaces sold for portraits of individuals who were important to the history of these institutions.

John Beirl pointed out that there are likely some people who were very important to the history of these schools who may not have the funds or family in the area to sponsor a portrait but should still be represented.

Sue Martinsen agreed, and listed some of the founding priests, nuns, and other figures who have been predetermined for inclusion to ensure they are represented.

Motion to approve the public art permit request by Ernie Bliss. Seconded by John Beirl. Passed unanimously.

6) Discussion Items

- a) Discussion related to the role of the Plan Commission and potential ways to streamline approval processes

April Kroner explained that the Economic Development Strategic Planning group has identified as a top priority the evaluation of approval processes to see if and how they can be streamlined.

Charmaine Swan asked if the intent is to streamline processes for people who are applying or for staff.

Mayor Lewis clarified that the focus is on streamlining and simplifying the process for applicants.

April Kroner explained that approval processes will be evaluated to comply with state requirements, as well as items that currently require Council approval but could be deferred to Plan Commission through Council vote. Conditional Use Permit approval is an example where Council currently has authority of final action and which the authority could be given to the Plan Commission by Council. She did emphasize that many of our processes are already as streamlined as is legally allowed by state requirements, and more outreach should be done to make people aware of this.

John Beirl agreed that the perception exists that City approval processes are difficult to work with, especially among local residents, and more work and outreach needs to be done to address these concerns. He also questioned what the role of the Plan Commission is for items which the City Council has final action of approval, despite the time taken by the Plan Commission to carefully discuss and vote.

April Kroner emphasized that she hopes Plan Commissioners will direct people to discuss their concerns with planning staff when they hear these perceptions.

Further discussion occurred regarding the role of the Plan Commission, and particularly procedures and implications for items in which the staff recommendation, Plan

Commission vote, and/or City Council vote are not consistent. This is a discussion that will be revisited at future meetings.

b) Process to market the Beaser Avenue Redevelopment site

April Kroner explained that the city plans to re-issue the RFP for this site as the formerly approved concept plan will not be moving forward in this location. She asked that the Plan Commission provide any feedback on changes they would like to see for the next iteration of the RFP.

c) Process to sell the Chequamegon Bay Engineering property

April Kroner explained that, per our ordinance and after discussing with the City Administrator, the city will issue an RFP for the site to consider all offers at once rather than one at a time as occurs when the property is listed with a realtor.

7) Announcements / reports / comments / questions

April Kroner explained the recent state statute update with regards to Conditional Use Permits, and informed the Plan Commission that a UDO text amendment will be coming forward in the near future to make it compliant with the new state requirements.

8) Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by John Beirl. Seconded by David Mettille. Passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15p.m. Minutes by Megan McBride.