

Minutes of the City of Ashland Plan Commission

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

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

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 March 6th by Katie Gellatly. Seconded by John Beirl. Passed unanimously.

4) Public Comment

Holly George indicated that she has received calls from concerned constituents regarding this item. She expressed that while she is not opposed to the sale of the building to the veterans, she emphasized that she wants to ensure all suitable options have been explored by the City. She also wondered what type of precedent this may set for future non-profit community organizations who are in need of a new location.

Bob Kreinbring, representing the VFW/American Legion, voiced his support for the sale of the building to the VFW/American Legion and thanked the Plan Commission and staff for their time and consideration.

Frank Kostka also expressed his support for the sale of the building to the VFW, explaining that their current building is unsuitable and unsafe for their members, which has prompted them to seek an alternative location for several years. Kostka added that the VFW/American Legion has limited resources to buy or build a building.

Pat Kinney urged the Plan Commission to vote in favor of selling the building to the VFW/American Legion, emphasizing that this is a way to give back and appreciate the sacrifices veterans have made and the services the VFW and American Legion provide for the community. Kinney indicated the City shouldn't always look at just the bottom line when making decisions.

Donna Williamson shared her familial background of those who served. She stated the vets have given all through volunteering and have never paid for their service. Williamson explained that while the 6th Street building has problems and was poorly constructed, needs the parking lot repaved, and needs a commercial kitchen added, it is better than any other building the vets have looked at. \$50,000 is all they can pay as they have to do so many

improvements to the property. She emphasized that City Council has already voted in support and will ultimately take final action regarding the sale. She urged the Plan Commission to also vote to approve the proposed sale.

Dick Pufall spoke in favor of selling the building to the VFW/American Legion, and agreed that this is an opportunity for the City to show appreciation for the sacrifices veterans have made.

Richard Kettring agreed with Council Williamson that it was the will of the Council to proceed with this sale to the VFW/American Legion. He also said that he disagrees with the staff recommendations that were provided.

Ella Teague spoke in favor of selling the building to the VFW/American Legion, noting the unsuitability of their current building and need to find a new location that meets the needs of all members.

Pat Pospychalla also spoke in favor of the proposed sale to the VFW/American Legion.

5) Action Items

- a) Discussion and Recommendation on the sale of the Chequamegon Engineering building at 211 6th St W.

John Beirl agreed with Council George's concern about setting a precedent, and also asked if there could be a referendum to tax payers to assist the VFW/American Legion with the new building.

Mayor Lewis said that Council would have the authority to initiate a referendum if they so choose.

Charmaine Swan asked why this item is being brought back before the Plan Commission since they have already discussed it at a prior meeting.

Mayor Lewis explained that it was brought to the Plan Commission as an informational item in the past.

April Kroner explained that our ordinance on the disposition of city-owned land gives authority to the Zoning Administrator and City Administrator to determine the appropriate sale process. The process determined by herself and the City Administrator was the Request for Proposals Procedure, which was communicated to the Plan Commission as a discussion item at a previous meeting. However, this item was then brought to Committee of the Whole and the subsequent Council meeting where the Informal Sales Procedure was determined to be used instead. Through this process the Plan Commission is required to review and provide a recommendation to the Council for their final action.

Katie Gellatly echoed previous concerns about the precedent that this decision could set, and that she feels the role of the Plan Commission and Council is to evaluate the best interests of the overall community. She said she supports using the Request for Proposals process as it seems the most appropriate for this particular site.

Ernie Bliss asked how many offers the City has received for this building to date.

April Kroner said that the VFW/American Legion offer is the only that the City has received, but the property also has not been marketed at all.

Ernie Bliss suggested that the services provided to the City by the VFW/American Legion such as organizing the parade could be evaluated as in-kind payment, which would avoid setting the precedent of the City "giving away" land.

Mayor Lewis said she believes that having conversations such is healthy for communities. She also noted that it is her personal belief that veterans are a class by themselves so she is comfortable with the proposed sale.

Ernie Bliss asked why a staff recommendation to use a different method than the Informal Sales procedure was provided when this was the process directed by Council.

April Kroner explained that this is because one of the standards for review in our ordinance is to evaluate the appropriateness of the Informal Sales process.

Ella Teague informed the Plan Commission that discussions were held at City Council to determine if the issue should come before the Plan Commission for discussion, and was determined that Plan Commission's recommendation is important in consideration of this item.

Motion to approve sale of the building at 211 6th St W to the applicant with price to be determined by Council by Ernie Bliss. Seconded by David Mettille.

Donna Blazek asked why the building was purchased by the City and not ultimately utilized for the new police station as originally planned.

Pat Kinney voiced support for April Kroner's decision to make a recommendation based on the standards for review stipulated in our ordinance.

Passed 4-1, Gellatly opposed, Beirl abstained.

b) Public Hearing and Vote on UDO text amendments to comply with Act 67

Motion to go into Public Hearing by David Mettille. Seconded by Katie Gellatly. Passed unanimously.

Megan McBride detailed the Class 2 Public Hearing notice that was given for this item.

April Kroner provided background on the proposed text amendments, going over details of the state legislative change that occurred which prompted the need for this text amendment to make our UDO comply with 2017 WI Act 67.

Motion to go out of Public Hearing by John Beirl. Seconded by Charmaine Swan. Passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the proposed text amendments by John Beirl. Seconded by Katie Gellatly. Passed unanimously.

6) Discussion Items

a) Discussion on Conditional Use Permits and potential modifications per Act 67.

Charmaine Swan asked if some communities are getting rid of Conditional Use Permits altogether in response to this legislation.

April Kroner said she was not aware of any in Wisconsin that have completely removed conditional uses, but has heard of communities eliminating conditional uses in certain districts.

John Beirl clarified that the ultimate approval for these UDO text changes would also need to be approved by Council.

April Kroner confirmed that Council has final action on all UDO text amendments. She also said that she would like to do public informational sessions related to possible UDO text amendments to educate residents about the proposed changes and receive their input.

The Plan Commission will be given a comprehensive chart illustrating the permitted and conditional uses for each zoning district, as well as staff recommendations for potential changes.

7) Announcements / reports / comments / questions

8) Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Charmaine Swan. Seconded by Mayor Lewis. Passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50p.m. Minutes by Megan McBride and April Kroner.