



**PLANNING COMMISSION  
WORK SESSION  
ANOKA CITY HALL COMMITTEE ROOM  
Tuesday, January 19, 2016  
6:00 P.M.**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The Work Session of the Anoka Planning Commission was called to order at 6:02 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:**

Commissioners present: Chair Don Kjonaas, Borgie Bonthuis, Karna Brewer, Manley Brahs, Sandy Herrala, Peter Rech and James Cook.

Commissioners absent: None.

Staff present: Chuck Darnell, Associate Planner.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

**1. 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Redevelopment Site**

Associate Planner Darnell introduced the city-owned property on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, north of the railroad tracks near the Northstar station. Staff explained that the City had been working on completing more investigations into the property to determine the constraints and opportunities on the property.

Staff explained that the City completed an updated survey of the property, which included a wetland delineation, floodplain delineation, ordinary high water level determination, Wild and Scenic district boundary determination, utility discovery, and tree survey. Staff had also completed research into the environmental regulations that would apply to any future development that would occur on the site.

Commissioner Herrala asked about the City's plans for a park in this area. Staff noted that the City is still in the process of investigating the possibilities on the site, and that no final plans had yet been produced. Commissioner Herrala asked about the floodplain and Wild and Scenic River regulations that might apply to dredging in this area. Staff stated that they would investigate that further.

Chair Kjonaas stated that the park improvements would be much better suited for the area if they were focused more on the natural environment, and that he thought that the future landing should be for paddle boat launching and storage only. Commissioner Herrala agreed with that statement.

Commissioner Herrala asked if there was still development interest in the property. Staff stated that the City is planning to complete the park improvements, and then to market the property for higher density residential development, similar to what has been guided for in plans and what the property is zoned for.

Commissioner Brahs stated that development in this area should be in character with what the City wishes to see around the transit station. Commissioner Cook agreed, and stated that higher density residential development would have fewer impacts on the environmental assets of the development site.

Commissioner Cook asked about the City's tree replacement policy, and whether invasive species were considered during the calculations of tree replacement. Staff stated that they would likely be calculated, but that replacement trees would not necessarily be required to be of the exact same species. Commissioner Cook asked if you would have to provide for replacement if you were to remove box elder, elm, or buckthorn. Staff stated that they would do more research on the replacement requirements.

Commissioner Brewer stated that trees should be preserved for habitat and that the City used to employ a forester that would make recommendations for the types of trees that would be used in redevelopment projects. Commissioner Cook stated that that type of expertise would be helpful, and that he had some resources that he could share with staff to assist in that type of work in the future. Commissioner Cook also asked whether we could sort the tree inventory list by type, and possibly map out where certain species are located. Staff stated that they would investigate this.

Commissioner Bonthuis asked whether the City had design standards that would apply to this area. Staff stated that we do have architectural standards that would apply to the zoning district. Chair Kjonaas suggested that the Planning Commission review the design standards for the TOD-R and TOD-E areas, and determine whether any updates are needed. Chair Kjonaas also suggested that the Planning Commission have a joint meeting in the future with the Park Board to discuss the park improvements that will be occurring in this area.

Commissioner Brewer stated that as the Planning Commission reviews the standards for the area, that they should consider the constraints that may impact future development in terms of allowing for development that is able to be profitable for a developer.

## 2. **Comprehensive Plan Update**

Associate Planner Darnell introduced the process that the City will be undertaking to update the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Staff also discussed the 2015 System Statement that was shared with the City, and some of the minimum requirements for information that will need to be included in each section of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

The Commissioners reviewed the projections for growth in population, households, and employment that were generated by the Metropolitan Council.

Commissioner Brewer asked about the employment growth, and whether it could ever grow at the same rate as population. Commissioner Bonthuis stated that it would be difficult, as Anoka has a high population of senior citizens that may be out of the workforce. Commissioner Cook also noted that Anoka does have one of the highest rates of employment, on a per capita basis, in the metro area.

Commissioner Brahs asked whether households were measured by unit, or by property. Staff stated that each individual unit translated to a household. Commissioner Brahs also stated that some areas of the minimum requirements may not apply directly to Anoka because it is a fully developed city with unique characteristics and needs.

Commissioner Brewer asked how we can accommodate and plan for growth without knowledge of the other areas of expertise. Staff stated that the City would be working with experts from all departments to develop the Comprehensive Plan, and would ensure that the different sections of the plan would be compatible with each other.

Commissioner Brewer also asked how the Planning Commission could ensure that development was occurring as it was guided in the Comprehensive Plan. Commissioner Herrala stated that development and growth that occurs in the City will already have been considered in terms of whether it is consistent with the Comp Plan before it comes to the Planning Commission for review.

## 3. **Other Staff Updates**

Associate Planner Darnell reminded the Commissioners about the Comp Plan workshop that was scheduled for January 26<sup>th</sup>. Chair Kjonaas, Commissioner Bonthuis, and Commissioner Brahs all stated that they would be attending. Staff also suggested that the February work session meeting be rescheduled to 5:30 PM to allow for staff to prepare for the City Council meeting, and that the Commissioners should determine whether the regular March meeting could be rescheduled to another day or week.

Time of adjournment 7: 25 p.m.

Submitted by: Chuck Darnell, Associate Planner