

**WILLMAR PLANNING COMMISSION  
CITY OF WILLMAR, MN  
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2012**

**MINUTES**

1. The Willmar Planning Commission met on Wednesday, October 24, 2012, at 7:00 p.m. at the Willmar Municipal Utilities (Council Chambers).

\*\* Members Present: Mark Klema, Charlie Oakes, Andrew Engan, Nick Davis, Bob Poe, Virgilio Aguirre, Jr., and Randy Czarnetzki.

\*\* Members Absent: Scott Thaden, and Gary Geiger.

\*\* Others Present: Trudy Jones, Martin & Dorothy Shockley, Robert Friederich, Al Gregerson, Bruce D. Peterson, Director of Planning and Development Services, and Megan M. Sauer- Planner/Airport Manager.

2. MINUTES: The minutes of the October 10, 2012 meeting were approved as submitted.

3. CITY INITIATED REZONE FROM GB/LB TO CBD- FILE NO. 12-06: The public hearing opened at 7:01 p.m. Staff presented the rezone initiated by the Planning Commission of several blocks abutting the Central Business District (CBD) based off of the Down Town Plan adopted earlier in 2012 from the current zoning which is General Business (GB) or Limited Business (LB) to CBD on the following legally described property: ALL of Block 26, City of Willmar; ALL of Block 27, City of Willmar; ALL of Common Interest Community Number 23, A Planned Community, Heritage Plaza; ALL of Common Interest Community Number 23, A Planned Community, Heritage Plaza, First Amended Common Interest Community Plat; Common Interest Community Number 23, a Planned Community, Heritage Plaza, First Supplemental Common Interest community Plat; East Half of Block 47, City of Willmar; the East half of Block 66, City of Willmar; ALL of Block 65, First Addition to the City of Willmar; ALL of Block 64, First Addition to the City of Willmar; ALL of Block 63, First Addition to the City of Willmar; ALL of Block 52, City of Willmar; ALL of Block 41 City of Willmar (see file map).

Staff explained that the proposed rezone is an action step in the Downtown Plan to spur dense development and expand the core of the City with retail/residential spaces. The plan process verified that many people consider the Downtown larger than the actual CBD. There are some areas ripe for development and just outside the CBD. This is just a proactive process to make the area more developable for the private sector with the denser more flexible standards.

Al Gregerson a condo owner in the Phoenix on 5<sup>th</sup> building (520 5<sup>th</sup> St. SW) stated he and others in the building are most concerned about parking. The CBD doesn't have off-

street parking requirements and he's concerned the streets would have more cars and take away spots for the condo owners guests (many of whom are elderly).

Staff stated that via the Downtown Plan a parking study is also in the works for the whole CBD and solutions for any parking problems will be dealt with.

With no further comments from the public the hearing was closed 7:21 p.m.

The Planning Commission talked about liking being proactive and following through with a community developed plan for the CBD. These properties will also be available for Downtown Development Grants and other incentives to draw private development. They understand the parking concerns, but it will be a rarity to have the churches and WEAC filling all the streets with vehicles.

Mr. Oakes made a motion, seconded by Mr. Davis, to approve the zoning amendment and forward it onto the City Council for a hearing and Ordinance adoption.

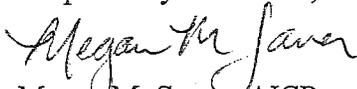
The motion carried.

4. DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE REZONE OF PROPERTY ALONG BUSINESS HWY. 71: Staff discussed a possible reuse of the Viking Hotel property on Business 71. An interested party would like to turn the hotel into efficiency apartments with some major rehab of the building. However, the property is commercially zoned and all the abutting properties are also commercially zoned.

The Planning Commission talked about not liking the idea of spot zoning the property and having an island of residential amongst the commercial properties. Staff added the possibility of amending the Zoning Ordinance to allow multi-family housing in the GB district with a conditional use permit. The Commission discussed that option, but also considered they'd be opening up that option to any and all GB properties in the City. The Commission asked for time to think about the options, peruse the commercial areas in town, and further discuss the matter at an upcoming meeting.

5. There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Megan M. Sauer, AICP  
Planner/Airport Manager

**PLANNING COMMISSION- OCTOBER 24, 2012**

**STAFF COMMENTS**

1. CITY INITIATED REZONE FROM GB/LB TO CDB- FILE NO. 12-06:

- The Planning Commission initiated the rezone of several blocks abutting the Central Business District (CBD) based off of the Down Town Plan adopted earlier in 2012 from the current zoning which varies from General Business (GB) and Limited Business (LB) legally described as follows: ALL of Block 26, City of Willmar; ALL of Block 27, City of Willmar; ALL of Common Interest Community Number 23, a Planned Community, Heritage Plaza, First Amended Common Interest Community Plat; Common Interest Community Number 23, A Planned Community, Heritage Plaza, First Supplemental Common Interest Community Plat; East half of Block 47, City of Willmar; the East half of Block 66, City of Willmar; ALL of Block 65, First Addition to the City of Willmar; ALL of Block 64, First Addition to the City of Willmar; ALL of Block 63, First Addition to the City of Willmar; ALL of Block 52, City of Willmar; and ALL of Block 41 City of Willmar (see file map).
- The abutting properties are varied from Industrial to commercial to R-4
- One of the guiding elements of the Down Town Plan was D1 Revise the Central Business Zoning district boundary. The meaning behind the rezoning is to include targeted redevelopment properties that currently lie near but outside the CBD boundaries to allow certain benefits to the types of business with the flexible and denser development standards etc.
- The element of rezoning the properties was an action step to be carried out by the City of Willmar as a short term goal.
- This is to allow future development to occur, not push out or negatively affect current land owners and uses. Those that are wishing to continue their current use in place will be able to do so.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve the rezone and forward it onto the City Council for a public hearing and Ordinance adoption.