

**MINUTES
CITY OF LONSDALE
REGULAR PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MEETING
JULY 20, 2017**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Voting Members: Jim Freid, Dave Dols, Ben Sticha, and Steve Cherney
Council Representative: Scott Pelava

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Joe Kodada

STAFF PRESENT:

City Planner Benjamin Baker and Chief of Police Jason Schmitz

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Dols called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm in the Council Chambers at 415 Central Street West.

2. AGENDA

Dols asked if anyone had any additions or deletions to the agenda.

A motion was made by Cherney and seconded by Freid to approve the agenda as presented. Vote for: Freid, Dols, Sticha, and Cherney; Against: None. Vote: 4-0. Motion carried.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Dols asked if anyone had any comments or corrections to the Minutes.

A motion was made by Cherney and seconded by Sticha to approve the Minutes from the May 18, 2017 Regular Meeting as presented. Vote for: Freid, Dols, Sticha, and Cherney; Against: None. Vote: 4-0. Motion carried.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

6. GENERAL BUSINESS

- a. Consider Approval of a Minor Subdivision for the Regional Stormwater Pond Located at 350 Central Street West (Lonsdale Feed Mill)

Baker stated that as a condition of the approved Development Agreement between the City of Lonsdale and Lonsdale Feed Mill, that the southwest portion of 350 Central Street West shall be split off and deeded over to the City of Lonsdale. The Planning Commissioners reviewed the attached maps and a certificate survey, created by Westergren & Associates, Inc., which showed the proposed parcel split, totaling 13,613 sq. ft. of land for the new pond area. Baker stated that the subject property was previously targeted by the City Engineer and Public Works Director as a potential location for a regional pond. He noted that the City would be responsible for maintenance of the pond after the parcel is deeded over to the City. The Commissioners asked about taxes, Baker said that 2017 property taxes will need to be paid in full before any transfer taxes place. The Commissioners stated that the Feed Mill property is a focal point of Lonsdale, and they recommended that the City keep the pond area looking nice.

A motion was made by Dols and seconded by Cherney to recommend approval of a minor subdivision for the regional stormwater pond located at 350 Central Street West, Lonsdale Feed Mill. Vote for: Freid, Dols, Sticha, and Cherney; Against: None. Vote: 4-0. Motion carried.

- b. Consider a Request by Kathy Kahler, 315 2nd Avenue SW, to Amend the City Code to Permit “Beekeeping” as a “License” Instead of a “Conditional Use Permit”

Baker stated that local resident, Kathy Kahler, attended the June 8, 2017 City Council meeting, where she asked the Council to consider amending the application process for beekeeping, so that it is more affordable. Baker explained that beekeeping is currently allowed as Conditional Use Permit with an application fee of \$300 + \$750 escrow. He read through the current regulations related to beekeeping in Lonsdale.

Baker stated that expert beekeeper, Kathy Smith, who was recommended by Pollinate Minnesota was in attendance at the meeting to help answer any questions that the Planning Commissioners may have about beekeeping and honey bees. Baker noted that Smith has helped other municipalities in Minnesota create appropriate beekeeping regulations. Smith stated that she has a B.S. degree in Wildlife Management and Masters coursework in Parks & Recreation Management along with Minors in Forestry and Biology. She said that she has worked for the DNR for over 25 years. Smith said that she was Vice-President of the Minnesota Hobby Beekeepers Association (MHBA) from 2006-2008. She also said that she is part of a team of five from MHBA who are in the process of developing a model ordinance for cities to use a guide.

Smith provided a significant amount of detailed information about honeybees and beekeeping. She explained the differences between hornets, yellow jackets, and wasps, and other bees. She talked about common fears that people typically have about bees, including: swarms, the likelihood of being stung, and allergic reactions. She explained how important bees are for pollinating human food and perfecting fruits.

Smith stated that the majority of beekeepers are very passionate about their hobby, and she said that beekeepers are going to do whatever it takes to help their hives survive due to the high cost of gear, equipment, and the initial cost of a colony. Freid stated that he moved to the city to get away from farm animals. He said that he is against farm animals and beekeeping in town and he wouldn't want any in his neighborhood. Smith said Minnesota's largest cities allow beekeeping. She asked Freid what his fears were, and Smith stated that more education about honeybees is typically needed. She asked Police Chief Schmitz if there have been any bee complaints over the last five years. Schmitz said no. On comparison, Smith wondered how many people would be afraid of a Rottweiler or other dangerous dog. She also wondered how many dog and cat complaints there have been over the years. Smith encouraged everyone to visit a live hive before any decisions are made, and she asked the Commissioners to give bees a chance. In regard to swarms, Smith stated that any beekeeper would be swift to collect a swarm. Smith said that a swarm is just a homeless colony, and she said that if you see a swarm to please call a local beekeeper or the Minnesota bee-lab, and they will be there quickly. Dols stated that he recently worked on roof with bees around, and he said that the bees never bothered the construction crew. He reminded everyone that bees are currently allowed in town.

Kahler and Smith talked about the environmental and pollination benefits of honeybees. They also talked about swarms and mites. Smith stated that over the last decade hobby beeping has gone from 40 members to over 400 members. Smith provided guideline suggestions for cities to require of beekeepers, including: location/setbacks, license cost, training certificate, neighbor notice, hive density, location, clean water source, and registration. Smith explained that hive entrances should be faced toward the interior of a property, and she talked about the fly patterns of bees. Smith stated that bees typically aren't an issue, and she suggested that cities should be more concerned about regulations for dogs and cats. The Commissioners asked Smith and Kahler more questions about bees. They talked about equipment costs, certification classes, inspections, spray drift, and beekeeping scholarships for kids. Cherney stated that since bees are already allowed, the real topic at hand is the application fee. He suggested that best practices and similar regulations that of the City of Edina be implemented in Lonsdale. The Commissioners wondered if the City Council should determine the cost of a beekeeping license or permit.

Dols stated that the Planning Commission will continue its discussion on beekeeping at their next meeting.

c. Consider a Request by the Lonsdale Police Department to Amend the City Code to Specify Language Regarding Low Powered Vehicles

The Commissioners reviewed information and regulations pertaining to low powered vehicles and special vehicles operating on City streets. Baker stated that the City currently does not have specific regulations for golf carts and similar vehicles. He said that if a City does not specifically permit the use of these special vehicles, then they may not operate on City streets. Police Chief Schmitz provided more details on the issue, and he asked the Commissioners for direction on whether or not these types of vehicles should be regulated or prohibited. The Commissioners expressed that their biggest concern is younger children who are driving these vehicles. Pelava suggested that special vehicles be required to have liability insurance.

Freid wondered why the Commission should consider more regulations, if the Police Department is having trouble enforcing the City's current regulations. Dols said that anyone that spots violations occurring, should contact the Police Department right away. After further discussion on the subject, the Commissioners agreed that the City should focus their future discussions on golf carts first, ATVs second, and then side-by-sides. The Commissioners also wondered how drones and remote control airplanes are regulated. Schmitz said that drones need a FCC license now due to the cameras.

7. MISCELLANEOUS

- City Project Updates:

Baker provided the Planning Commission with updates on the Area No. 5 Project, Pond View Drive Extension Project, Well Drilling Project, and Main Street South Site plans. He also relayed stats on new home permits and total permits issued over the past 6-months.

- Joint Government Training Services (GTS) Meeting with Area Cities in August/September. Baker asked if the Commissioners were interested in attending a GTS training session along with other area cities sometime over the next few months. The Commissioners all expressed interest in attending such an event.
- Tree Planting Requirements for 629 Industrial Drive SE. Baker stated that City Staff has a meeting scheduled for July 24th with Lonsdale Packaging to discuss the owner's hesitation to plant the required 20 trees, as shown on the approved landscape plan, which was approved in May 2017 along with Lonsdale Packaging's Variance/Easement Vacation/Site Plan approval. The Planning Commissioners all agreed that the approved landscape plan, which showed 20 evergreen trees, should be followed. The Commissioners questioned why Lonsdale Packaging wouldn't have to follow the approved plan and City Code regulations. They noted that at least seven other businesses in town have all recently had to plant trees along with similar expansions, additions, and new building projects. Cherney stated that if Lonsdale Packaging wants to pursue a major change to the approved site/landscaping plan, then they should have to resubmit and pay for another land use application and public hearing.

8. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Cherney and seconded by Sticha to adjourn the meeting. Vote for: Freid, Dols, Sticha, and Cherney; Against: None. Vote: 4-0. Motion carried. The meeting ended at 8:48 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Benjamin Baker, City Planner