

**MINUTES
CITY OF LONSDALE
REGULAR PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MEETING
AUGUST 17, 2017**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

STAFF PRESENT:

City Planner Benjamin Baker

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 Kodada and seconded by Freid to approve the agenda as presented. Vote for: Freid, Kodada, Dols, Cherney, and Sticha; Against: None. Vote: 5-0. Motion carried.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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

A motion was made by Kodada and seconded by Sticha to approve the Minutes from the July 20, 2017 Regular Meeting as presented. Vote for: Freid, Kodada, Dols, Cherney, and Sticha; Against: None. Vote: 5-0. Motion carried.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

6. GENERAL BUSINESS

a. Introduction/Presentation from Travis Dimond Manore, Vice President of Construction for LGI Homes - Minneapolis-St. Paul Division

Travis Dimond Manore, of LGI Homes, presented a detailed presentation to the Planning Commission at the front table. Manore went through the history of the company since 2003. He said that LGI, based out of Huston, TX, is currently the 15th largest home builder in the United States, with the goal of being in the top 5 in the next couple of years. Manore stated that LGI will be constructing new homes, targeted towards first-time home owners and current renters, on their 74 lots in Lonsdale. Manore clarified that LGI never rents their homes out. He said that LGI builds in sets of 3 per week. He noted that LGI has closed over 19,000 homes. Manore said that the company has a 27.4% gross profit margin to due to its high volume and efficiency business plan. He stated that LGI is making its way into Minnesota and the Upper-Midwest for the first time in cities including: Big Lake, Lonsdale, and Montrose, all located around 35 miles away from Minneapolis. He noted that 50 homes have already been constructed in Big Lake. Manore stated that LGI plans to erect a sales center that will be open 359 days a year and house 2-5 local sales representatives. He noted that LGI does not provide financing, but he said that a financing option station/person will be available in the sales center. He said that there are five different model homes to choose from. Manore said that LGI doesn't place similar models next to each other. He said that it typically takes about three months for their construction crews to finish a home. He stated that any local contractors can bid on the work, and they pay their vendors every week. Manore said that they keep their job sites neat and orderly.

Freid asked if LGI would consider adding a third-stall garage or customizing the interiors or exteriors of their standard home plans. Cherney asked if LGI would at least complete a deck instead of leaving a ledger board. Manore said that it is not part of LGI's marketing model, and he said that LGI builds the same home models on 100% speculation. Manore stated that LGI's homes will not negatively affect surrounding home values. Pelava asked if LGI would look to match surrounding home size/designs. Audience member John Duban asked if LGI would be providing basements or storm shelter rooms inside their homes in case of strong winds or tornados. Manore said that only their lookout models will have ½ basements.

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"

The Planning Commission reviewed a staff report on beekeeping along with proposed text amendments and information from hobby beekeeping expert Kathy Smith. Baker stated that the Planning Commission heard from Smith and Kathy Kahler at their previous meeting. Baker asked the Commission for direction on: 1) whether or not "beekeeping" should be processed as a license or conditional use permit, and 2) should the City adopt specific regulations for beekeeping as an ordinance, policy, or just use best management practices as the standard. Freid stated that he is not in favor of allowing animals in town, and he suggested keeping the application as a CUP, which has a higher application fee, to discourage residents from applying for a beekeeping permit. Kahler

stated that due to the high cost of hobby beekeeping, that only serious and invested people will apply for a beekeeping license or permit. Dols agreed with Kathler, and he stated that Lonsdale's current process and permit cost is steep compared to other cities. Kodada asked what would be the easiest for City staff. Baker stated that he did check with the City Attorney, and she said that requiring a license for \$100.00 was reasonable. He said that the City Attorney also suggested that properties with bee colonies should be required to cover any additional inspection services conducted by any beekeeping consultants contracted by the City.

A motion was made by Cherney and seconded by Dols to recommend approval of a \$100.00 license fee for beekeeping, instead of a requiring a Conditional Use Permit (\$300.00 application fee and \$750.00 escrow). Vote for: Kodada, Dols, Cherney, and Sticha; Against: Freid. Vote: 4-1. Motion carried.

The Commissioners further discussed fears and potential complaints about bees and beekeeping. The Commission discussed the impact of beekeeping on neighboring properties. Kahler provided information on beekeeping training courses. The Planning Commission suggested gathering a list of qualified certificate beekeeping classes in the area. Kahler stated that she is now on the swarm chasers list.

The majority of Commissioners agreed that the City should adopt a polity that references best management practices to regulate beekeeping in Lonsdale. They agreed that the following items should be addressed in the policy: training certificate, lot size/hive density, notification of neighbors, ownership, flight pattern or beelines, hive location, clean water source, registration, and equipment upkeep.

A motion was made by Cherney and seconded by Sticha to recommend creating a policy to reference best management practices for beekeeping. Vote for: Kodada, Dols, Cherney, and Sticha; Against: Freid. Vote: 4-1. Motion carried.

The Commission stated that they could review the final policy and best management practices at an upcoming meeting.

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

The Planning Commission continued their discussion on regulating special low powered vehicles. Baker noted that the City does currently have some basic regulations for snowmobiles and ATVs, but not for golf carts. He stated that the Lonsdale Police Department has requested that the City come up with rules for golf carts so that people can legally operate golf carts on City streets. The Commissioners reviewed relevant information from the League of Minnesota Cities along with ordinance and map examples from other Minnesota cities.

Freid stated that he was concerned with kids driving and riding in special vehicles around town. He questioned what the age limits were for the different types of low powered vehicles. Freid also stated that the Police Department should enforce all motorized vehicles riding on the walking paths and trails. Pelava mentioned that the State does host ATV training courses. The Commissioners briefly discussed where such vehicles should be allowed and how they would be regulated during special events, such as Community Days. The Commission directed Staff to get more information on age requirements. The Commissioners agreed that the topic could be further discussed at upcoming meetings.

d. Review of Neighborhood Design Standards for New Single-Family Homes

The Commissioners reviewed Ordinance 2015-262 (City Code §153.074), neighborhood covenants for Willow Creek Heights, and the PUD Agreement for the Villas of Willow Creek Heights III. They also reviewed an example of a low quality home recently constructed in new subdivision in Montgomery, MN and a garage constructed on a new development vacant lot in New Prague. Baker stated that the intent of Ordinance 2016-262 was to help prevent lower quality homes, in terms design, size, and value, from being constructed in existing neighborhoods, where homes may be larger in size, have more design features, and higher property values. He said that basically the 2015 ordinance amendment was adopted by the City to require new home construction, to at a minimum, be similar to the existing housing stock in those neighborhoods.

Baker stated that after City Staff's recent initial review of LGI's proposed home plans, Staff found that LGI's homes did not fit in with existing homes/neighborhoods in terms of design and home size. He said that some of their homes did not meet the size requirements in Willow Creek Heights and most of their exterior façade designs were lacking curb appeal compared to existing homes in RayAnn Acres, Harvest Pond, and especially Willow Creek Heights. The Planning Commission strongly advised City Staff that LGI's homes need to have at least a 3-stall garage and fit in with the existing home designs in those three neighborhoods.

A motion was made by Kodada and seconded by Cherney to recommend that the City proceed as follows:

- First: Negotiate and/or require that LGI Homes increase their design standards to better “fit in” with existing homes/neighborhoods per Ordinance 2015-262.
- Second: Amend Ordinance 2016-262 as-soon-as-possible to detail exact design standard requirements that are acceptable to the City and help provide home builders with specific guidelines for home design.
- Third: Enact a moratorium, or time out, on new housing construction, to provide:
 - 1) adequate time for the City and LGI to come to an agreement on home design; or
 - 2) adequate time for the Planning Commission & City Council to clarify exact design standards required in order for LGI’s homes to “fit in” with existing neighborhoods.

Vote for: Freid, Kodada, Dols, Cherney, and Sticha; Against: None. Vote: 5-0. Motion carried.

Knowing the impact that LGI’s homes will have on Lonsdale, Freid, Kodada, Cherney, and Sticha all stated that they would be available next week to help City Staff explain to LGI the importance for their home plans to fit in better with existing homes and neighborhoods.

- e. Overview on Minnesota State Demographic Center Presentation to Rice County Staff
In the interest of time, this Agenda Item was tabled until a future meeting.

7. MISCELLANEOUS

8. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Kodada and seconded by Cherney to adjourn the meeting. Vote for: Freid, Kodada, Dols, Cherney, and Sticha; Against: None. Vote: 5-0. Motion carried. The meeting ended at 8:35 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Benjamin Baker, City Planner