

City of Winsted
Downtown Vibrancy Commission
Winsted City Hall – Lewis Room
Tuesday, March 11, 2014
3:00 p.m.

Downtown Vibrancy Commission Members Present: Nancy Fasching
Chip Guggemos
Joe Swanson

Downtown Vibrancy Commission Members Absent: Anne Schulenberg

Staff Present: Mayor Steve Stotko, City Council Liaison
Amanda Zeidler, Utility Billing & Payroll Clerk

1) Call the Meeting to Order

Mr. Chip Guggemos, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

2) Approval of Minutes – February 11, 2014

Ms. Nancy Fasching made a motion to approve the minutes of the Downtown Vibrancy Commission Meeting on February 11, 2014. Mr. Joe Swanson seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

3) No Staff Report.

4) No Old Business.

5) New Business

a) Winsted Area Chamber of Commerce Update – Jeff Campbell

Mr. Jeff Campbell, President of the Winsted Area Chamber of Commerce was present to provide an update regarding the proposed hotel in Winsted. Mr. Campbell stated that the feasibility study has been completed and had a very positive outcome. Mr. Campbell stated that the next step is to discuss possible locations for the hotel.

The Downtown Vibrancy Commission discussed potential locations for the proposed hotel. Mr. Campbell stated that the developer acknowledged that it will be a destination hotel, not one that will pull traffic off of McLeod County Road One (1). Mr. Campbell added that there will still be a need for the existing motel in Winsted.

The Downtown Vibrancy Commission discussed the connection to Winsted's downtown, the Luce Line Trail, Winsted Lake, and the theme in the Promenade. They also discussed possible facilities and amenities for the hotel. Mr. Guggemos stated that he will report to the City Council that the Downtown Vibrancy Commission is in support of locating the hotel in downtown Winsted.

b) C-1 Commercial District Ordinance Discussion

Mr. Guggemos stated that Mr. Clay Wilfahrt, Winsted City Administrator requested that the Downtown Vibrancy discuss the C-1 Commercial District Zoning Ordinance and the possibility of restricting churches or assembly-type locations in the downtown. Mr. Guggemos stated that City Staff was recently made aware of a church that has moved in to the building at 182 Main Avenue West.

Mayor Stotko stated that the building is in a C-1 Commercial District according to the City's zoning map. He stated that staff reviewed the City's zoning ordinance, and has concluded that the ordinance does not currently allow churches as a permitted or conditional use in C-1 Commercial Districts; therefore barring a change in the ordinance, the church is out of compliance with City zoning ordinances.

Mayor Stotko stated that the City has to change the ordinance or follow the ordinance. He clarified that the ordinance does not rule out churches; however, churches are not listed as a permitted use in the C-1 zoning ordinance. Mayor Stotko stated that when this ordinance was approved, a lot of people wanted to change their storefronts into housing, so the City listed the uses that were allowed. He added that he wants to make sure that there is consistency.

Mayor Stotko stated that the City could also change the zoning ordinance to allow churches in the downtown area. Zoning is typically used to keep similar properties together, and churches are often seen as dissimilar to businesses since they are only occupied for a small part of each week. He added that staff reviewed ordinances of ten (10) communities and found two (2) that allow churches in the zoning district comparable to Winsted's C-1 Commercial District. Mayor Stotko stated that Winsted's ordinance does contain language that allows for similar uses in the

downtown area such as clubs and lodges, and according to an information memo from the League of Minnesota Cities, regarding the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA), they recommend allowing religious uses when similar uses are present. Because of that, staff would recommend that regardless of what is done with the individual church, the ordinance be reviewed.

Mr. Guggemos stated that he is in favor of reviewing the ordinance; however he would like to leave it open to allow uses such as ministries or rental facilities that are open to the public. Ms. Fasching believes that more research needs to be done by the City's consultants to see what is legal or not. Mayor Stotko stated that this church will most likely be remedied, but asked where the Downtown Vibrancy Commission stands on future uses?

Mayor Stotko stated that this discussion will take place at a Planning Commission meeting. Mayor Stotko reviewed the current list of permitted uses and permitted accessory uses from the C-1 zoning ordinance. Mayor Stotko stated that the City will have John Anderson, Municipal Development Group, review the ordinance and the memo from the League of Minnesota Cities, and then address the Planning Commission.

The Downtown Vibrancy Commission agreed that they would like to primarily maintain businesses and services in the downtown, and that the ordinance needs to be updated and revised.

6) Announcements

a) Proposed Training Center

Mr. Campbell stated that an informational meeting will be held at Winsted City Hall on Tuesday, March 18, 2014, for businesses to learn more about a proposed training center that will be located at 150-2nd Street South in Winsted. He stated that the goal is to use this building for a training center that Dunwoody College of Technology would manage the training. Area businesses are being asked to help fund the program or provide equipment. The training program would train four (4) or five (5) people at a time, and be more of a certificate program, than an accreditation. A person would learn a skill, get a certificate for the program, and then be hired by a local business to perform that skill. Mr. Campbell stated that the hope is to have the training center open in the fall, 2014. He added that fifteen (15) area businesses will be represented at the information meeting on March 18th.

b) Communication With Downtown Business Owners

Mr. Guggemos stated that he has spoken with a few of the downtown business and property owners since the last Downtown Vibrancy Commission meeting. Mr. Guggemos summarized his conversations with the business and property owners.

The Downtown Vibrancy Commission briefly discussed ideas for improving the downtown buildings and methods to begin transforming the downtown. Mayor Stotko made a recommendation to complete an improvement project with one (1) property owner in 2014 to get the ball rolling and find out what will work and what needs to improve before working with other building owners. The Downtown Vibrancy Commission was in agreement with Mayor Stotko and Ms. Fasching stated that it is a great place to start.

Mr. Guggemos, Mr. Swanson, and Mayor Stotko agreed to take a walking tour of the downtown at the close of the formal meeting.

7) Adjournment

Mr. Swanson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Fasching seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0. The meeting adjourned at 4:26 p.m.

Clay Wilfahrt

Clay Wilfahrt,
City Administrator
City of Winsted

ATTEST:

Amanda J. Zeidler

Amanda J. Zeidler,
Utility Billing & Payroll Clerk
City of Winsted