

City of Winsted
Planning Commission
City Council Chambers
April 9, 2012
6:00 p.m.

Present: JoLynn Cafferty
Dan Dickhausen
Marvin Ebersperger
Max Fasching
Mike Guggemos
Tom Ollig – Council Liaison

Staff Present: Brad Martens, City Administrator
Raquel Kirchoff, Administrative Assistant

1) Call the Meeting to Order

Mr. Ebersperger called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2) Approval of Minutes

Ms. Cafferty motioned to approve the minutes from the Planning Commission Meeting on March 12, 2012. Mr. Guggemos seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

3) Public Hearings

4) Old Business

5) New Business

Mr. Martens stated that the alternative energy was not ready for review at this meeting, but would be available for review at the next Planning Commission meeting.

a) Signage Request

Mr. Martens stated that City staff was recently approached by a property owner of a downtown building questioning whether a “sandwich board” style sign was permitted to be used on the sidewalk.

Martens stated that a brief review of the current Sign Ordinance found that such signs are not permitted in the C-1 Commercial Downtown Business District and that properties zoned in the Highway Commercial and Industrial Districts may place one free standing temporary banner or portable sign on a property.

Martens displayed examples of sandwich board signs and stated that allowing the signage request would require an amendment to the Sign Ordinance. He asked for the Planning Commission to provide input regarding sandwich board signs.

Council Liaison Ollig stated that it would be beneficial to create a standard for this type of sign in the downtown area. Mr. Fasching stated that a member of the Chamber of Commerce had approached him and asked that the City should do whatever is possible to support the downtown businesses and he is of the same opinion.

Ms. Cafferty stated that other cities have language in their ordinances regarding sandwich board signs, and noted that other cities require a Certificate of Insurance when businesses

apply for this type of sign because of damage that can be caused by these signs due to wind. She continued by describing specific language from other cities that requires four feet of open sidewalk for pedestrian traffic, requires a height restriction on signs, signs must be securely anchored, a limit of one sandwich sign per establishment and at least a distance of ten feet between each sign.

The Planning Commission members discussed the following areas regarding allowing sandwich board signs:

- Allowing this type of sign if they were only displayed on sidewalks during business hours so that they are not left out overnight.
- Downtown sidewalks were wide enough to display these signs and to allow room for all varieties of pedestrians (handicapped with wheelchairs, handicapped with walkers, families with strollers, individuals, etcetera).
- Specifications written to restrict the sign to be placed close to the building, or close to the curb, but keeping in mind that they need to be placed so that cars will not hit them when parking.
- Must decide whether to require a tie down anchoring system or require a weighted sign.
- Business owners must obtain a sign permit so that a Certificate of Insurance is required for the sign. The liability for any damages or injury because of the sign would be the responsibility of the business owner.
- Size requirements must be specified.
- Both parallel parking and diagonal parking need to be considered and specifications created for both for placement of the signs. The downtown area has both types of parking.
- Creating a separate section in the Sign Ordinance for sandwich board signs instead of trying to categorize them into temporary signs.
- Prohibiting illuminated sandwich board signs.

Mr. Fasching asked if the sandwich board signs would distract traffic by reflective material in them or in other ways. Mr. Martens responded that within the current Sign Ordinance, there is a section for prohibited signs that regulates signs for safety reasons and this section specifies requirements regarding reflectivity.

Mr. Fasching asked if the City has ever addressed sign spinners, which are people dressed up in costumes outside of businesses or near streets to attract businesses, within the Sign Ordinance. Mr. Martens stated that as long as the sign spinner is not affecting public safety or interfering with traffic signs, they should not have to be addressed specifically in the Sign Ordinance.

Council Liaison Ollig requested that the width of the downtown sidewalks be measured and brought back to a future meeting, and Mr. Martens stated that he would provide this at a future meeting.

The Planning Commission members were in favor of allowing sandwich board signs in the downtown area as long as the sidewalk width was wide enough to allow for other pedestrian traffic with the signs and also if the areas previously listed were addressed.

Mr. Martens stated that he would research a few select cities for language examples and provide them at a future meeting. Ms. Cafferty suggested that Martens look to the City of Princeton and the City of Hastings.

Mr. Ebersperger stated that after more information has been gathered, the Planning Commission would review the subject again at a future meeting.

b) Crafters Retreat Request

Mr. Martens stated that City staff was recently approached by an individual who may be interested in purchasing a property in the City of Winsted to be used as a "Crafters Retreat".

Martens explained that a Crafters Retreat is similar to a bed and breakfast in that small groups rent out a property for a weekend and use the space to do craft work that includes scrapbooking, quilting, beading, knitting, etcetera. He continued by stating that this type of retreat is gaining popularity throughout Minnesota and across the United States.

Martens displayed pictures of what rooms look like for a Crafters Retreat and listed some communities in Minnesota that have them.

Martens stated that the individual that wants to provide a Crafters Retreat thinks that the ideal location in Winsted would be a property adjacent to Winsted Lake which would provide a beautiful setting to the crafters; however, Martens stated that the problem with this is that nearly all property along Winsted Lake is zoned R-1 which does not allow for this use.

Martens stated that property zoned R-2 Multiple Family Residential District does allow "Boarding and Rooming Houses". These are defined as follows:

Boarding House: A building other than a hotel where, for compensation and prearrangement for definite periods, meals or lodging and meals are provided to three (3) or more persons, not of the principal family therein, pursuant to previous arrangements and not to anyone who may apply, but not including a building providing these services for more than ten (10) persons.

Rooming House: A rooming house shall be construed to mean any dwelling occupied in any such manner that certain rooms in excess of those used by members of the immediate family and occupied as a home or family unit, are leased or rented to persons outside of the family without any attempt to provide therein cooking or kitchen accommodations, providing the accommodations are not provided for more than ten (10) persons.

Martens displayed the current Zoning Map and stated that the only R-2 Multiple Family Residential District the City has is a small area in the Winsted on the Lake development where multi-family homes are located, and further stated that there is not an opportunity for anyone to come in and open a Crafters Retreat or a Bed and Breakfast on the lake. Mr. Martens asked the Planning Commission members if they were interested in allowing this type of request in an R-1 Single Family Residential District.

Mr. Guggemos asked if the interested individual could obtain this through the Conditional Use Process. Mr. Martens responded that with the current ordinance, the individual would need a variance and that would be hard to prove. To use the Conditional Use process, the ordinance would need to be re-written to define R-1 Single Family Residential differently and a Public Hearing would need to be held each time a request came in.

The Planning Commission members discussed allowing a Crafters Retreat to be placed in an R-1 Single Family Residential District and were not in favor of it because this use does not fit into an R-1 Single Family Residential definition and due to the different circumstances that would arise depending on what property a Crafters Retreat would be held at. Some neighbors of the retreat may not be in favor of having this in their neighborhood.

The Planning Commission members did see a better fit for this type of use in a Commercial District and suggested that the individual that was interested in providing a Crafters Retreat

contact some of the building owners in the downtown area, to see if there was a possibility for this use in one of those buildings.

6) Other Business

7) Adjournment

Fasching motioned to adjourn the meeting. Cafferty seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Brad Martens

Brad Martens,
City Administrator
City of Winsted

ATTEST:

Raquel Kirchoff

Raquel Kirchoff,
Administrative Assistant
City of Winsted