



**CITY OF MONTROSE  
200 CENTER AVENUE SOUTH  
MONTROSE, MINNESOTA 55363  
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
September 17, 2008**

Pursuant to call and notice, the Montrose Planning and Zoning Commission met in regular session on Wednesday, September 17, 2008.

Those present were Commissioners, Cory DeWitte, Roy Henry, Keith Roseen, Tim Hackenmiller, Georgina-Stanley-Woidyla and Chuck Smallwood.

Sharon Knodel, liaison, Bob Kirmis, city planner, Justin Kannas, city engineer and Barb Swanson, administrator were also present.

Absent: Alfred Mohring

**MISSION STATEMENT**

*The Planning Commission, serving a key leadership role as an advisory body to the City Council, reviews and evaluates land use issues utilizing zoning and subdivision regulations to ensure conformity to the Comprehensive Plan and community values, to manage the future growth of Montrose.*

**Agenda**

Motion by Smallwood, seconded by Hackenmiller, to approve the agenda with the following addition: Sharon Knodel to speak regarding the Expo. Carried 6-0.

**Approval of Minutes**

Motion by Hackenmiller, seconded by Smallwood, to approve the August 20, 2008 minutes as presented. Carried 6-0.

Cory DeWitte, chair, read the public hearing procedures included in the packets

## **Public Hearing – Parks and Trails Plan Update 7:10pm**

Bob Kirmis, city planner, reviewed the Parks and Trails Plan update from the planners memorandum dated August 25, 2008.

### **BACKGROUND**

Attached, please find a draft version of the Montrose Parks and Trails Plan Update dated September 2008. The Plan represents an update of the 2003 Plan and has been prompted in large part by comments received from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

In their recent review of the City's Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR), the DNR identified a number of environmentally sensitive areas within the City's ultimate growth boundary which, in the opinion of both the DNR and City Staff, are worthy of future park and/or trail consideration.

In addition to identifying the park search areas suggested by the DNR, the draft Plan also updates a variety of outdated information related to the City's existing park and trail system.

### **SUMMARY OF CHANGES**

The following is a summary of changes to the 2003 Parks and Trails Plan:

1. Previous references to the City's 2002 Comprehensive Plan have been changed to reference the City's 2007 Comprehensive Plan Update.
2. The study area boundaries within Park Plan have been expanded to mimic the study area boundaries of the City's AUAR and 2007 Comprehensive Plan Update.
3. Existing facility references have been updated. The Plan Update references both recent park improvements (made since 2003) as well as new City parks. New parks include Rock Brook, Forest Creek, Preserve of Montrose and White Tail Ridge.

Accordingly, the Existing Park and Trail Facilities map has been updated to incorporate facility changes that have occurred since 2003.

4. The description of the Park Commission has been changed to reference a seven member body rather than five members as stated in the 2003 Plan.
5. "Carver Park" has been re-named "Carver Field".

6. In the Lion's Park recommendations, the previous reference to the telephone company property has been changed to note the recent sale of the land to the VFW.
7. A number of park search areas have been changed or added to the Parks and Trails Plan based upon comments received from the DNR. These include the following:
  - The park search area north of the sewage treatment plant has been shifted southward to the industrially guided property south of the plant site. In association with such change, the industrially guided land is proposed to be "re-designated" for low density residential use.
  - The park search area south of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street and east of Meridian Avenue has been shifted to the south side of the Woodland State Wildlife Management Area. Such change responds to existing development patterns/constraints and would provide a desirable link between the wildlife management area and Fountain Lake to the east.
  - The area southeast of Malardi Lake has been added as a park search area. According to the DNR, such area is characterized by numerous natural features. The park would essentially become a southerly extension of the existing Malardi State Wildlife Management Area and become part of a large scale trail system linking the two wildlife management areas (north and south of U.S. Highway 12).

The Park and Trail Plan map has been updated to reflect the above described changes.

8. The following trails have been added to the Park and Trail Plan as suggested by the DNR:
  - Between the Malardi Lake and Woodland State Wildlife Management Areas.
  - In the extreme northwest corner of the study area, along the existing drainageway.
  - South of 70<sup>th</sup> Street and west of County Road 110 (along an existing drainageway).

The Park and Trail Plan map has been updated to reflect the above described changes.

9. The park dedication fee section has been changed to reference the City's current park dedication fees.

For comparative purposes, the existing 2003 version of the Park and Trail Plan Map is attached for reference.

## **LAND USE PLAN AMENDMENT**

In review of the City's AUAR, the DNR questioned the appropriateness of future industrial uses south of the City's sewer treatment plan between State Highway 25 and the Woodland State Wildlife Management Area. The Planning Commission may recall that such industrial land use designation was prompted in part by an industrial development proposal which was ultimately withdrawn. The DNR identified the area as being environmentally sensitive and has recommended less intense use of the property. City Staff concurs with this recommendation and believes low density residential development represents a more appropriate use of the land.

Under a separate, City initiated application, the Planning Commission will be considering an amendment to the Land Use Plan to change the guided use of the property from industrial to low density residential.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The draft Parks and Trails Plan Update was reviewed and recommended for approval by the Park Commission on August 12, 2008.

DeWitte asked if there was anyone who wished to speak in favor or opposition of this item, if so they should address the chair at the podium.

Dave Emon asked if this was the public hearing regarding the land use south of the Waste Water treatment Plant. Emon was informed that was the next item on the agenda.

No one from the public spoke regarding the Parks and Trails Plan Update.

## **The public hearing was closed at 7:12pm**

Hackenmiller, commissioner asked that Kirmis, city planner, clarify the park search areas and changes referenced.

Kirmis reviewed the changes referenced on the map displayed. (Page 5, #7 and page 5 #8 in the memorandum).

### **Parks and Trails Plan Action**

Motion by DeWitte, seconded by Roseen, to recommend approval of the Parks and Trails Plan Update. Carried 6-0.

### **Public Hearing – Comprehensive Plan Amendment 7:35 pm**

Bob Kirmis, city planner, reviewed the Comprehensive Plan Amendment from the planners memorandum dated September 9, 2008.

## **BACKGROUND**

**The City of Montrose has initiated a Comprehensive Plan amendment to change the guided land use of an approximate 55 acre tract of land located south of the City's sewer treatment plant and east of State Highway 25 from "Industrial" to "Low Density Residential".**

The change in land use designation is being considered in part by comments received from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in their review of the City's Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR).

The DNR is especially concerned with wildlife habitat and maintaining a high quality habitat around and adjacent to Woodland Wildlife Management Area. The DNR indicates that this is one of the best Wildlife Management Areas in Wright County. As a result, the DNR is concerned about preserving existing wetlands and trees, especially immediately adjacent to the wildlife management area. The subject parcel does contain significant size trees and wetlands. The parcel also has significant grade change throughout. To accommodate industrial use, significant grading and clearing would be necessary. For these reasons, the DNR recommends that the subject parcel not be designated as industrial use.

The subject property presently lies outside of the Montrose limits but lies within the City's ultimate growth boundary.

Attached for reference:

- Exhibit A - Site Location
- Exhibit B - Current Land Use Plan
- Exhibit C - Proposed Land Use Plan

## **ISSUES ANALYSIS**

Comprehensive Plan. The Land Use Plan as contained in the City's 2007 Comprehensive Plan Update is intended to depict the general desired locations of future land uses in the City. The Plan calls for industrial use of the subject site.

The current industrial land use designation of the subject property is based in part upon the following factors:

- State Highway 25 access.
- Adjacency to the sewage treatment plant (an existing use having an "industrial" character).
- A previous industrial use development proposal located just north of the subject property.

Land Use Compatibility. As part of the amendment request, a determination should be made that the proposed use is compatible with existing and long term surrounding land uses.

The following is a listing of existing land uses, guided land uses and zoning designations that surround the subject property:

Direction	Existing Land Use	Guided Land Use	Zoning
North	Public (Sewage Treatment Plant)	Public/Semi-Public	INS, Institutional
South	Public (Woodland WMA)	Public/Semi-Public	NA (within Township)
East	Public (Woodland WMA)	NA (wetland)	NA (within Township)
West	Undeveloped	Medium Density Residential	NA (within Township)

In consideration of the site's natural features (topography and wetland infringement) as well as applicable shoreland overlay district requirements which limit impervious surface coverage, the site is not considered ideally suited for future industrial use.

The degree of compatibility of low density residential use with surrounding land uses is dependent upon in part upon subdivision design. While low density residential use are considered compatible with the Woodland Management Areas to the south and east, buffering/screening to the north and west (along State Highway 25) will be necessary to mitigate impacts of the adjacent highway and sewer treatment plant.

Zoning. As indicated, the subject site currently lies outside of the City limits. At such time when the property is annexed and a development proposal is received, the site would then be zoned for low density residential use.

Park Plan Update. In the pending update of the City's Park's and Trail's Plan, the Park Commission has recommended that a park search area be established over the subject

property. Such designation is basically a southwesterly shift of a previously established park search area. The recommendation was made both in regard to the need for such a park facility in the area and a desire to preserve the site's natural features (as referenced by the DNR).

## RECOMMENDATION

The proposed land use plan amendment reflects a specific recommendation of the DNR in their review of the City's AUAR. The DNR identified the subject site as being environmentally sensitive and has recommended less intense use of the property.

City Staff concurs with the recommendation of the DNR and believes low density residential development represents a more appropriate use of the subject site than the current industrial designation. As a result, staff recommends approval of the requested amendment.

DeWitte asked if there was anyone who wished to speak in favor or opposition of this item, if so they should address the chair at the podium.

### Dave Emon – PID 220-000-013-200

Mr. Emon had the following questions and concerns:

- When a property is changed to low density does this affect what the property can be used for
- Zoning definitions, light industrial use and low density
- What regulates the use and how does this affect the property

Kirmis informed Emon that at the present time the property is subject to county planning until the property is in the city limits.

Kirmis, city planner explained and addressed Mr. Emon's questions and concerns.

### Evan Siljander – Po Box 451 Montrose, MN

Mr. Siljander stated the following questions and concerns:

- Parks and Trails within the Wildlife Management Area
- Are the proposed changes being made based off the AUAR study is saying?
- Has the planning commission reviewed the AUAR study and are they aware of the cost.
- Would like to see the planning commission ask more questions and have more discussions before passing items on the agenda.

DeWitte asked that Siljander only address the topic at hand and only address the comprehensive plan amendment.

Kirmis, city planner, explained that the guided land use goes beyond the AUAR. This is an amendment to the comprehensive plan. The AUAR does not dictate the land use, the comprehensive plan does that.

Catherine Neiberger – 125 Hill Street

Ms. Neiberger stated the following questions and concerns:

- The city's policy on rezoning properties. Neiberger understood that the city can not rezone properties.

Kirmis explained that this is a comprehensive plan amendment to change the guided use. The city is not rezoning this property. This is a long term vision of ultimate growth of the city. If this property was to be annexed into the city then it would be appropriate for the property owner to request rezoning.

A discussion was held regarding the rezoning process and future steps.

Neiberger would also like to see zoning for wind turbines. DeWitte directed Neiberger to contact city hall and ask to be added to the next agenda.

**The Public Hearing was closed at 7:35**

**Comprehensive Plan Amendment Action**

**Motion by Hackenmiller, seconded by Georgina-Stanley-Woidyla, to recommend approval to change the guided land use of an approximate 55 acre tract of land located south of the City's sewer treatment plant and east of State Highway 25 from "Industrial" to "Low Density Residential".**

Roseen would like to see this information be forwarded to the county after it has been approved by the city council. It is important to keep open communications with the townships and county.

Justin Kannas, city engineer, stated that the county and the township will be sent a copy of the final land use plan after the changes are considered. They can address any comments at that time.

**Unfinished Business**

**GTS Training Options**

Richter explained that the city has not received much interest in the joint cost sharing planning and zoning training sessions with the cities that were contacted earlier in the year with the exception of Buffalo.

Further discussion was held to recruit other cities and work with Buffalo regarding the training session through GTS

Roseen asked if members of the public can attend providing they pay their own class fee. Richter will look into this.

Motion by Roseen, seconded by Georgina-Stanley-Woidyla, to direct staff to recruit other cities to the north regarding the cost share program for planning and zoning training through GTS. Also, to work with the City of Buffalo regarding the meeting be held at their facility if they remain interested in participating.

Carried 6-0.

### **Miscellaneous**

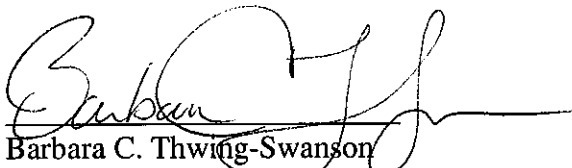
#### **EXPO**

Sharon Knodel, liaison, informed the commission that the Expo will be held Saturday September 20<sup>th</sup> at the Montrose Elementary School from 9am-1pm. Knodel invited and encouraged members of the commission to attend.

### **Adjournment**

Motion by DeWitte, seconded by Smallwood, to adjourn at 7:44pm

Author: Kristine M. Richter  
City of Montrose

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barbara C. Thwing-Swanson", written over a horizontal line.

Barbara C. Thwing-Swanson  
Administrator/Clerk/Treasurer