**Minutes of the Meeting of the Plan Commission Held**

**On Wednesday, October 1, 2014 pursuant to notice duly given**

1. Meeting called to order by Chairperson Bostedt at 4:00 p.m.
2. Roll Call: Mayor Bostedt, Bob LeBreck, Jeremy Wusterbarth, John Matravers, John Bostedt

Excused: Bob Bake

Absent: Mike Werner

Also Present: Fire Captain John Reed, Building Inspector Pete O’Connor, Police Chief Dan Ault, Police Officer Denise Bastian, Sara Perrizo, Administrator and as Recording Secretary and other interested parties

1. Approval of Agenda

**Moved by Wusterbarth, seconded by Matravers to approve the agenda as presented. M/C**

1. Approval of Minutes from the 07/10/14 meeting.

**Moved by J. Bostedt, seconded by Le Breck to approve the minutes.**

**Motion carried upon verbal voice vote. 5 ayes**

1. Correspondence/Public Input

None.

1. Discussion/Possible Recommendation on:
   1. Review of Ordinance 2-4-5 – Plan Commission

Le Breck had asked at a previous meeting if State Statute required the Alderperson on the Commission to be the Vice-Chair. Perrizo researched this and, although City ordinance requires it, State Statute does not. Le Breck thinks it would be nice to have a citizen be the Vice-Chair, to offer them more involvement. Wusterbarth commented that the Vice-Chair doesn’t have much to do unless the Chair is absent from the meeting. Mayor Bostedt asked if the State Statutes require the Mayor to chair the Commission. It does not, but Matravers commented that the Mayor typically knows more about what is going on in the City and he believes he or she should be Chair. Mayor Bostedt suggested that the ordinance be brought back to the ordinance study group to consider addressing how the Vice-Chair is chosen.

* 1. Ideas to Amend City Ordinance to Allow the Raising of Chickens in the City

A draft of the ordinance prepared by Attorney Calvert was in the packets. A few typos were pointed out and will be corrected. Ault has spoken with a lot of people on this issue. He would like to see the neighbor signatures obtained by the Police Department instead of the property owners as some people may agree to the chickens just so their neighbors won’t be upset. The cost to the City for this would be the time spent by the Police Department.

Reed stated that City ordinance only allows one accessory building per property and asked if a chicken coop would be considered an accessory building. Sean Heyrman, 209 Bitters Avenue, said that he would consider a coop to be similar to a dog house. O’Connor suggested that this be included in the ordinance.

Heyrman stated that allowing a coop up to 50 square feet in size is excessive. A coop that large will not hold in heat. Also, the draft ordinance limits the size of a run to 40 square feet, but the minimum recommended size is 10 square feet per chicken, so we would be limiting people to the minimum recommendation. He recommended that the maximum coop size be 20 square feet and the run be at least 10 square feet per chicken and not to exceed 120 square feet.

O’Connor suggested that it be included that the coop must be removed if chickens are not being housed there. Discussion ensued regarding whether or not the coops will have to meet State building codes if humans are going to be in them. The draft ordinance provides that the plans for coops will be reviewed by the Building Inspectors.

Mayor Bostedt asked if there are any concerns about the height of the coops. The consensus was that 10 feet high is appropriate. Mayor Bostedt reminded the Commission that they had discussed a trial period for the ordinance. Matravers thinks 12 months is appropriate and Le Breck agrees.

Ault stated that there are already issues with animal control in the City and asked what will be done with chickens running at large. We are already charged $53 per cat at the Humane Society and he is also not willing to put a chicken in the back of a squad car. Le Breck suggested putting bands on the chicken legs, to identify the owners. Heyrman commented that Green Bay has not had any issues with chickens running at large. Ault replied that we don’t have an animal control officer like Green Bay does. There are also concerns about the attraction of wild life such as foxes and skunks. Heyrman stated that none of the cities he has researched have had this issue. This isn’t a farm with free-range chickens – the chickens here will be locked up. Ault stated that, in his experience, many people don’t take care of their animals. Heyrman said that this is different than buying a puppy or kitten – there is an investment required with chickens. Ault has already dealt with the issue of someone who had four ducks in town and questioned where we will stop with this. In addition, Bastian has handled three chicken complaints. Heyrman said this is part of why they are asking for a trial period. If there are a lot of problems, then the ordinance can be removed.

Kathy Olson, 338 Jefferson Street, asked about yard limit size. Le Breck informed that the coop has to be 25 feet from a principal structure. O’Connor mentioned that there are different setbacks in effect whether the coop and run are considered a fence or a building. Perrizo suggested that the ordinance state that the coop must be 25 feet from a principal residence and no closer than 3 feet to the property line.

Discussion turned back to what to do with chickens who are loose and then caught. Ault said that the City has to decide if we want the Police Department to handle this and if it is an effective use of their time. Heyrman doesn’t expect a lot of coops in the City as there are only between 7 and 9 in Green Bay. Ault has no problem giving this ordinance a chance, but needs to know how to handle any chickens that are caught. Heyrman is willing to volunteer to help inspect the coops and to keep chickens that are caught in order to make this ordinance work. He is educated on raising back yard chickens and can make sure that people are doing things correctly. Le Breck commented that we will know most of the people who have permits and if one is running, it would probably belong to someone who does not have a permit.

Regarding the leg bands, Perrizo stated that there will be a cost to the City to purchase them. Heyrman found a place where 100 bands can be order for $10. The consensus was to raise the annual fee to $12 to cover this cost.

**Moved by Wusterbarth, seconded by J. Bostedt to recommend adoption of ordinance 7-1-6.5 to allow chickens in the City for a trial period of one year, after which the Plan Commission and Police Department will review the ordinance.**

**Motion carried upon verbal voice vote. 5 ayes**

* 1. Ideas for Appearance of New Businesses in the City

John Mescha, 14821 Dade Pine Avenue, Miami Lakes, Florida, thinks it was a wise investment by the City to do the Streetscape work and create a shopping center from the Library to City Hall. He was at a meeting where the DOT explained the bypass and heard that only 33% of traffic will stop in Oconto since the bypass was constructed. Now we are left with vacant businesses. He is impressed by the new restaurant, Benjamin’s, on Business 41 and also Happy Garden and Wayne’s. He would like to see signs to bring people in to the City. It takes a little money to invest in advertising, but we need to bring people in and get the message to people, “Try It, You’ll Love It”. Wusterbarth commented that these things are more for the Tourism Committee and City Council to deal with as the Plan Commission doesn’t have much say in them. We are dealing with appearance here. Mescha spoke with the owner of the Oconto Pharmacy about putting murals on the side of the building and the owner said to go ahead. That would encourage sales in the gift shop and putting other murals in unique places would help bring people into the City. Local artists could get involved and there is the technology available to enlarge photos to mural size. We could use pictures of Oconto from history and create trails to tell a story. Mayor Bostedt stated that we are trying to encourage design as new buildings come in and existing buildings are renovated. Olson said that there are a lot of niches and swirls on some buildings on Main Street and it would be neat to go back and do things historically. Heyrman asked if the City could offer any incentive to businesses willing to make their buildings look more historical. Mayor Bostedt explained that we have a Historical Preservation Committee, but there is no funding for it so it doesn’t meet. Wusterbarth stated that we can only make suggestions as we don’t want to keep new businesses out. Olson is willing to help in any way she can to make Oconto unique.

Mescha stated that $65,000 is being spent on the Library roof and asked if there is any way to put a roof on St. Peter’s church. Olson is looking for grants. Mescha suggested that St. Peter’s could become a welcome center for visitors. Olson commented that a lot of people already stop in looking for information. Heyrman stated that we are different that some cities who have adopted ordinances regarding appearance because most of them are already an attraction. An ordinance like this can be scary for a city that is trying to get established as a place to visit.

Mayor Bostedt asked the members to write down their ideas on this for the next meeting. Wusterbarth commented that he would support an ordinance requiring a certain amount of green space, trees, etc per square foot of land area. Our industrial park only has a few buildings where there is landscaping, but if you go to other cities, their industrial parks look much nicer. This item will be on the next agenda.

1. Adjourn

**Moved by Matravers, seconded by Wusterbarth to adjourn.**

**Motion carried upon verbal voice vote. 5 ayes**

**Meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted:

Sara J. Perrizo, CPA

Administrator