

EAST BETHEL CITY COUNCIL JOINT WORK MEETING

March 3, 2010

The East Bethel City Council met on March 3, 2010 at 6:14 PM for a joint work meeting at the Community/Senior Center.

CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Boyer Steve Voss Steven Channer Kathy Paavola

CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS EXCUSED: Greg Hunter

PARK COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Kenneth Langmade Sue Jefferson Barb Hagenson Daniel Kretchmar Tim Hoffman

PARK COMMISSION MEMBERS EXCUSED: Dan Butler Bonnie Harvey

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Lorraine Bonin Lori Pierson Eldon Holmes Glenn Terry Julie Moline

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS EXCUSED: Tim Landborg Heidi Moegerle

ALSO PRESENT: Douglas Sell, City Administrator
Stephanie Hanson, City Planner
Jack Davis, Public Works Manager

Call to Order **The March 3, 2010 City Council Joint Work Meeting was called to order by Acting Mayor Boyer at 6:14 PM.**

Adopt Agenda **Paavola made a motion to adopt the March 3, 2010 City Council Joint Work Meeting Agenda. Channer seconded; all in favor, motion carries.**

Presentation – Conservation Design (CD) Development Hanson explained that she is going to show a PowerPoint presentation that she hopes helps explain Conservation Design Development.

Hanson said Conservation Design is typically based on your comprehensive plan goals. She said some of the City of East Bethel comprehensive plan goals are reinforcing the rural character, preserving and regenerating natural resources, reducing impacts to ground and surface water caused by past development/agricultural uses, restoring the natural hydrological functioning-increasing infiltration, reducing runoff pollutants to the Rum River and creating better connections between neighborhoods. Hanson said these were just based on reviews.

Hanson said Conservation Design principals are just based on review and are reinforced by reducing impacts on the ground. She said keep in mind, there are principles that are used in general. Hanson said we will use flexible design standards, protect and create natural landscapes and ecological corridors, reduce impervious surface, implement LID storm water management techniques and use collaboration to achieve high quality development. She said this last one, using collaboration to achieve high quality development is very important.

Hanson explained that it is critical that when creating project elements, the other documents are not in conflict with each other, such as if you create one ordinance, and then create another they need to not be in conflict with each other. She said we need to create a Conservation Design Ordinance, update our Water Management Plan, create a Storm Water Management Ordinance, Refine SNEA boundaries – connectivity and greenways/open space (update the Parks/Trails Plan, Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Map), Update SNEA and PUD sections of zoning code and create guidance/education documents.

Hanson said the project approach is to effectively implement this we have to have a conservation design ordinance in place. She said we need to recognize the relationships between project components. Hanson said it is the trickle down effect. She said we need effective implementation of conservation design and SNEA Ordinances. Hanson said we need to assure consistency and update our WMP goals and policies. She said we need to create a Storm Water Ordinance and required Storm Water Ordinance.

Hanson said the project outcomes are that in the end we will have a Conservation Design Ordinance to implement vision: high- quality development, flexibility through collaboration and improve water quality.

Hanson said and another project outcome is we will have a Water Management Plan an educational resource for understanding water, decision making, policies that align with and support our Comp Plan CD/LID policies and provides direction for creating Storm water Management Ordinance.

Hanson said in the end we are hoping to redefine the SNEA boundaries, update the SNEA and PUD sections of the code, and creates educational documents/brochures for staff, stakeholders/developers, land owners, etc. of what the expectations are, outlining the process and such.

Hanson said she will explain the difference between Conservation Design (CD) and Low Impact Development (LID) She said the goals for conservation design are not specific it is site planning and designing process Hanson said Low Impact Development is to reduce the amount of storm water runoff and to integrate storm water management techniques into site design, minimize volume, improve water quality, emphasis on BMP's, reduce impervious surface, conserve natural areas and use pervious area to treat storm water runoff.

Greenway
and SNEA
Maps and
Outline of
the
Conserva-
tion Design
Ordinance

Hanson said she placed a map of environmentally sensitive areas in front of you. She said one important thing we all need to understand is ecological corridors. She said one important thing we all need to understand is ecological corridors. Hanson said the map shows high quality habitat patches, future greenway corridor which runs all along Cedar Creek. She said the next layer is future trail connections. Hanson said and the last layer is significant natural environmental area overlay district (zoning). She said ACD supplied a lot of this information to us. Hanson said when she takes these three components some of the questions that come to mind are is there space to expand this, should we connect the high quality habitats, does the existing corridor function as a ecological corridor, does it provide movement.

Hanson said as far as the value of ecological corridors they enhance opportunities for wildlife, creates trail links and human connections, anethetics – rural character, ecological systems – infiltration, nutrient sink and frame/buffer views.

Hanson said the functions of an ecological corridor is they serve as a habitat for native species,

plants, animals, movement of wildlife, dispersal of seeds, ecological sink, traps sediments, nutrients and toxins.

Hanson said the impacts of development is loss of natural space, fragmentation of natural space, degradation of water resources, decreased ability for nature to respond to change and edge habitat. She said as we know water resources provide a variety of functions. Hanson said it decreases the ability for nature to control change. She said as far as these edge habitats, where two types of cover meet, this is something that we want to keep on our mind when we decide on development.

Hanson said as far as the ecological corridor, what is next. She said staff seeks direction. Hanson said this is something we need to think about and address.

Hanson said we have a Conservation CD outline, ordinance concept. She asked do we have goals within a range of acceptability. Hanson said it is pretty straightforward and there are common standards across the board, storm water standards. She said one thing we need to talk about is density, what is acceptable, cluster development, higher density in some areas, do we allow 30-50% open space. Hanson said what about Low Impact Design Standards. She said what about Storm Water Management Techniques. Hanson asked are there other ideas.

Hanson said she has a project timeline of the 1st draft of the Conservation Design Ordinance and the 1st draft of the updated SNEA boundaries map will be done by April 7, 2010. She said the 2nd draft of the Conservation Design Ordinance will be done by May, 2010 and the update of the PUD/SNEA districts and zoning map will be done May, 2010 to August, 2010. The 1st draft of the Storm Water Ordinance will be done by May, 2010. Update the Water Management Plan by June, 2010. Hanson said with a tentative completion date of the project by October, 2010.

Hanson said the education material was published by the National Park Service and she has it electronically if you are interested.

Boyer said he thinks this is a little too aggressive on the timetable, he would prefer to run this through the commissions. Voss said he thought this also. Hanson said this is the framework. Boyer said there are some serious policy issues here; he thinks those need to go through the commissions. Voss said he thinks with any approach we take those are considerations we need to take. He said he thinks if staff wants to propose the framework that is fine. Voss said it could be done by August. He said if we were doing this three or four years ago, then it might take a long time, but there is a lot of experience out there of communities doing it.

Hanson said we are half way into doing this. She said we have inventories of vegetation, overlay districts, etc. Boyer said that is one way of looking at it. He said he thinks there is an element of community education in this, and that is the element of putting this through the commissions that it filters out that you are working on this and it gets peoples attention. Boyer said this is the same as the sewer system; you need to get information out there on what is happening and how is this going to impact our residents. He said you can remember back on cluster housing, the misconceptions and how we were terrible for doing it. Bonin said as someone that lives in one of the sensitive areas, she is concerned how this will impact her property. Voss said think back when we did Wildwood by Fish Lake, which was a well attended meeting, and we actually implemented conservation design and we had 100 people there and everyone was against it when we got into the meeting but by the time we were done, half the people understood what we were doing and were with us.

Boyer said and now we are talking about a City wide policy and this is a different kettle of fish. He said he knows with the Park Commission when we talked about the corridors we talked about connecting just areas like Sandhill Crane to Cedar Creek, which was the idea behind the corridors; there was no greater idea about the animal communities, which was as far as we went with it. Boyer said he doesn't think we have given any thought to connecting smaller communities and he knows that the smaller communities will cease to exist if we don't connect them. He asked but how much of the City will support this. Boyer said who will support this when we say by the way you can't mow there, he think that speaks to not racing through the process.

Voss asked so what is your suggestion. Boyer said that we take our time and start talking about it at Town Hall meetings. He said have a public hearing. Boyer said aim to have it done in a year. He said he is just picking a number that seems reasonable. Bonin said we have to make a list of the things that are important. She said if we are scattered in various places, at least keep it somewhere so when we are asked questions we have answers. Boyer said he thinks we need to make a list of what people are going to fear about this. Hagenson said she has only been on the Park Commission a couple of years, but the last meeting was the first time she heard of this, and she agrees with Boyer, we need to slow this down, do some education, beginning with her, she doesn't have a clue what effect it would have on her and her property.

Hanson said a true Conservation Design Ordinance is developer driven, if the property is in the overlay district, then they might have to follow certain plans or some cities give them the option. She said some cities require and some give them the option. Moline asked what the Met Council has to say about that. Hanson said it is in our comp plan, but when it comes to conservation design, they are starting to dabble. She said they are starting to put guidelines together that cities might have to follow. Moline asked does that affect our timeframe. Hanson said we would just have to update our comp plan.

Sell said as to the deadline we had to get something out there to get the discussion going, we hear you want education, planning, Town Hall meetings, special meetings, share this information, so the public understands it. Voss said it is never good to go before the public before we know what we are thinking about doing. He said as a City, staff, and elected officials we need to present a plan, a dynamic at this stage and then shape it. Bonin said it is possible to have some meetings just for certain neighborhoods to talk about what is just going on in that neighborhood. Boyer said that would be great. He said one thing we were talking about is the City has no center we think could use those in some places, but the problem becomes Hwy. 65 is this place with no focus area. Bonin said it might be advantageous at some time that if a neighborhood had a concern at some time they could come to the City and let us know. Boyer said there are neighborhood watch groups.

Sell said it is important to remember that this is not pre-existing neighborhoods that will be affected by this; it is primarily new developments as Hanson has pointed out. He said it doesn't mean existing neighborhoods need to be ignored, but it is for new developments. Boyer said with all due respect, if you look at this map he thinks there is a huge impact on the Rural Residential area. He said if you are realistically going to try to connect these areas, there will be impact. Boyer said he can point right behind his property as an example. Hanson said that might be something you want to consider when we sit down and talk. She said do we just talk about certain size properties. Boyer said yes, maybe can just get people not to hunt there.

Set Work
Meeting

Hanson said it sounds like she is hearing that we need to set a work session to discuss what the criteria are going to be. She said she likes the idea of not rushing it through, but we need to give ourselves a pat on the back we have taken great strides on this, doing the comprehensive plan and at this point it is more than fine tuning the details but we are halfway there and now we just need to hammer out the details. Boyer said the Park Commission meeting is a week from tonight maybe they could take a look at this, add it to their agenda.

Jefferson asked is there another City close by that has done this. Hanson said Hanover, Elk River, and others. Hagenson said it is not something you can visually see. Boyer said but Elk River was pretty much developed before they did this. Voss said they still have land left. He said they have had their ordinances for a long time. Hanson asked what the suggestion for staff is. She said our suggestion is to get everyone back together in April as a work group to talk about it together. Voss asked would that be to talk about the map. Hanson said yes. She said she thinks that you need to sit down as a group and come up with some goals, objectives and criteria.

Boyer said he thinks it would be nice for Council to come up with policy decisions of how far we are willing to go. He said rather than dump this on the commissions and then say we won't do that after they send the policies to us. Boyer said he thinks we need to have a consensus at Council first. Paavola asked are you suggesting that Council have a special meeting. Voss said he would have staff put together policy framework then we go over it.

Jefferson asked why staff is doing all the legwork on this type of project. She said versus on how we did it for the comprehensive plan, hired someone. Jefferson said she is confused on how we are going to get to this, when we hired someone for the Park Comp Plan, we relied on them to do everything. She asked why are we doing it this way, rather than hiring a consultant. Sell said when we did the Park Comp Plan there was one person you interacted with. He said that person had access to others that you didn't see. Sell said we have a staff person that is more than capable of doing this and if she has questions, she has resources to find the answers. Holmes asked is it possible we could get someone from Elk River or one of the communities that has done this to come talk to us. Hanson said yes.

Boyer said he would like to see a wetland map and what would happen if we put 100 foot buffers around it. Terry said he would like to see a map of the exiting parks and how this affects that. Hagenson asked what a wildlife corridor is. Boyer said it is a 300' wild trail. Voss said and it is not contiguous. He said the whole idea is to find a balance of keeping certain land undeveloped but at the same time it is not a taking of land. Voss said a lot is done on an individual property owner's basis. Hanson asked what you would think about inviting the MPCA to come in and answer some of your questions and then move forward from there. Sell said maybe let Council do their policy and objections and let the others know what that is. Voss said last thing he wants to do is talk about map because it will stop everything in its tracks. Boyer said in practical terms, Council would have a meeting. Sell said you could do that or do it as part of your regular meeting. He said staff can develop something and get your feedback. Sell said then the second meeting in April you can look at it. He said then the first meeting in May have the MPCA person out here.

Adjourn

Pierson made a motion to adjourn at 7:16 PM. Paavola seconded; all in favor, motion carries.

Attest:
Wendy Warren
Deputy City Clerk