



**WATERTOWN PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday, August 12, 2010 at 7:30 p.m.
Watertown City Hall, 309 Lewis Avenue South
City Council Chambers

Members Present: Chair, James Rivord; Vice Chair, Andrew Gillett, Commissioners, Donald Hendricks, Chuck Salden, and Jim Sandquist

Members Absent: Commissioner Rob Wilkening, Seth Bossert, Council Liaison Rick Mann, Watertown Township Representative Neil Johnson

Staff: Senior Planner, Crystal Foust

Others Present: None

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Rivord called the meeting to order at 7:41 p.m.

2. ADOPT AGENDA

GILLETT MOVED, SECONDED BY HENDRICKS TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 12, 2010 AGENDA. ALL AYES, MOTION CARRIED.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. JUNE 10, 2010

HENDRICKS MOVED, SECONDED BY SALDEN TO APPROVE THE JUNE 10, 2010 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED. ALL AYES, MOTION CARRIED.

4. OLD BUSINESS

5. NEW BUSINESS

A. Metropolitan Livable Communities Action Local Housing Incentives Account

The City of Watertown previously elected to be a participant in the Metropolitan Livable

HEART OF THE LUCE LINE TRAIL

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Communities Act Local Housing Incentives Account. Participation in the voluntary LCA LHIA provides the city with the opportunity to compete for grants and loans to support activities that help the City meet its affordable and life cycle housing goals. The last time the City adopted a Housing Action Plan was in 1996 for the planning period 2000-2010. If the City chooses to continue its participation in the LCA, it must establish new affordable and life-cycle housing goals for the next decade (2011-2020). As part of the City's recent 2030 Comprehensive Plan Update, we acknowledged its fair share of the region's affordable housing need. For the City of Watertown the fair share number is 60 units over the next 10 years. Although the council fully supports the need for this total number of new affordable units over the next decade, it also acknowledges the reality of limited funding available to create new affordable housing opportunities. For this reason, the Council asks the City establish its LCA affordable housing goal as a range of 39 to 60 for the period 2011 to 2020 with the low end of the range representing the number of units that can be accomplished at currently available funding levels region-wide.

Regarding the City's life-cycle housing goal to diversity the type and density of housing to meet residents' changing housing needs and preferences, the Metropolitan Council asks the City establish a goal range of 60-650 units over the next decade. The low end of the range represents the community's total share of the region's affordable housing need and the high end is the potential number of units permitted by land use guiding the City's 2030 Plan Update for medium, high, mixed use, redevelopment, TOD or similarly named residential development, or the total forecasted household growth for the community to 2020, whichever is less.

Given the state of the economy and decrease in housing starts, several communities across the 7-county metro area have expressed concerns about meeting their "housing number" as shown in the comprehensive plan. For many communities, the housing projection in the comprehensive plan is high and communities may be reevaluating these projections. For Watertown, with the downtown redevelopment project being an affordable senior apartment, a majority of the required affordable housing units will be these units. The developer for the project has proposed 45 units for the senior building. Staff is comfortable with the goals as outlined by the Metropolitan Council and meeting these goals. Regardless, Metropolitan Council staff has stated that there are not penalties or consequences for not meeting the projected goal for affordable and life-cycle housing. Both housing need numbers and the LCA housing goals are based on forecasts that were initially made in 2004 when the state of the economy was much different, and which were used as the basis for the 2008 round of updates. The 2010 census numbers are expected soon. They will be used to prepare a new set of regional and local forecasts. While the staff at the Metropolitan Council feeling is that the current forecasts and therefore the adopted housing needs numbers and therefore the proposed LCA housing goals numbers may be too high, they don't have a realistic alternative to using them at the present time and they can't postpone developing a set of LCA Affordable and Life-Cycle Housing Goals at this time given the State Statute deadlines.

HENDICKS MOVED, SECONDED BY GILLETT TO RECOMMEND TO THE CITY COUNCIL TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION AND HOUSING ACTION PLAN FOR THE PLANNING PERIOD 2011-2020 TO CONTINUE THE CITY'S PARTICIPATION IN THE LIVABLE COMMUNITIES DEMONSTRATION ACCOUNT. ALL AYES, MOTION CARRIED.

6. COMMISSIONERS REPORT

7. STAFF REPORT

A. Recent ruling for the City of Minnetonka v. Krummenacher case

There has been a recent court case ruling by the Supreme Court on a variance in the City of Minnetonka. The ruling makes it difficult for local jurisdictions to pass variances like years past based on previous case law. The ruling makes it so restrictive that the League of Minnesota cities has proposed to advocate a change in the Statute during the next year's legislative session.

8. ADJOURN

SANDQUIST MOVED, SECONDED BY SALDEN TO ADJOURN THE PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING AT 7:55 PM. ALL AYES, MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully submitted,

James Rivord
Chair

Crystal Foust
Senior Planner