

Minutes – City of Delano
City Council/Economic Development Authority
Monday, January 8, 2024 5:00 PM

1. Call to Order

Mayor Holly Schrupp called the special workshop meeting of the Delano City Council/Economic Development Authority of Monday, January 8, 2024, to order at 5:00 pm.

2. Roll Call and Approval of Agenda

Members Present: Mayor Holly Schrupp; Councilmembers Jason Franzen, Becky Schaust, Mike Mathisen, Jeremiah Hawkins; Planning Commission members Jeff Demeules, John Beussman, Nancy Rowbotham, Matthew Schmidt, Robert Slipka, Jon Krieg, Josh Gehlen.

Members Absent:

Also Present: Phil Kern, City Administrator; Paula Bauman, Administrative Services Director; Shawn Louwagie, City Engineer; Al Brixius, City Planner; Eric Rheault, Administrative Intern; Bryce Borland, Deputy Clerk.

3. Special Order of Business

A. Presentation and discussion related to draft 2040 Comprehensive Plan

Kern says that the Comprehensive Plan is the guiding document for the community. The City aims to update its Comprehensive Plan every 10 years, and the scope of each plan is about 15-20 years. Kern says that City Planner Al Brixius authored the plan, and he has informed the City that this year is his last year working in planning. He says that Brixius met with the City Council, the City's various commissions, City staff and other community members to solicit feedback for the Comprehensive Plan being presented tonight. Kern says that tonight will be an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback on the plan. Staff plans a final version of the plan ready for the Council to consider adopting sometime in March.

Prior to the presentation of the Comprehensive Plan, Kern presents a 2023 development update. He says that the City received 73 new building permits this year and shows how this compares to the last 30 years. He shows how this compares to population change and says that the City's population is not growing at the same rate that building permits are. He then shows how Delano Public Schools enrollment trends have changed over the last 20 years. Next, he talks about how the City's infrastructure systems are managed including the sanitary sewer, storm sewer system, transportation system, water system and electric system. He says that the Wastewater Treatment Plant was constructed in 2004, and currently the City uses about 34% of its flow capacity. However, Kern says that the City is using a significantly larger percentage of the facilities capacity for certain chemicals like CBOD. He says that this has been the biggest impact of Tuffy's coming to town. He reports that Tuffy's had been exceeding standard CBOD levels, but they have been working to improve this and he expects levels to be normal by his next development update.

Schmidt asks if the potential Tuffy's expansion would create another increase in CBOD levels. Louwagie says that Tuffy's is an SIU (Significant Industrial User) and now has an SIU agreement with the City. Under this agreement, they are encouraged to have a "pre-treatment" facility so they can control their costs. Franzen asks if other cities do this. Kern says that SIU's are very

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common, and it is actually rare that Delano only has one. Kern finishes the development update talking about the water and electric systems overseen by DMU.

Brixius talks about the 2040 Comp Plan. Brixius says that the 20-year plan allows the City to take a broader look at issues, and allows the City to plan for events instead of just reacting to them. He talks about the history of comprehensive plans in Delano dating back to 1980, when the first one was made. Approved in 2012, the 2030 Comprehensive Plan is the most recently created plan and expanded on elements of all previous plans before it. The 2040 Comprehensive Plan is broken up into five sections: Community Perspectives, Policy Plan, Development Framework, Planning Districts and Implementation.

Brixius starts with the section about Community Perspectives. Brixius says he was very pleased with the interviews he conducted with the Council and advisory committees. He says the Spirit of Delano was identified as a positive attribute and the “small town feel” was considered very important for many. He says Delano is fortunate to have citizens who engage with their community to create and maintain this atmosphere. Since the last comprehensive plan, there are more policies regulating the natural environment, and more concern about maintaining the condition of these areas as community resources. The pace of growth is seen as both a positive and potentially negative impact of new development. Al says that based on his interviews, transportation is the aspect that the most people take issue with. There is a lot of concern over traffic congestion, safety, and the need for more trail connections.

Brixius next talks about the Policy Plan. Brixius provides goals related to the City’s natural resources and identifies Delano’s Greenway system. Brixius provides a historical overview of Delano’s population and housing demographics. Brixius explains how interest rates impact these trends and the types of housing that people are interested in buying. He proposes goals aimed at managing growth and maintaining a small-town atmosphere. He references a city-wide land use plan and an extraterritorial land use plan. In the extraterritorial map, he points out the line that marks Delano’s transitional boundary.

Demeules asks about creating more affordable housing. Schmidt said he talked to the manager at Culver’s and none of their employees are from Delano. Brixius says this is because Delano is becoming more wealthy and working class employees cannot afford to live in town. Franzen says that the problems Delano has are demographic problems, which are the same issues that many other communities are facing. Schrupp says that there are not enough starter homes available in town. Demeules says this isn’t something that developers want to build because these homes are less lucrative. Hawkins says that the City should aim to have life cycle housing so people can buy a starter home, and when they decide to move up, they can stay within the community. Brixius says that this could mean giving more flexibility to developers who will make housing developments that the City is looking for. Brixius says that the City should make sure to not sacrifice durable houses and quality buildings to satisfy the wants of the developers.

Kern says that the black dashed line on the extraterritorial map are current city limits, and notes that some of the properties identified in the transitional area are resistant to annexation. Schmidt says that he understands that Independence is in a different county which can complicate annexation but asks if they would be open to having some of their land annexed. Kern says that

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Independence is already a City so the process is not the same as if the City wished to annex from a township.

Brixius next talks about residential land use goals. He says that this Comprehensive Plan attempts to use zoning to describe the land use districts. He says that the City ultimately gets to determine zoning, not the developer. Brixius says he has no issue adjusting zoning requirements to help the City achieve certain goals such as creating affordable housing. Brixius next talks about commercial land use goals which include zoning plans that are specific to Downtown and Highway 12. Next, Brixius talks about industrial land use goals. He talks about opportunities that may come about with a potential rail spur. Finally, Brixius talks about public and semi-public land use. He says that Delano Municipal Utilities (DMU) has expressed the need for more space. There may also be need for a satellite fire station to reduce response times. Brixius also says that while the school district has good facilities right now, they may want to consider an additional elementary school on the south side of town to reduce transportation times for some residents.

Next Brixius talks about transportation concerns and goals. Transportation concerns include streets, trails, rail, parking, and transit. He says that the transportation plan identifies future and arterial routes. The trail plan also includes safer pedestrian connections across Highway 12, the Railroad and the River. He then talks about street improvement projects that the City will have to consider budgeting for in the long term. He says that they will be expensive, but assures the project will be spaced out, not all at once. These projects are regularly anticipated and budgeted for. Krieg says that the City may have a different timeline than MnDOT and the County on some projects.

Krieg suggests changing the verbiage in one line of the Transportation section from “effectively” to “safely and efficiently”. Brixius says he will make the change. Schmidt says that the Transportation section does not make much mention of “electrifying” and creating charge points around the City. Mathisen says DMU is looking into ways to create charge points. Brixius says that this would likely be part of the Commercial Land Use section. Hawkins says that he hears Delano will be part of the transit plan. Brixius says that is true.

Brixius says that people were very complimentary of the City’s community facilities. He presents a list of proposed future community facilities and says some will be much longer term than others.

Finally, Brixius talks about the City’s planning districts. He says that the planning recommendations are going to be specific to these planning districts.

Schaust asks about the pedestrian bridge. Krieg says that there was discussion of a pedestrian crossing to the north side of the City crossing. Brixius says this is shown on the map already.

Schmidt says solar was not talked about in the Comp Plan at all. Brixius says he does not see any issue integrating it into a building design or rooftop equipment. Even if the City wanted to do a ground mount. Schmidt asked if the City was looking to do anything to be more green. Mathisen says that DMU is looking at options to install solar panels at both City buildings and says they will continue to look for areas to put solar panels.

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Slipka asks about a map in the Comprehensive that is difficult to interpret. Slipka also asks about the potential for a new elementary school. Brixius says that he has included guidelines about school placement but believes City should not prematurely pick a location for the school. Kern says that the school has asked the City for areas that would work well. City staff has gone through the process of identifying properties for the school.

Slipka asks about affordable housing. Kern notes that Lennar is trying to find an affordable housing project to provide an entry level product. He says that it is starting to hurt the City that there isn't workforce housing for the City's industrial workforce. Hawkins says that Capstone's more affordable housing options were changed because Highway 12 couldn't handle the density, and the development only became less affordable since then. Schaust says that often a Homeowner's association fees will make houses less affordable as well.

Schmidt asks how far the City is on deciding the use of the third lot in the Granite Works site. Kern says Council discussed an option to use the third site for more market rate apartments, but ultimately decided against it for now. The Council is still considering its options.

Slipka asks about next steps. Brixius says that comments should be sent to City staff and then the Comprehensive Plan will have its own public hearing in March. Kern suggests that Council provide feedback to staff by the end of January so it can be incorporated and sent out for final review ahead of the approval in March. Kern says they will look at having public engagement with the document as well.

4. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss the special workshop City Council meeting of Monday, January 8, 2024 was adjourned at 7:39 pm.

Signed:

Holly Schrupp, Mayor

Paula Bauman, Administrative Services Director

Attest: Bryce Borland, Deputy Clerk