



**Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission**

Wednesday November 9, 2016

7:00 p.m.

1307 Cloquet Ave, Cloquet, MN 55720

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Wilkinson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

**Attending:** Planning Commission members: Chuck Buscher, Michael Haubner, Kelly Johnson and Uriah Wilkinson; City: Al Cottingham and Holly Butcher.

**Absent:** Commission members: Jesse Berglund, Bryan Bosto, John Sanders.

**Others Present:** None.

**ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

None.

**AGENDA ITEMS**

**October 11, 2016 Meeting Minutes**

Chairperson Wilkinson asked for any corrections or additions.

**Motion:** Commissioner Johnson made a motion to approve the Planning Commission meeting minutes from October 11, 2016, Commissioner Haubner seconded. (Motion was approved 4-0).

**Downtown Cloquet: Challenges and Opportunities along Cloquet Avenue & the Historic West End**

Community Development Director Butcher stated that she was looking for the Planning Commissions input on challenges and opportunities for the Historic West End and the Cloquet Avenue Downtown corridor. She explained the process that she had done with the building and business owners in these areas earlier this year and with the EDA last month. She reviewed the key findings of the property/business owners input for each district during the spring of 2016 which were:

**HISTORIC WEST END BUSINESS DISTRICT**

**ASSETS:**

- Historic buildings, strong residential population above storefronts, evolving destination district, proximity to the riverfront.



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CONCERN:

- **Lacking Visibility of the business district from Highway 33. High number of storefront vacancies and building conversions into blighted uses. Not an economically vibrant district.**

OPPORTUNITY:

- Open up the visibility of this district so that it is a destination district.

**CLOQUET AVENUE BUSINESS DISTRICT**

ASSETS:

- Good location, easy to find, good parking.

CONCERN:

- **Good location, easy parking but Cloquet Avenue is wide and traffic travels fast therefore it is difficult for pedestrians to cross.**

OPPORTUNITY:

- To discuss design concepts to streetscape and improve the pedestrian climate cross-ability of Cloquet Avenue to connect neighbors and businesses on the south to Cloquet’s businesses, parks and riverfront areas on the north side of the road.

**PC INPUT:**

After generating the below list of assets and challenges in these Districts, the PC concluded:

<b>HISTORIC WEST END BUSINESS DISTRICT</b>	
<b>ASSETS</b>	<b>ISSUE</b>
+	Historic, Cultural Heritage of the buildings and design of the district—this includes and extends beyond the commercial district into the homes such as the Weyerhauser homes off of Chestnut St.
+	New destination businesses locating in the district (Avenue C Restaurant) and community capacity to support them—good use of upper story signage to communicate to Hwy 33
+	Prime for entrepreneurial energy & opportunities to market EDA programs
+	Downtown should have distinctive features – should each district be unique or have continuity?
<b>CHALLENGES</b>	<b>ISSUE</b>
-	High number of vacant buildings without active utilities; AND actively occupied buildings that are blighted
-	The City of Carlton historically had a gateway entrance sign that said “gateway to Jay Cooke.” The West End is a good entrance spot for gateway signage. Need a reason to draw traffic off of road, which comes first – make it attractive then businesses will locate or vice versa? Need wayfinding signage into and around the district (homes, riverfront etc.)



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-	The function of Wentworth Park is now gone post relocation of City Hall from West End. This park along with property along Avenue B from Broadway to Arch St is a good location for housing redevelopment – townhome style within the District.
-	Blight along Avenue A in particular from Chestnut to Arch St—prime for redevelopment of housing. Avenue B from Chestnut to Market St on the north side of the St is blighted concepts to redevelop block housing with berm or garage entrance on Avenue A and housing facing Avenue B.
-	Opportunity to landscape and clean up municipal parking lots owned by the City downtown –VFW West End, walkway to the lot across burned down former Hong Kong Restaurant building.

**CLOQUET AVENUE BUSINESS DISTRICT**

<b>ASSETS</b>	<b>ISSUE</b>
+	Wide Road. Opportunity to plan for the appropriate design for future roadway project which is programmed for a few years from now— <b>PC Input Road Diet Opportunity</b> (Ideas – downtown Park Rapids and part of Grand Rapids has parking in the center of the street on low volume streets)
+	FLW Gas Station. An underappreciated asset, very unique.
+	New destination restaurant – NE BBQ
<b>CHALLENGES</b>	<b>ISSUE</b>
-	Fast moving traffic and a wide street, tough for pedestrians.
-	There are some blighted buildings along Cloquet Avenue – Aardvark, Bark of Town, Lamberts (set for SCDP grant), Eds, former Casey’s Bakery on 14 <sup>th</sup> St
-	Inefficient traffic signal timings on Cloquet Avenue at 14 <sup>th</sup> and 10 <sup>th</sup> St
-	Opportunity to landscape and clean up other municipal parking lots owned by the City downtown – Nelson Funeral Home Lot, VFW West End.
-	Full City parking lot at SpecSys Building being used by County, does County need more room to expand Downtown?

**Commissioner’s Questions/Comment**

Mr. Cottingham noted that ISD #94 would begin working on an addition to Churchill School in order to move ECFE to that site.

**Next Meeting**

December 13, 2016

Meeting adjourned 8:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Al Cottingham, City Planner/Zoning Administrator