

**GREATER BEMIDJI AREA
REGULAR JOINT PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

**Thursday, April 22, 2021
6:00 P.M.**

**Northern Town Hall, 445 Town Hall Rd NW, Bemidji, MN 56601
/Cisco Webex Video Conferencing
(For log in information <https://www.jpbgba.org/planning-actions>)**

AGENDA

- **Call to Order/Roll Call** **Chair**
- **Pledge of Allegiance**
- **Approve Agenda**
- **Approve Minutes**
 - **Thursday, March 25, 2021 Regular Meeting**

NEW BUSINESS

- 1. Visitors** **Chair**

OTHER BUSINESS

- 1. Possible Ordinance Updates Review & Discussion**
 - **Short-term Vacation Rental Draft Ordinance**
 - **Cul-de-sac Definition**
 - **Section 903**
 - **Section 402 - Front Yard Setback**
 - **SSTS Definitions**
 - **Drive-thru Standards**
- 2. Director's Report**
- 3. Upcoming Meetings** **Chair**
 - **May 12, 2021** 6:00 pm JPB Regular Meeting
 - **May 27, 2021** 6:00 pm JPC Regular Meeting
 - **June 9, 2021** 6:00 pm JPB Regular Meeting
 - **June 24, 2021** 6:00 pm JPC Regular Meeting
- 4. Adjourn** **Chair**

**MINUTES
GREATER BEMIDJI AREA
REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

**April 22, 2021
6:00 p.m.**

**Cisco Webex/Northern Town Hall
445 Town Hall Rd NW**

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Mike Granlund called the regular meeting of the Greater Bemidji Area Joint Planning Commission to order at 6:00 p.m., roll call was taken and the pledge of allegiance was recited.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Berg, Heinonen, Lemmer, Granlund, Smith, Gould, Steffen, David, Faver.

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

STAFF PRESENT: Jamin Carlson, Ainslee Knudson, Nickolaus Phillips.

OTHERS: None.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Motion by Lemmer, second by Heinonen, to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion by Heinonen, second by Smith, to approve minutes from the March 25, 2021, Greater Bemidji Area Regular Joint Planning Commission as presented.

Motion carried.

VISITORS:

None

OTHER BUSINESS:

Short-Term Vacation Rental Draft Ordinance Review & Discussion:

Phillips described the proposed ordinance update to allow short-term vacation rentals. Lemmer stated that she received feedback from property owners in surrounding areas that STVRs with hired property managers have issues. Phillips addressed that additional regulations for STVRs have been put in place since this topic was visited in the past. Smith and Lemmer confirmed their support for changing the Ordinance to allow STVRs. Commission members discussed adding a three strike program. Heinonen expressed his support to revisit the topic of STVRs, as he believes that there are current STVRs in the Bemidji area. Heinonen stated that implementing an ordinance update allowing STVRs would give the GBAJPB an opportunity to regulate them and protect the homeowners around these properties. Faver stated that amending the Ordinance specifically for those who are already operating STVRs illegally is not a good reason. Faver inquired as to why this proposal was brought back to the Commission. Staff confirmed that the Joint Planning Board requested that it be revisited. Staff and Commission members discussed requiring rental licenses and the City Rental Department overseeing the STVR program. Staff recommended having an annual permit on an administrative level as opposed to an Interim Use Permit, with stricter regulations than were previously proposed. Phillips noted that he will send

Commission members the STVR packet that Staff put together so they can review and prepare for the next Joint Planning Commission meeting and the Public Hearing.

Cul-de-sac Definition Review & Discussion:

Staff recommended that the current ordinance definition for cul-de-sacs should be updated to be more specific in order to prevent future issues and safety hazards with emergency services or evacuations. Smith addressed that the maximum length should be clarified and inquired if the 500 feet includes the loop of the cul-de-sac or not. Heinonen addressed that the length of a road with one ingress and one egress should be regulated. Carlson addressed that there is a definition for a dead-end road in the Ordinance. Smith suggested specifying a maximum length of road, such as "must be less than 500 feet." Staff clarified that there is a stipulation in the Ordinance if a road is over a certain length, there must be two accesses.

Section 903 Review & Discussion:

Carlson addressed that Staff receives many variance applications for properties in the shoreland overlay district each year. Phillips confirmed that what is coded in state statute cannot be varied from, and it is up to Staff to ascertain which of those variance requests are beyond what Staff can allow. Lemmer requested examples. Staff confirmed that they would provide examples at a later date.

Section 402 – Front Yard Setback Review & Discussion:

Carlson confirmed that a Board member requested that the front yard setback be revisited. Phillips explained that the Commission could consider an averaged front yard setback. Lemmer confirmed that she had individuals expressing their desire for reduced front-yard setbacks and concerns about letting children play in their front yard. Lemmer discussed property owners having a bigger backyard for safer play, and more room in the front yard for front porch sitting. Faver asked how many front-yard setback variance applications Staff receives per year. Faver expressed concern over changing the Ordinance when a neighborhood line has already been established. Steffen expressed concern over future changes, specifically the widening of streets. Phillips suggested setback averaging, which the state shoreland ordinances use. Smith requested to see and review a formula for setback averaging. Faver and David inquired about the flexibility for setback reduction in subdivisions and planned unit developments. Carlson confirmed that there is that flexibility within the Ordinance. Carlson confirmed that this request was in reference to existing houses within existing neighborhoods. Faver inquired about revisiting the rear-yard setback. Carlson stated that property owners have more flexibility with a rear-yard setback as opposed to a front-yard setback because the current rear-yard setback is 25 feet or 25% of the lot. Lemmer expressed her support of using the string-line technique or setback averaging, or reducing the front-yard setback and addressed the inconsistency in her own neighborhood, with older houses closer to the street and newer houses pushed back.

SSTS Definitions Review & Discussion:

Phillips has received inquiries from individuals regarding different septic systems, cluster systems, etc. Phillips addressed that Staff feels they should update the SSTS definitions in order to include additional types of systems if and/or when they get installed. Commission members had no additions.

Drive-thru Standards Discussion:

Carlson described the proposed drive-thru standards. Commission members confirmed their support of the proposed addition to the Ordinance.

Additional Other Business:

Steffen inquired as to a past discussion concerning requiring homeowners to pump their septic tank every two years. Carlson stated that the only times that Staff can require a compliance

inspection is when there is a sale of a property or when a property owner obtains a permit.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Carlson provided updates on last month's planning cases as well as proposed cases and new and potential developments. Carlson expressed that Mark Borseth, who had planned to start as the Planning Director had declined the offer, and so Carlson accepted the position and began as the Planning Director on 4/5/2021. Carlson anticipates that the upcoming JPC meeting will be held at Northern Town Hall and via Webex as Council Chambers will likely be under construction until June 2021. Philips provided an update on enforcement activity. Carlson confirmed that interviews for the Assistant Planner will take place next week.

UPCOMING MEETING DATES:

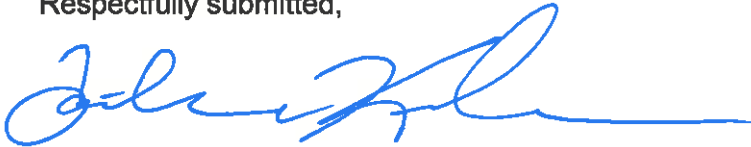
May 12, 2021	6:00 pm	JPB Regular Meeting
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ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, motion by Lemmer, second by Steffen, to adjourn the Regular Planning Commission meeting at 7:08 p.m.

Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,



Ainslee Knudson
Administrative Assistant

Approved and attested by: Michael Granlund
Joint Planning Commission Representative