



ST. FRANCIS PLANNING COMMISSION

**ISD #15 DISTRICT OFFICE BUILDING
4115 AMBASSADOR BLVD.
AUGUST 15, 2012**

7:00 PM

AGENDA

1. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance
2. Roll Call
3. Adopt Agenda August 15, 2012
4. Approve Minutes July 18, 2012
5. Public Comment
6. Public Hearing – Metes & Bounds Division Ordinance Amendment
7. Public Hearing – Zoning Enforcement Ordinance Amendment
8. Public Hearing – Comprehensive Plan Amendment - Park Plan Revisions
9. Temporary Sign Ordinance Discussion
10. General Discussion Items by Planning Commissioners
11. Adjournment

There may be a quorum of St. Francis Council Members present at this meeting.

**CITY OF ST. FRANCIS
ST. FRANCIS, MN
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
July 18, 2012**

1. **Call to Order:** The Planning Commission meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chairman Rich Skordahl.
2. **Oath of Office:** Joel Olson
3. **Roll Call:** Present were Chairman Rich Skordahl, Commission Members, Roni Ronyak, Ray Steinke, Joel Olson, City Council Member Tim Brown, City Planner Nate Sparks (Northwest Associated Consultants), and Planning Commission Secretary Kathy Lind.
4. **Adopt Agenda:** MOTION BY STEINKE, SECOND BY OLSON TO ADOPT THE JULY 18, 2012 PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA. MOTION CARRIED 4-0
5. **Approve Minutes:** MOTION BY RONYAK, SECOND BY STEINKE TO APPROVE THE JUNE 20, 2012 PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES. MOTION CARRIED 4-0
6. **Public Comment:** None
7. **Ordinance Discussion – Keeping of Bees.**

BACKGROUND

In area cities, there have become more frequent reports of people keeping bees on urban lots. This has caused issues between neighbors and complaints to the cities. Currently, the City of St. Francis does not have any direct ordinance relating to the keeping of bees.

BEE KEEPING ORDINANCES

Generally, cities regulate bees as “livestock” as they are common elements of agricultural uses. St. Francis allows livestock on parcels greater than 5 acres in size in animal enclosures greater than 100 feet from any property line but does not specifically mention bees in the list of animals so regulated. Many ordinances restrict non-agricultural uses to one hive per parcel.

PROPOSED ORDINANCE

Based on how the City’s current ordinances are structured related to animals and how other cities approach this issue, the following draft ordinance language is proposed for the Planning Commission’s discussion:

8-3-5: KEEPING OF BEES.

- A. Bees may be kept on parcels five (5) acres in size or greater.
- B. No parcel may have more than one hive unless it is an agricultural use.
- C. All hives must be kept one hundred (100) feet from any property line.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

The Planning Commission members requested that Nate Sparks present the above changes in final form at the next planning commission meeting for recommendation to City Council.

8. **Comprehensive Planning Discussion – Park System Goals.**

BACKGROUND

The St. Francis Public Works Department had requested an analysis of the current park system and the future park plan. The goal is to evaluate the current system and plans and make recommendations on how to more efficiently and effectively deliver service to the public. This review included inspections of the parks, review of acquisition records, and a comparison of the existing Park Plan against the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. Upon this review the following issues were noted:

- The current park system has several parks with service area overlaps. A few parks have very limited residential service areas. A more targeted approach to acquiring active park land is recommended. This would result in the need for changes to the current Park Plan.
- The current park system and plan both feature numerous smaller parks requiring additional maintenance activity leading to depleted funding for replacement and development. A policy towards fewer, larger parks is recommended to be included into the Park Plan. Consideration of future maintenance costs should be carefully considered before building parks and trails.
- Several parks have limited usable area or visibility from the right-of-way resulting in underdevelopment and vandalism. Minimum park site selection criteria are recommended for incorporation into the Park Plan. Existing parks not fitting the criteria should be improved, reclassified, or divested.

The Planning Commission is asked to review the recommendations brought forward from this analysis for consideration of making revisions to the existing system and plans.

RECOMMENDED PARK SYSTEM PLAN POLICIES

At the time the City of St. Francis adopted the current Park Plan, the method for determining the amount of parkland necessary was to match population projections to the amount of land acquired throughout the system. This is a valid way to assess parkland needs when tied to actual land use. Since the adoption of the plan, some land use assumptions for the City have changed. Many of the areas targeted for future parks are now going to have significantly fewer future residents. Some areas where parks have already been acquired will also have fewer residents than initially planned.

The current plan also seeks to have established many small, minor parks much like has been the past park development practice in the past. This is an effective practice when supplying recreational needs to targeted areas of population. The Public Works Department has noted a concern that the expense of upkeep and development for the number of existing and future parks may be above likely budgeting thresholds. Thus, the goal would be to keep the same level of recreational planning available while finding ways to more efficiently provide park related services. This will ensure that the City can afford the routine maintenance for existing parks while also having enough resources to take care of future park needs.

Park systems that seek to maximize efficiency need to have a vision and policies to guide the realization of this goal. The following are the key components to maximizing efficiency within a municipal park system and properly choosing sites for land acquisition:

Categorization

Parks should be clearly categorized based on use. This allows the City to focus resources in appropriate manners. It would be recommended that the City focus on just two key active park categories and categorize the existing parks and future parks as such. The two major categories should be simply neighborhood and community level parks. Programming for community level parks would be facilities that draw from the City as a whole such as ball fields and other such facilities that would require parking lots and sanitary facilities. Neighborhood level parks would be for playground equipment and other limited facilities intended to serve residents within the service area.

Accessibility

Parks should be located on higher classification roadways. Parks should not be located on local streets where users will interfere with the residential nature of the area. Parks should have sidewalks or trails leading to the site from the neighborhood residences. Every park should be designed to handle the traffic it generates. Parks should connect to one another and key community facilities via the trail and sidewalk system.

Usability

Neighborhood parks should be of a size that reflects the community values but are recommended to be between 3 and 10 acres in size. This allows for more centralized facilities which lowers maintenance costs and increases the usability of the park. Parks that are intended to serve the community as a whole should be 20+ acres in size unless they serve a special purpose for which a smaller site is sufficient. Parks should be given names and signage that are independent of the subdivision that they are found in to avoid deterring residents from other neighborhoods using the park. Existing parks may not meet these standards and can be considered for expansion, replacement, supplementation, or reassignment.

Visibility

Parks should have good visibility into the site from the right-of-way and the neighborhood. Good visibility increases safety and limits opportunities for vandalism and crime. Vandalism results in premature replacement costs.

Maintenance

In order to limit liability, park equipment should be replaced on a regular schedule. The City should plan on replacing equipment and amenities every 20 to 25 years and begin routine safety inspections. A capital improvement budget should be made to track replacement costs. The City should plan on replacing equipment as a priority before new equipment unless new priorities are developed.

Trails are usually maintained by the City. Sidewalks are usually maintained by the neighboring property owners. As more trails are installed, the more the City is committing resources to maintaining trails. In some situations, a sidewalk or bike lane could serve the same purpose of a trail. Trails that the City does not wish to maintain and are not used year round by the public could become seasonal and closed during winter. Trails should be put on a regular maintenance schedule which should include seal coating and planning for replacement.

Open space should only be acquired in fee title when there is an identifiable public purpose. Ownership of the land comes with responsibilities for maintenance. When the City does come into ownership of property, low maintenance vegetation should be considered. If an open space parcel is remote, contracting of maintenance may also be considered.

Service Areas

The community should establish an appropriate distance for a service area. It is common to utilize a ¼ to ½ mile radius for neighborhood park service areas, as this is a common standard for walking distance. Parks serving neighborhoods should serve more than one development. Parks should be located in areas that are accessible to as many people as possible to maximize use and limit the total amount of parkland needed to service the community.

The City of St. Francis has some rural residential neighborhoods. It has been the City's practice to provide parks in these areas for the residents. This policy should be re-examined. Rural development densities are lower and the service areas would end up with a very limited amount of residences within ½ mile. Larger scale community parks or other types of special destination parks are appropriate for rural areas provided they are not dependent upon a central location.

PARK SERVICE AREA ANALYSIS

In order to establish whether or not the City has acquired adequate or excessive parkland, a service area analysis should be conducted. Parks should have independent service areas serving residential neighborhoods. A map was included showing each park with a service area of ½ mile around it. It should be noted that Highway 47, Rum River, and other such barriers lie within several of the service area circles, so care should be taken when analyzing overlap.

PARK SYSTEM AND PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

The City of St. Francis had made a practice of acquiring land for parks and natural areas within most new developments. The Public Works Department has expressed interest in exploring a new direction that maximizes efficiency within the park system in order to limit future budget increases due to maintenance of parkland. If the City chooses to go in this direction, the following actions would be appropriate, as part of a Park Plan Amendment:

Adopt new park categories and definitions

The existing park plan uses “Complex”, “Mid-Size Park”, and “Small Passive” as categories. Instead, it would be recommended for the City to use “Neighborhood Park” and “Community Park” and focus acquisition of parkland on active park facilities. The park category definitions should fit the concept of fewer, larger parks. Acquisition of natural areas and open space should be primarily done through easement agreements.

Consider maintenance responsibilities for park plan components

For every component in the park plan, the maintenance responsibility should be considered. Additional parks mean additional maintenance costs and routine scheduled replacement. Future park areas should be limited to what is necessary and what can serve the public in an efficient and organized manner. Trails should only be used when a trail is necessary to separate bicycle and pedestrian traffic from higher classification roadways. Bicycle lanes and sidewalks could replace trails on the trail plan when feasible.

Set minimum standards for acceptability in new park acquisition

Minimum Park standards should be established in order to ensure new parks are a fit within their intended category, accessible, usable for their intended purpose, visible and safe, easy to maintain, and have a specific service area. Such standards should be incorporated into the park plan to ensure the City is communicating its intent to the public and potential sub dividers of land.

Re-evaluate the need for rural neighborhood level parks

The City completed a Park & Trail Plan in 2005. This Plan establishes general priorities and policies for the City’s park system. The Plan was completed prior to the City’s 2030 Land Use Plan. At the time the plan was developed, the City was anticipating future rural residential development. The updated 2030 Land Use Plan set a new minimum development density of one unit per 10 acres in the rural portions of the City. A large number of parks are contemplated in the plan for the rural areas. This may not be appropriate any longer due to this change.

Revise park search areas

If the steps above are taken, the City should also review the current park search areas. The current methodology was to tie search areas to places where the City wanted parks in the future. A more efficient method would be to tie parkland to the areas with a higher number of future housing units.

Consider divestment of parks with inadequate or overlapping service areas

Divesting parkland is a serious matter that should only be done in cases where the park was acquired for a purpose that no longer fits within the City’s goals and policies. If the above steps are taken, it would stand to reason that the City would have a difficult time justifying the maintenance necessary to keep Royal Oaks and possibly Edgewild.

Prior to divestment, the City would need to process a Comprehensive Plan Amendment and in some cases a rezoning. A small number of parks in the City were platted as parkland but none have been considered for this process, as they are currently open space and wetlands. Otherwise, all parks have been platted as

Outlots. To be utilized for a purpose other than park, the City or the buyer would need to replat the property. If the property is in a Planned Unit Development, the PUD may need to be amended. Any money acquired from divestment would need to be placed in the Park Dedication Fund.

Incorporate maintenance schedules into park budgeting

In order to provide the safest parks possible, the City will need to set routine maintenance and replacement schedules. The cost for replacing and maintaining equipment should be put in line ahead of new acquisition to ensure there are enough resources to do so.

Require park concept plans with new dedications

Prior to accepting any parkland, the City should require the developer to show the proposed park can meet the needs for which it has been acquired. This can be done by requiring concept plans showing needed facilities within the public park.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

The Planning Commission finds these concepts to be acceptable and requests additional analysis be conducted and have a draft revisions to the Plan for review at the next Planning Commission meeting for recommendation to City Council.

9. **General Discussion Items by Planning Commissioners.** None

10. **Adjournment:**

MOTION BY STEINKE, SECOND BY RONYAK TO ADJOURN MEETING AT 8:03 P.M. MOTION CARRIED 4-0

Kathy Lind, Zoning Secretary

Date

PLANNING REPORT

TO: St. Francis Planning Commission
Matt Hysten, City Administrator

FROM: Nate Sparks, City Planner

DATE: August 8, 2012

MEETING DATE: August 15, 2012

RE: Ordinance Amendment – Metes & Bounds Divisions

BACKGROUND

The Subdivision Ordinance and Zoning Ordinance have a minor discrepancy in lot width requirements that impacts un-platted subdivisions. This ordinance is intended to correct this likely error.

PROPOSED ORDINANCE

Metes and bounds divisions are un-platted subdivisions. In most cases, the City requires subdivisions to be platted. The current ordinance states that metes and bounds divisions are only allowed for creating one new lot provided the lot is 10 acres or more in size and 330 feet in width or less. The amendment would change this to allow for metes and bounds divisions that create new lots 10 acres or more in size and lots 300 feet or more in width. The minimum lot sizes in the Agricultural Districts are all 10 acres and 300 feet in width. The City no longer uses the 330 foot width standard.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

It is recommended that the Planning Commission recommend approval of the following ordinance. The Planning Commission may wish to discuss any further desired exemptions from platting, as well.

**ST. FRANCIS METES & BOUNDS DIVISION ORDINANCE
PUBLIC HEARING REVIEW DRAFT
AUGUST 15, 2012**

11-03-4: METES AND BOUNDS:

- A. Conveyances by metes and bounds shall be prohibited except in the following cases: cases where the subdivision follows the Administrative Subdivision procedure in Section 11-04 or where no more than one new lot is created and both lots are more than ten (10) acres in area and have a width of less than three hundred thirty (330) feet at the building setback line.
1. A subdivision meeting the qualifications and following the procedures of an Administrative Subdivision in Section 11-04.
 2. A subdivision creating no more than one new lot and both resulting lots are 10 acres or greater in size with 300 feet or more of frontage.
- B. Divisions by metes and bounds creating new parcels shall follow the same procedure as established for a preliminary plat. Application requirements may be waived at the discretion of the Zoning Administrator.

PLANNING REPORT

TO: St. Francis Planning Commission
Matt Hylan, City Administrator

FROM: Nate Sparks, City Planner

DATE: August 8, 2012

MEETING DATE: August 15, 2012

RE: Ordinance Amendment – Zoning Enforcement

BACKGROUND

The City Council is considering an ordinance amendment to include an administrative penalty enforcement option in the City Code. In order to utilize this procedure for Zoning Ordinance violations, the following minor amendments need to be made to the enforcement section of the Zoning Ordinance.

PROPOSED ORDINANCE

The amendments include opening up enforcement to include other designated officers of the City other than just the Zoning Administrator, allowing the City Administrator to control the distribution of the enforcement letters, adding the administrative enforcement procedure as a possible remedy to zoning violations, and eliminating the timeframe for the deadline in the ordinance. These sections will then be deferred to the Council's adopted Code Enforcement procedure and not require public hearings for further amendment.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

It is recommended that the Planning Commission approve the following ordinance.

**ST. FRANCIS ZONING ENFORCEMENT ORDINANCE
PUBLIC HEARING REVIEW DRAFT
AUGUST 15, 2012**

10-3-9: ENFORCEMENT: This Ordinance shall be administered and enforced by the Zoning Administrator or other such party as designated by the City Council or City Administrator. The Zoning Administrator may institute in the name of the City of St. Francis any appropriate actions or proceedings against a violator. Whenever a violation of this Ordinance occurs, or is alleged to have occurred, any person may file a written complaint. Such complaint shall state fully the causes and basis thereof and shall be filed with the Zoning Administrator. That person shall record properly such complaint, immediately investigate, and take action thereon as provided by this Ordinance.

A. **Enforcement Procedure.** ~~For the enforcement of the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance, the first zoning violation notice shall be sent by regular mail, and the second notice will be sent by certified mail or return receipt requested to the property owner of which the violation is taking place. A copy of the zoning violation notice shall be sent to the City Council, Planning Commission, Police Chief, and City Attorney.~~ For the enforcement of the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance, zoning violation notices shall be sent by either first class or certified mail to the property owner of which the violation is taking place. A copy of the zoning violation notice shall be sent to the City Administrator, City Clerk, Police Chief, and City Attorney. The zoning violation notice shall contain the following information:

1. A description of the violation which is taking place.
2. A picture (if possible) of the violation which is taking place.
3. Location and/or address of the property at which the violation is taking place.
4. Identification of the section of the Zoning Ordinance which is being violated.
5. Date the violation was discovered.
6. Steps necessary to correct the violation.
7. Deadline ~~in~~ by which the violation must be corrected, which is at the discretion of the Zoning Administrator, ~~but which in no case may be longer than fifty (50) days from the date the first notice is mailed.~~

B. **Correction of the Zoning Violation.** Correction of the violation in the manner stipulated by the zoning notice violation, at any point during this enforcement

process, shall deem the zoning violation notice null and void, and enforcement activity shall cease.

C. **Failure to Correct Zoning Violation – Enforcement Remedies.** Failure to correct the zoning violation shall result in the City pursuing enforcement action following notification to the property owner, with the City having the authority to carry out the following enforcement remedies or combination of remedies:

1. **Withhold Permits.** The City shall have the authority to withhold any permits or City approvals which are necessary until the violation is corrected to the City's satisfaction.
2. **Stop Work Order.** The City shall have the authority to issue a stop work order on the subject violation.
3. **Abatement.** The City shall have the authority to require that the violation be abated by completely removing or stopping the item or use which has been identified in the zoning violation notice.
4. **Injunctive Relief.** The City shall have the authority to seek an injunction in court to stop any violation of this Ordinance.
5. **Civil Remedies.** The City shall have the authority to institute appropriate civil action to enforce the provisions of this Ordinance, and shall recover reasonable court costs and attorney's fees which are incurred due to the enforcement of the subject violation, at the discretion of the court.
6. **Assessment.** The City shall have the authority to use the provisions of Minnesota State Statutes 429, assess any charge against the property benefited, and any such assessment shall, at the time at which taxes are certified to the Anoka County Auditor, be certified for collection in the manner that other special assessments are so certified.
7. **Criminal Remedies.** The City shall have the authority to institute appropriate misdemeanor criminal action for a violation of this Ordinance.
8. **Cumulative Remedies.** The powers and remedies of this section shall not be individually limited and are not exclusive. The powers and remedies of this section are cumulative and all power and remedies may apply, as well as any other remedies allowed under State law.
9. Administrative Penalties. The City shall have the authority to utilize Section 2-11 of the City Code for enforcement of the Zoning Ordinance.

D. **Revocation.** Instead of, or in addition to any of the remedies in Subd. C., failure to comply with the conditions of a conditional use permit, interim use

permit, or the ordinances of the City shall result in the conditional use permit or interim use permit being revoked by the City Council. Revocation proceedings shall require a public hearing ~~before the City Council~~, with notice and due process according to Section 10-3-3, except that the City Council may waive Planning Commission review and comment.

PLANNING REPORT

TO: St. Francis Planning Commission
Matt Hysten, City Administrator

FROM: Nate Sparks, City Planner

DATE: July 11, 2012

MEETING DATE: July 18, 2012

RE: Comprehensive Plan – Park System Goals

BACKGROUND

At the July meeting, the Planning Commission discussed making some minor amendment to the City's Park Plan. The Park Plan had been adopted prior to the revised Comprehensive Plan and there were some inconsistencies with future park search areas. Additionally, City Public Works Department has noted that several City parks have had issues related to lack of use or improper use and revising some of the goals and standards for parks. Based on the review and comments at the July meeting, maps and text have been revised and brought back for a public hearing.

SUMMARY OF REVISIONS

The revisions to the plan include the following:

Development Capacity Study to Determine Park Needs

A development capacity study was done as part of this analysis. Based on Comprehensive Land Use Plan designations a baseline number of residents per acre was projected for future growth areas identified. This calculation identifies the amount of land necessary to be reserved for active park land within the growth areas. The results of this study are to be incorporated into the plan in case land use changes are made so the plan can be easily amended.

Revise Categories of Parks

On pages 32 through 36 of the Park Plan there are several types of parks mentioned. These categories are proposed to be reduced to: Community Parks, Neighborhood Parks, and Open Space.

- Neighborhood parks are to be identified as within the urban service area only and from 3-10 acres in size of usable space. These parks are required to have adequate frontage, accessibility, connectivity, usability, and an independent service area ranging from ¼ to ½ mile in size.
- Community Parks are identified as being 20-60 acres in size and are to combine the current plan concepts of "Sports Complex" and "Community Park". The

search areas for these parks will be in the Rural Service Area, on major roads, and near the edge of the City's urban growth areas.

- Open Space replaces Passive/Small Parks and incorporates the natural resource preservation aspects of the plan. It is also to become the holding zone for possible future parks.

Revise Park Search Areas

The Park Search Areas in the current plan were based on the growth models from the previous Comprehensive Plan. The revised search areas are focused on the above assumptions and the current land use plan. See the attached map for the updated version.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

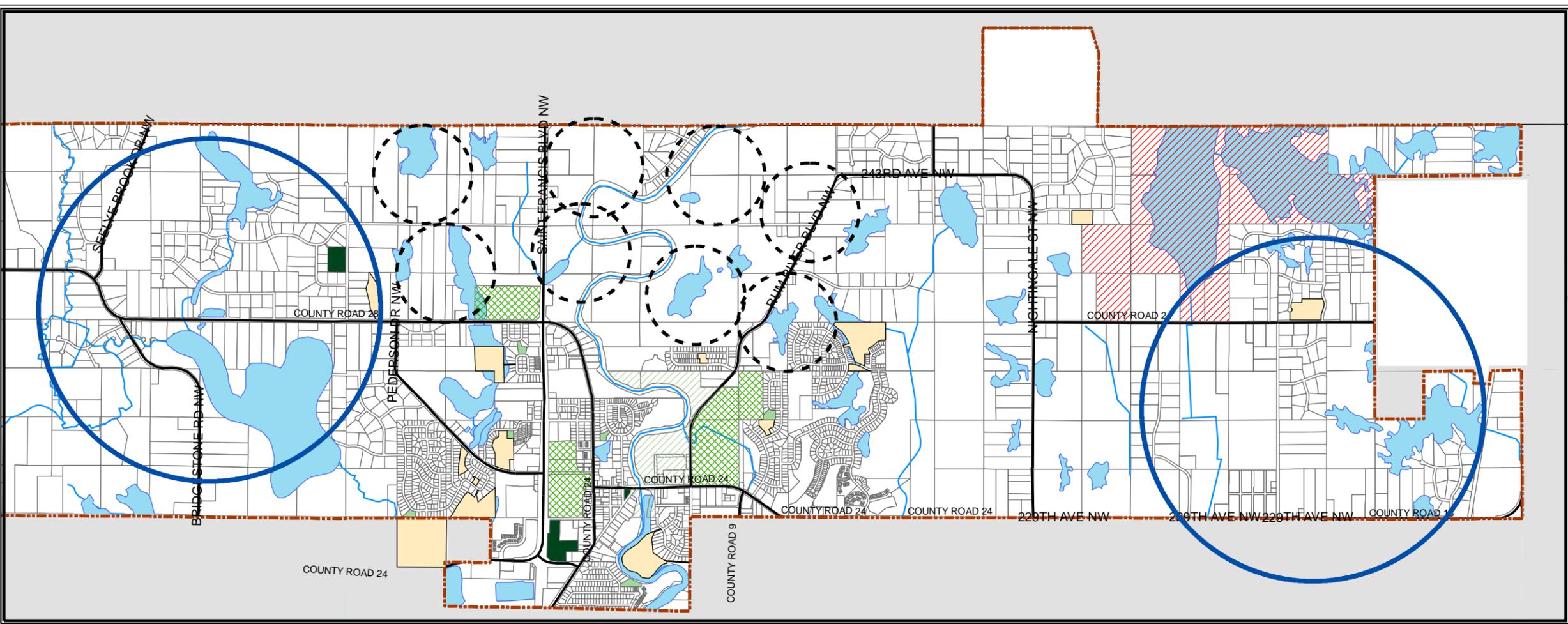
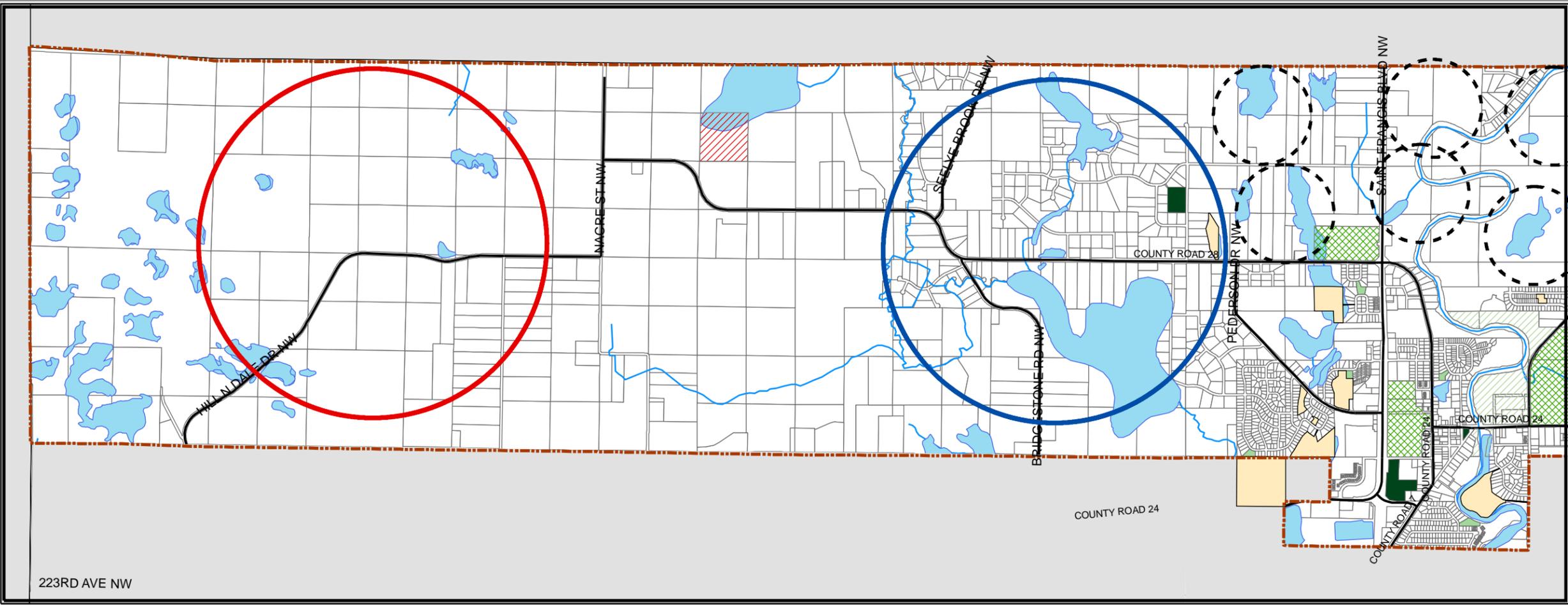
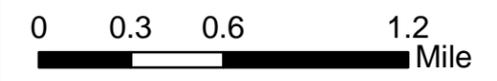
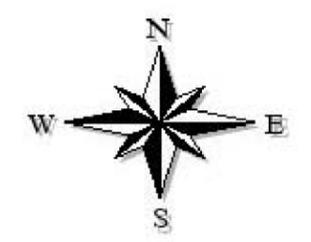
It is recommended that the Planning Commission hold a public hearing on these revision and review the new draft plan map. Any desired changes can be either brought back for further review or given to the Council.

Park Search Areas

Parks

-  Community Park
-  County Park
-  Neighborhood Park
-  School Land
-  State Land
-  Open Space

-  Future Neighborhood Park Search Areas
-  Future Community Park Search Areas
-  Future Regional Park Search Areas



223RD AVE NW

PLANNING REPORT

TO: St. Francis Planning Commission
Matt Hysten, City Administrator

FROM: Nate Sparks, City Planner

DATE: August 9, 2012

MEETING DATE: August 15, 2012

RE: Ordinance Discussion – Temporary Signs

BACKGROUND

Starting in June of 2010 and continuing until a public hearing in March of 2011, the Planning Commission held several meetings where the sign ordinance was discussed. The principal purpose behind the amendments was to incorporate content neutrality into the ordinance whereby the City is regulating sign size, location, and duration rather than content. Also, included in the amendments were updates to the non-conforming sign section made necessary by a statutory change and temporary sign regulations, as the City had received some complaints about illegal temporary signs and found enforcement difficult.

The ordinance amendments went into effect on January 1, 2012. Since that time, the City has largely gotten compliance on the temporary signs. There are some business owners who brought complaints forward to the Chamber of Commerce regarding the new temporary sign regulations. The Chamber invited City Staff to a meeting to hear these complaints. At the meeting the Chamber of Commerce asked that the City Staff discuss their issues with the ordinance with the Planning Commission.

TEMPORARY SIGN ORDINANCE COMPLAINTS

The complaints lodged by business owners at the meeting were that the duration of time allowed for the display of temporary signs was not long enough, the permitting process was too expensive, and that the size allowed was too small. The current ordinance allows for temporary signs up to 32 square feet in size to be displayed up to 120 days per year for a permit fee of \$25. The permit can be for the full year or for one period of time for display. Previously, the City did not require a permit for temporary signs and allowed their display for a period of time of up to 10 days. Below is a refresher of the Planning Commission's discussion on these topics and a succinct summarization of a complaint received regarding each:

Duration of Time

The Planning Commission reviewed several area ordinances regarding the duration of time allowed for the display of temporary signage. This was the primary issue with the previous incarnation of the sign ordinance as the 10 day period was difficult to enforce and difficult to comply with unless you owned your own sign, as the sign companies typically rent in greater durations of time than 10 days. Discounting the ordinances that prohibited all temporary signs, the ordinances reviewed by the Planning Commission ranged from allowing 14 days to 120 days per year of display for temporary signage with 60 and 90 days being the most common. The Planning Commission chose to select the longest period of time in use in a known area ordinance which was for 120 days per year.

Temporary sign ordinances have the time allowance in order to separate temporary signage from permanent signage. Permanent signs are required to meet the building code, as they are permanent features on the parcel. Temporary signs do not and all temporary structures are limited in durations of time as they are not permanently safely fastened to the ground. Permanent signage has its own set of rules and regulations in the ordinance.

Some business owners at the Chamber of Commerce meeting felt 120 days per year of signage was too limited. The golf course wanted to display signage for the duration of the golf season. A tenant at the City Centre felt that year round signage would be appropriate because of limited advertising availability for businesses in the area.

Size of Sign Allowed

While reviewing area ordinances, the Planning Commission noted that there were mostly two sizes of temporary signs allowed, 32 square feet and 48 square feet, plus one city that allowed 50 square feet. The Planning Commission recommended 32 square feet in area since it matched standards currently in place in the ordinance for similar signs, was consistent with several known temporary signs in use at the time, and also matched the size allowed by the area city using the 120 day allowance.

Size allowances are important, as temporary signage can sometimes obstruct views of traffic if too large. As the popular temporary signs in use transition from the trailer based changeable letter signs to the black signs with neon lettering, many cities have been allowing up to 48 square feet in size. Elk River, Princeton, and Albertville have semi-recently made this change. These signs usually come in 24, 32, and 48 square foot sizes.

A business owner at the Chamber meeting expressed that the 48 square foot sign would be preferable to the 32 square foot sign for visibility from Highway 47.

Sign Permit & Fee

Since monitoring the duration of display of every temporary, portable sign in the City had proven to be too difficult, the Planning Commission recommended going to a permit based system. Property owners are required to submit a permit stating when they would be displaying temporary signage and the City would only need to confirm the date of removal to ensure compliance. Since this inspection would cost the City taxpayers money, a nominal user fee was associated with the permit of \$25 to help defray the costs of administration. By comparison, some area cities are charging: Elk River \$30 with a \$100 deposit, Big Lake \$250 annual fee plus a \$100 escrow, Coon Rapids \$50, Robbinsdale \$50, East Bethel \$40, and Ramsey \$25. The fee is generally at the low end of the range found in Cities in the general vicinity. The permit can be annual fee or for each use at the determination of the permit holder.

A business owner at the Chamber meeting felt that the permit fee was an unnecessary tax on business.

Other Concerns

Some cities have separate ordinances written that allow for non-profits to place signage on a limited basis outside of the confines of a temporary sign ordinance. A comment was made that St. Francis should explore a similar exemption.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

It is recommended that the Planning Commission discuss these issues and decide if further discussion is warranted on this topic.