

## PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES - CITY OF INVER GROVE HEIGHTS

Tuesday, February 15, 2011 – 7:00 p.m.  
City Hall Chambers - 8150 Barbara Avenue

Chair Bartholomew called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Tom Bartholomew  
Pat Simon  
Tony Scales  
Paul Hark  
Harold Gooch  
Damon Roth  
Mike Schaeffer

Commissioners Absent: Christine Koch (excused)  
Dennis Wippermann (excused)

Others Present: Tom Link, Community Development Director  
Allan Hunting, City Planner

### **APPLICANT REQUESTS AND PUBLIC HEARINGS**

There were no public hearings.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Tom Link, Director of Community Development, gave a presentation regarding the Concord Boulevard Neighborhood. He explained the history of the area, including the recently restored Historic Rock Island Swing Bridge. He advised that in the 1990's residents and businessmen approached City Council regarding reinvigorating and redeveloping the Concord Area. As a result, the City hired a consultant to perform a Neighborhood Land Use Study of the Concord Area, which included a significant amount of neighborhood involvement. A key element of the plan was a riverfront park. A master plan for Heritage Village Park was prepared which, among other things, emphasized the historical aspect of the park. As a result of these planning activities, the City acquired the old railroad property as tax forfeit, conducted a series of environmental investigations, and commenced remediation of groundwater and soil contamination. That environmental cleanup continues today, with another years worth of work remaining. The City obtained grant funds and started to acquire properties in the Doffing Avenue Neighborhood from willing sellers, as well as acquiring several blighted properties along Concord Boulevard with the help of the Dakota County Community Development Agency (CDA). Mr. Link advised that the City has acquired 20 properties in the Doffing area from willing sellers, with 11 properties remaining. More recently, the City reviewed the Concord Neighborhood as part of its Comprehensive Plan Update. The Comprehensive Plan shows the 80-acre Heritage Village Park Master Plan, the Rock Island Swing Bridge Park, the marinas as permanent commercial, and mixed use along the Concord frontage. Mr. Link showed the various parts of the updated Heritage Village Park Master Plan, including the less intense open space area to the north, the more active use area to the south, and the Mississippi River Regional Trail (MRRT) running throughout the park.

Commissioner Simon asked for clarification of a walking bridge that had previously been discussed.

Mr. Link stated the walking bridge shown in earlier plans over the railroad tracks and Concord Boulevard has now been removed, in large part because of cost. He advised that the park will feature internal trails as well as the County regional trail, which begins in Coon Rapids and extends

down to Hastings. He advised that reconstruction of the Historic Rock Island Swing Bridge will hopefully be completed by summer 2011, with the parking lot and 66<sup>th</sup> Street trailhead being constructed later on this year.

Chair Bartholomew asked if the property on the west side of the pond near 62<sup>nd</sup> Street had recently been acquired by the City, to which Mr. Link replied in the affirmative.

Commissioner Hark asked if the park property was elevated enough above the river to alleviate fear of flooding.

Mr. Link replied that the City anticipates occasional flooding as much of the property lies in the 100 Year Floodplain. However, the park is designed in such a way that it can flood in certain parts without causing serious damage. He advised that the City has a standard protocol for managing flooding.

Mr. Link then discussed upcoming studies. He advised that the City is in the process of selecting a planning consultant to update the 1998 Concord Neighborhood Plan. The update will determine appropriate land use designations for neighborhood properties, identify potential redevelopment sites, and involve the residential neighborhood and Concord business community in the planning process. Mr. Link stated the Planning Commission will be involved in the Concord Neighborhood Plan Update which will take place in 2011. Once that is complete, the City will select a consultant to assist with the preparation of design guidelines and conduct a study of market strategies of the selected site(s). This will take place in 2012 and will be funded primarily by a Metropolitan Council Livable Communities Grant and will be undertaken in close cooperation with the City of South St. Paul, Dakota County CDA, Progress Plus, and Concord neighborhood residents and businesses. Once these studies are complete, the City will seek a developer to undertake redevelopment of the Concord Boulevard Neighborhood. He advised that the goal is to encourage more commercial and business activity, strengthen the residential neighborhood, and continue the existing pedestrian-oriented mixed use development pattern.

Commissioner Simon referred to the fill being placed on the park site and asked if it was close to completion, to which Mr. Link replied in the affirmative. He added that the fill was acquired free of charge from contractors working in the area.

Chair Bartholomew asked if the regional trail running from Coon Rapids to Hastings was near completion, to which Mr. Link replied in the affirmative.

Chair Bartholomew asked if the intent was for the trail to run down to Spring Lake Park in Hastings, to which Mr. Link replied in the affirmative. He stated the trail would hopefully improve economic development as well as be a recreational asset.

Commissioner Gooch asked if park visitors would be allowed to walk out onto the Rock Island Swing Bridge, to which Mr. Link replied in the affirmative.

Commissioner Gooch asked if Cameron Liquor was still planning to relocate to Concord Boulevard, to which Mr. Link replied in the affirmative, stating they were anticipating a Fall 2011 opening.

Chair Bartholomew asked if the County issues with Cameron's were resolved, to which Mr. Hunting replied there had never been any issues with access and they were still discussing final dollar amounts regarding relocation and acquisition.

**Elections**

Motion by Commissioner Gooch, second by Commissioner Simon to reappoint Tom Bartholomew as Chair of the Inver Grove Heights Planning Commission.

Motion by Commissioner Gooch, second by Commissioner Roth, to reappoint Paul Hark as Vice-Chair and Pat Simon as Secretary of the Inver Grove Heights Planning Commission.

Both motions carried (7/0).

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Bartholomew adjourned the meeting at 7:56 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Fox  
Recording Secretary