

**MINUTES**  
**CITY OF LONSDALE**  
**REGULAR PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MEETING**  
**MARCH 15, 2012**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Jim Freid, Joe Kodada, Dave Dols, John Duban, Ben Stich, and Scott Pelava

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

None

**STAFF PRESENT:**

City Planner Benjamin Baker

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Dols called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm in the Council Chambers at 415 Central Street West.

**2. AGENDA**

Dols asked if anyone had any additions or deletions to the agenda.

A motion was made by Duban and seconded by Kodada to approve the agenda as presented. Vote for: Freid, Kodada, Dols, Duban, Sticha; Against: None. Vote: 5-0. Motion carried.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Freid and seconded by Sticha to approve the minutes from the January 19, 2012 meeting. Vote for: Freid, Kodada, Dols, Duban, Sticha; Against: None. Vote: 5-0. Motion carried.

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**5. PUBLIC HEARING**

- a. Review Public Comments Pertaining to Ordinance 2012-250, an Ordinance Amending City Code Section 153.025, Variances

Dols read through the public hearing notice and opened the hearing. Baker read through the staff report, the proposed ordinance amendment language (Ordinance 2012-250), a related article on City variance authority, a League of Minnesota Cities (LMC) handout of the 2011 State variance legislation, and a LMC handout answering comments and questions concerning variances. Baker also reviewed a sample variance application form and an example of variance related findings of fact. He provided examples of the three-

factor test for practical difficulties related to 1) reasonableness, 2) uniqueness, and 3) essential character. After Baker finished providing an overview on the proposed ordinance amendment, Dols asked if anyone off the floor wanted to speak on the matter. No public comments were given (there was no one from the public in attendance at the meeting). Baker noted that there were no verbal comments received either.

A motion was made by Duban and seconded by Freid to close the public hearing. Vote for: Freid, Kodada, Dols, Duban, Sticha; Against: None. Vote: 5-0. Motion carried. The public hearing closed.

## **6. GENERAL BUSINESS**

- a. Consider Approval of Ordinance 2012-250, an Ordinance Amending City Code Section 153.025, Variances

The Planning Commission reviewed the proposed ordinance amendment.

A motion was made by Kodada and seconded by Duban to recommend approval Ordinance 2012-250, an ordinance amending City Code Section 153.025, Variances. Vote for: Freid, Kodada, Dols, Duban, Sticha; Against: None. Vote: 5-0. Motion carried.

- b. City Updates

Baker provided a brief update on City projects currently going on. He talked about the progress being made on the new Water Treatment Plant, the 2012 Street Reconstruction Project, Economic Development (EDA) initiatives, upcoming parks and recreation plans, and Planning/Zoning Department projects. The Commissioners reviewed associated pictures, maps, and site plans related to the updates. The Commissioners thanked Baker for the update.

- c. Overview of Temporary Structures / Car Ports

As requested by Commission Member Kodada at the previous meeting, the Planning Commission reviewed a variety of pictures showing portable and permanent car port structures. They also reviewed an example temporary structures ordinance that the City of Montgomery is proposing. Baker provided the Commissioners with the City's current rules related to accessory buildings, structures, and uses. He noted that the current regulations require that accessory structures need to be compatible with the principal building from both an aesthetic and architectural standpoint. Pelava asked if "party tents" would be classified as a similar portable structure. After reviewing and discussing the issue, the Commissioners agreed that the City should not allow for portable temporary car port structures.

d. Discuss Building Design Standards / Policy for New Development

Baker noted that he recently attended a presentation entitled “Bad Design Ruins Good Planning” by Maureen Bellows (a former Orono Planning Commission Member and a professional architect with SBP Design-Wayzata). He provided a brief overview of the presentation, including following key points:

- Cities tend to do a good job of planning at a macro scale. However, less attention is given to planning and architecture at a micro scale.
- A community’s character and appeal is created by its architecture.
- Planning Commissioners have an opportunity and the ability to influence architectural design and can provide advice to Councils.
- To understand architecture and ultimately produce buildings which are architecturally appealing, it is necessary to learn the “language of architecture”.
- Nine principles of design should be referenced when reviewing building projects:
  1. Regionalism
  2. Context
  3. Scale and massing
  4. Composition
  5. Hierarchy
  6. Color
  7. Details and craftsmanship
  8. Transformation (building endurance)
  9. Simplicity
- Once the “language of the architect” is learned, it may then be applied by Planning Commission members.

Based on the presentation, Baker suggested that cities should pay more attention to building architecture and design as part of the overall development review process. He also suggested that City staff, on behalf of the Planning Commission and City Council, bring up the issue of building architecture/design preferences during initial development/site plan review meetings. He explained that early design conversations and/or a development design guidebook (expressing the City’s design expectations) could help save developers and architects time and money. Baker stated that the City of Lonsdale may initiate a development guidebook which could include examples of both good bad design. He asked that Commissioners to review 18 different pictures of buildings in Lonsdale to determine a consensus on what existing buildings in town tend to define/represent Lonsdale right now. He also asked the Commissioners to rate Lonsdale’s existing buildings in terms of design and architecture. He stated that ratings and comments received from the Planning Commission would be helpful in gauging what types of buildings the community may feel are significant, eye catching, and/or aesthetically pleasing.

**7. MISCELLANEOUS**

Freid mentioned that there is a leaning fence along the sidewalk surrounding the property at 133 Main Street North that could constitute a potential public hazard.

Duban asked if the Police Department was going to enforce jake braking noise violations.

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Freid and seconded by Kodada to adjourn the meeting. Vote for: Freid, Kodada, Dols, Duban, Sticha; Against: None. Vote: 5-0. Motion carried. Motion carried. The meeting ended at 8:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

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Benjamin Baker, City Planner