

Plan Commission 101

Last week I was at a staff meeting with City Planner John Stockham and a couple others. One of the main items we discussed was in preparation for the June 1 Plan Commission meeting. With what looks to be an otherwise light Plan Commission agenda, we're going to devote some forty-five minutes to an hour on what we're referring to as "Plan Commission 101."

The longest tenure on the Commission is five years, and other members have been more recent appointments. So everyone has been appointed since the tail-end or after building boom earlier in the decade. The commissioners are thoughtful and committed, but the institutional knowledge is a bit limited.

Part of Plan Commission 101 will cover zoning and land division related permits. Wisconsin statutory law and local ordinances contain certain requirements for re-zonings, conditional use permits (CUP), site plans, floodplain developments, subdivisions, annexations, and such.

We will discuss, for example, what is a CUP, when is it applicable, how does it differ from a re-zoning or a variance, what is the application process, and what is the review and decision process.

City Engineer Dave Sauer, Building Inspector Dave Wartenweiler, and City Planner John Stockham will be present at the meeting. We will discuss the roles both of staff and of the Plan Commission in each of the application/permit topics, including procedures for follow-up review and enforcement.

With our Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan marking its fifth year, we will discuss Wisconsin statutes for the Smart Growth Law, in particular the "consistency" requirement. And we will cover the role of the Plan Commission in reviewing applications for amendments to the plan.

Development 101

Later, at the August 2 Plan Commission meeting, we expect to have a follow-up "Development 101" workshop. At this meeting we will invite local builders, real estate agents, surveyors, and others who work in the land development field.

Again, we will cover some of the basics about re-zonings, CUPs, site plans, and subdivisions. But we will also focus on building permits: what is required for one- and two-family residences, what is required for multi-family and commercial development, and what is required within the city's historic district.

We will also likely have an in-depth review of water-related laws. Broadly, this includes floodplain, shoreland, and wetland regulations; stormwater management; and erosion control requirements. In some cases, such as the shoreland regulations which were previously handled for us by Rock County, these are relatively new for us. In other cases, such as stormwater management, small-scale construction sometimes is overlooked.

We want to ensure clarity and consistency of the regulations, but also seek ways to encourage best management practices (BMPs) and streamlined procedures.

Discover Wisconsin

Last week, Brad Moellenberndt, Jim Brooks, Ruth Ann Montgomery, Jackie Liebel, and Sandy Decker went up to Madison to view the editing process of the Discover Wisconsin feature on Evansville.

From what they told me, the show had only a minimal amount of editing remaining. They needed to verify a few details such as whether it is “Romano’s Pizza” or “Romano’s Pizzeria.” And some background music still needed to be added.

But their real comment was that the show is great. Where most episodes of Discover Wisconsin have a tendency to be a series of scenes simply depicting this event, that attraction, a local restaurant, and another activity; instead, the Evansville show presents a more fully rounded presentation of the community.

The message that really comes through in the show is that we have a fun place to visit, a great place to do business, and a friendly place to live.

Premier Party Reminder

Save the date: Thursday, June 10. Evansville residents will be the first to see our Discover Wisconsin show; we’ll put it up on a big movie screen in the park. We’ll also have Looney Tunes cartoons on the big screen, fireworks at dusk, a festival tent, brats, popcorn, slushies, and more. Make sure to bring a blanket or lawn chairs for the family to spread out in front of the big movie screen!

Any questions about the Premiere Party please contact the ECP, Jim Brooks, at 882-0598. Any questions about how businesses can participate in upcoming promotions call the Chamber, Jackie Liebel, at 882-5131. Any other questions about how the Discover Wisconsin program works feel free to call Dan Wietecha at 882-2263.