

CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS
BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA
Regular Meeting/Work Session – February 23, 2009

Pursuant to due call and notice, a regular meeting/work session of the City Council of the City of Bemidji, Beltrami County, Minnesota, was held on Monday, February 23, 2009, at 5:30 p.m. in the Conference Room of City Hall, Mayor Lehmann presiding.

Upon roll call, the following Councilmembers were declared present: Lehmann, Johnson, Negard, Meuers, Waldhausen, Hellquist. Absent: Downs

Staff Present: City Manager John Chattin, City Attorney Alan Felix, City Engineer Craig Gray, Community Development Director Rita Albrecht, Deputy City Clerk Michelle Miller

Others Present: Paul Richards Widseth, Smith & Nolting, Benji Hofstad Widseth, Smith and Nolting, Mel Milender JPB, Andrew Mack JPB, Olden Kittleson

Mayor Lehmann stated that the purpose of the work session was to review the Southshore Development Concept.

Albrecht began by identifying what has been done, what the City has to work with, what the City wants to accomplish, how to get there and the time frame. Albrecht outlined the studies that have already been done since 2000 on the south shore property. Those studies include the HRDC study in 2000-2001, a housing study, CSL study, and RDG study. She indicated that several developers have already been interviewed (both local and out of town) to help refine the development. Albrecht also indicated that staff has been working with Ryan Kieson, attorney with Drahos, Kieson & Christopher, on how to subdivide the property. Albrecht emphasized that the goal of staff is to help the Council understand what has been done and plans for the future.

Paul Richards, Widseth, Smith and Nolting, summarized the plans that were presented to the Council for the South Shore. Richards emphasized the balance between private and public development working with the downtown to compliment each other rather than compete with it, and having a flexible plan and creating a pleasant and inviting area. Richards stated that increased height limits would allow the residential units to be more attractive for developers. Having a height restriction of 35 feet would create a “boxy” look and would be less appealing for the development as a whole. Richards indicated that the 150-200 foot setbacks of both businesses and residential from the lake would allow a view to and from the lake for the public. Many uses were detailed in the plans presented including, mega lots which could be sold or leased; midrise multi-family residential building; low rise multi-family residential building; and mixed use area concepts with many variations of commercial buildings including, retail below and office above, business below and residential on top, commercial and hotel; and hotel/resort emphasizing a pleasant view from the lake. Richards reiterated that the average height would be 65 feet but no more than 85 feet giving more variety in structure and gives more value to the property.

Chattin indicated that the value of the land will depend on the PUD and that staff would like to have lots for sale as early as June stating that an application could be made for the PUD process in either March, April or May.

Mel Milender, Greater Bemidji Joint Planning Board, requested that an application not be submitted in March, to give them time to review ordinances in March. He indicated, however, that he was concerned with the increased height limits since the City was able to garner support for the BREC height variance of 85 feet because there were not going to be any buildings higher than 65 feet in the development.

Council discussed the following:

- Height concerns along the lake could set a precedent;
- Better with 200 foot setback from lake (not obstruct view);
- Very exciting development; will compliment the event center;
- The variation in the development will draw people to the area; and
- Creating higher variances increases value.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, motion by Hellquist, seconded by Waldhausen, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle R. Miller
Deputy City Clerk