

**MINUTES OF THE NEENAH PLAN COMMISSION**  
**Tuesday, November 7 2023**  
**4:15 p.m.**

**Present:**

Mayor Jane Lang, Chairperson	PRESENT	Alderman Dan Steiner, Vice Chairperson	PRESENT	Gerry Kaiser, Director of Public Works	PRESENT
Kate Hancock-Cooke	PRESENT	Karen Genett	PRESENT	Betsy Ellenberger	PRESENT
Gerry Andrews	PRESENT	Sarah Moore-Nokes	PRESENT		

**Also Present:**

Brad Schmidt, Deputy Director of Community Development	Kayla Kubat, Administrative Assistant of Community Development	Chris Haese, Director of Community Development
Scott Becher, 1061 Green Acres Ln	David Miller, 240 1 <sup>st</sup> Street	Larry Zwiers, 1372 Alpine Ln
Tom and Jan Hoare, 1490 Breezewood Ln	Jason and Lori Geffers, 8275 County Rd T Larson	Alderman Cari Lendrum
Holly Engelman, Public Relations Specialist	Dean Kaufert, 1360 Alpine Ln	Alderman Todd Stevenson

**Minutes:** MSC Kaiser/Andrews, the Plan Commission, to approve the October 10, 2023 meeting minutes. All voting aye. Motion passed. Vice Chairperson Alderman Steiner abstained.

**Public Appearances:** Chairperson Mayor Lang opened public appearances to topics not related to the agenda.

Scott Becher, 1061 Green Acres Ln- He brought up an article from the Sheboygan Press regarding affordable housing. He pointed out Appleton is #4 on the list, Sheboygan is #3, and Racine is #9. He provided a copy of the article for distribution.

No others in attendance spoke. Chairperson Mayor Lang closed public appearances.

**Public Hearings:**

- a. Rezoning – 1385 Alpine Lane – R1 to R2 District

Dean Kaufert, 1360 Alpine Ln- He first stated the neighborhood was not properly notified of this hearing as some residents on his street received the letter regarding this rezoning the day before this hearing or the same day. He then commented there are all single-family homes in the neighborhood. On the entire street, there are no duplexes. He stated he does not have any problems with duplexes as he owns three or four in a duplex area. He states there is enough housing available, and this neighborhood is meant for single-family housing.

Larry Zwiers- 1372 Alpine Ln- He states this neighborhood should stay single-family homes.

Tom Hoare- 1490 Breezewood Ln- He states he built his house in an area where it has always been single-family, and he feels it should stay single-family.

Jason Geffers, 8275 County Rd T- He is the purchaser of the lots. His intention with the duplexes is to provide housing for friends and family, in particular aging parents and his newly married children. He states he has been a builder for 25 years; he intends to provide nice spec homes and duplexes on the lots to attract an upscale buyer.

No one else in attendance spoke. Chairperson Mayor Lang closed this public hearing.

**Action Items:**

**a. Rezoning – 1385 Alpine Lane – R1 to R2 District**

ORDINANCE  
No. 2023-18

Deputy Director Schmidt went over the request from the applicant, Jason Geffers, for the rezoning. This property was recently annexed into the city, as well as the property directly to the west earlier this year. At the time when the property owner annexed this property, his intent was to split off and either sell or develop the piece or the subject property. In the end, that property owner chose to sell it to the applicant. There have been conversations with Applicant Jason Geffers about his plans for the property. This rezoning is also in conjunction with a certified survey map to split this lot into four lots. The surrounding area is primarily zoned single-family to the north and to the south. However, there is a row of R2 district zoning along Breezewood Lane, so this rezoning would not be what is referred to as spot zoning. It is consistent with the zoning patterns in this neighborhood. With a rezoning, once it's rezoned to R2, it still allows for both single-family attached and detached units. When a property is rezoned, it is not necessarily for a specific development, it is open to those other uses as well.

Vice Chairperson Alderman Steiner asked what the approximate size and square footage is of each unit. Applicant Jason Geffers stated it is very preliminary, but an estimate would be around 1,300 square feet. He also stated he is looking to make these units ADA friendly due to his parents living in the unit and possibly other aging residents. This would be zero-entry and no steps in the homes.

Member Ellenberger asked about the notices sent out and how they didn't reach residents until the day before. Director Haese explained how this is an extra notice in addition to the state law requirement of the to notify residents before the Council meeting. The city chooses to do an additional public hearing for the Plan Commission meeting. The notices were sent out last week Wednesday, however, the mail service has not been reliable. Deputy Director Schmidt went over the rezoning request process. There is a pre-application meeting with the applicant to understand the request, ask questions, and get feedback. Once the application is received, we are required to add it to the next regularly scheduled Plan Commission meeting. Per state law, we need to send out notices to neighbors within 200 feet, which were sent out Wednesday, informing the residents of the informal public hearing. Also, there are notices put in the newspaper per state law. For this hearing, the newspaper notices were this weekend and Monday. The Plan Commission agenda is also published on Fridays on the city's website and a notice was sent to the third district alderman, in case they receive any questions.

Member Ellenberger asked for clarification on the map which lots will be single-family, and which are duplexes. She also stated she liked seeing the rendering of the duplex as well as the zero-entry for the aging population.

Vice Chairperson Alderman Steiner stated for a zone to change, it needs to fit in with the comprehensive plan. He asked Deputy Director Schmidt to go over how this rezoning would fit into the plan. Deputy Director Schmidt went over how this is a transitional area between a high-density residential area to the west. The area to the east and north is considered a residential neighborhood investment area, which is primarily single-family but does not prohibit two-family. In looking at these factors, this rezoning would be consistent with the comprehensive plan.

Member Andrews stated where he lives there are a lot of duplexes on the north end of his street, and they are always in high demand. He feels when there is a mix of single-family and duplexes in an area, it makes the area more interesting and attractive. He does not think duplexes should be segregated and there seems to be a great need for this kind of housing.

Member Genett stated there are many duplexes on Breezewood already, it is consistent with neighborhood.

Vice Chairperson Alderman Steiner stated this would not be a huge outlier in the area. Housing continues to be an issue everywhere, not only in the city but across the country.

Chairperson Mayor Land did state the formal hearing will be next Tuesday evening at the Common Council meeting.

**MSC Andrews/Genett, the Plan Commission, recommend Common Council approve Ordinance No. 2023-18 rezoning portion of property located at 1385 Alpine Lane to R-2, Two-Family Residence District. All voting aye. Motion passed.**

**b. CSM – 1385 Alpine Lane – 4 Lots**

Deputy Director Schmidt went over the applicant's request to subdivide this lot into four separate lots. Lot three and lot four are proposed to be rezoned to R2 and the two northern lots would remain R1, proposed for single-family development. In reviewing CSMs, we look at that they meet minimum lot size. In this case, the minimum lot size for both the zoning categories is 7,200 square feet, which they exceed. The minimum lot width is 60 feet, which is also exceeded. There are water and sanitary laterals to lot four and lot one. Laterals will need to be installed to lot two and lot three.

Member Andrews stated if the R2 rezoning does not pass the formal hearing, the four lots would stay R1. Deputy Director Schmidt stated yes.

**MSC Steiner/Moore-Nokes, the Plan Commission, approve the 4 lot CSM for the property located at 1385 Alpine Lane. All voting aye. Motion passed.**

**c. Site Plan Review/Beer Garden – 240 1<sup>st</sup> Street – New Restaurant**

Deputy Director Schmidt went over the request received for a site plan for a new restaurant located at 240 1<sup>st</sup> Street. This is a former optician's office located in the northwest corner of 1st and Water Street. The plan for this is to demolish the building and build a new building on the foundations that are currently there. The new building is roughly 5,700 square feet in size, one

story, which will include a restaurant and an outdoor patio/beer garden. Deputy Director Schmidt showed renderings of the building. The entrance is on the west side of the building. The parking lot to the west of the building will remain and there will be additional parking along the and the north side of the building. He also showed the floorplan, where the dining space is in the middle, and the outdoor patio is located on the east and south side of the building. The plan also includes some landscaping. The final landscaping plan has not been reviewed, but there are landscaping requirements along Water Street and 1st Street. The developer is also installing a catch basin in the parking lot. There is a request for a liquor license, which will be at a Public Services and Safety meeting, not only to improve approve the liquor license, but the expansion to the patio area as well.

Dave Miller, the Developer, stated the renderings are being finalized in hopes to be open by Cinco de Mayo due to it being a Mexican restaurant but that may be an aggressive timeline.

Deputy Director Schmidt went over the site plan and how the proposed building is a little smaller than the existing building. Also stated this is in a zoned C2 district, which is a central business district. Restaurants are a permitted use. In reviewing these site plans, we are trying to ensure setbacks are met.

**MSC Andrews/Ellenberger, the Plan Commission, approve the site plan for a new restaurant building located at 240 1<sup>st</sup> Street subject to the Site Plan Review letter comments and recommend Council approve the outdoor beer garden. All voting aye. Motion passed.**

**Comprehensive Plan 2040 – 5 Year Review:**

**a. Chapter 5: Housing**

Deputy Director Schmidt went over updating the data with either the new American Community Survey or 2020 Census data. There have been conversations about doing a housing market analysis to better understand what is happening in our area, both regionally and in the city. Owner occupied rates fell slightly from 66% to 64%, which is a common trend across the county. Vacancy rates dropped, which reflects the current housing market.

Vice Chairperson Alderman Steiner asked what data a housing market analysis would provide that we do not currently have. Deputy Director Schmidt stated it would show some trends as well as rents, mortgage costs and housing costs in more detail. It would also analyze our housing stock in greater detail than the Census and make projections from the data.

Member Ellenberger asked if this included the upgrade in the VNA. Deputy Director Schmidt it was not included in the data collected at that time, but we can now include it.

Deputy Director Schmidt went over how the housing chapter does go over low- and moderate-income housing options. We are also monitoring affordable housing legislation and trying to understand how this impacts the city. There are currently challenges with single-family homes due to not having a lot of developers and land available and there being more interest in multi-family. Having a variety of housing and having housing available will help the demand.

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Member Hancock-Cooke asked what will happen when the city cannot grow anymore. Deputy Director Schmidt went over how growth is important but also protecting existing neighborhoods. There are surrounding communities that are landlocked without the ability to look at growth. Endless growth is not the plan but to ensure the city can grow is important.

Member Andrews stated there was a goal of having 100 lots available and if this is still the goal. Deputy Director Schmidt went over the new subdivisions that are being developed. He also went over appropriate developing sites.

Member Moore-Nokes looked at the Outagamie county housing study and asked how this is related to the city. Deputy Director Schmidt went over how it is better to look at a regional perspective and not only City.

Member Andrews asked if this plan discusses auxiliary structures. Deputy Director Schmidt stated there are challenges with building codes and looking long-term of what is going to happen once the structure is no longer needed by the owner.

Member Hancock-Cooke asked about tiny houses. Deputy Director Schmidt stated the challenge would also be the building code and the need for foundation, water, and sewer. He explained the building code is a state document.

Director Haese stated in a tiny home, there is still a bathroom and kitchen and the cost per square foot to construct may be similar to a full-size home. There is also an issue with vehicles and parking

Deputy Director Schmidt stated in other communities, there are some age-restricted housing, which can help the aging population downsize more affordably.

**Announcements and Future Agenda Items:** Next meeting is scheduled for November 28, 2023.

**Adjournment:** The Commission adjourned its meeting at 5:13 p.m. MSC Genett/Ellenberger. All voting Aye. Motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted,



Kayla Kubat  
Administrative Assistant, Department of Community Development

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# The 10 most affordable US cities for renters

Noah Sheidlower Sep 25, 2023, 5:27 AM CDT



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**The Missouri Capitol in Jefferson City** Jeff Roberson/AP

**Jefferson City, MO, ranks as the most affordable metro area in the US for renters.**

**The top 10 metro areas all had over 62% of renters paying under 30% of their income on rent.**

**Metro areas in Ohio, Wisconsin, and Wyoming rounded out the top five.**

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For the most affordable rent, Americans may need to move to cities in Ohio, Wisconsin, or Wyoming.

Jefferson City, MO, ranked as the most affordable metro area for US renters, according to [data from the US Census Bureau](#). For the top

cities, Insider analyzed the share of residents with affordable rent, meaning the percent of residents who pay less than 30% of their income on rent.

## The most affordable metro areas for US renters

Rank	Metro Area	Share with affordable rent	Median gross rent	Median household income
1	Jefferson City, MO	68.4%	\$816	\$71,396
2	Lima, OH	67.9%	\$893	\$59,880
3	Sheboygan, WI	66.8%	\$882	\$62,978
4	Appleton, WI	66.5%	\$955	\$78,388
5	Casper, WY	64.9%	\$902	\$69,627
6	Sioux Falls, SD	63.3%	\$962	\$77,605
7	Great Falls, MT	63.2%	\$837	\$58,698
8	Rocky Mount, NC	63.0%	\$847	\$53,896
9	Racine, WI	62.7%	\$980	\$71,788
10	Wenatchee, WA	62.7%	\$1,294	\$87,459

Note: Affordable rent is defined as the percent of people paying less than 30% of income on rent.

Over two-thirds of renters in Jefferson City, the capital of Missouri with just around 43,000 residents, had affordable rent, as median household income was over \$71,000, yet median gross rent was just \$816 a month.

City of over 35,000 residents in northwest Ohio, ranked second, with around 68% of rents able to afford rent. The median

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gross rent was just under \$900, while median household income was about \$60,000.

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The advertisement features a dark blue background with two circular portrait cutouts. The first cutout shows a smiling man in a dark suit, labeled 'The Sales Leader'. The second cutout shows a smiling woman in a light blue shirt and brown jacket, labeled 'The Marketing Manager'. To the right of the portraits is the Dun & Bradstreet logo, which consists of several overlapping circles in shades of blue and teal, followed by the text 'dun & bradstreet' in a white sans-serif font.

Wisconsin had three metro areas in the top 10: Sheboygan, Appleton, and Racine. All three, whose median gross rents were under \$1,000, are concentrated in the eastern side of the state. Around two-thirds of renters in Sheboygan and Appleton had affordable rent, while 63% in Racine had affordable rent.

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areas in Wyoming, South Dakota, Montana, North Carolina, Washington rounded out the top 10, all with around 63% or more with affordable rent.

The data supports recent findings that wealthier Americans are moving to Montana and Idaho for more affordable rent.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the metro areas with the lowest percentage of people with affordable rent were concentrated in Florida, particularly in Homosassa Springs, Naples, Port St. Lucie, and Miami-Fort Lauderdale.

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The New York-Newark-Jersey City metro area, which has some of the highest rents in the nation, ranked in the middle of the pack, with over 47% of residents having affordable rent.

The rental market nationwide has been softening, though the median US asking rent is still over \$2,000 — on par with a record high set last year. Many people are still holding onto their rentals given a still-tight home-buying market, though rent increases may

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report from earlier this month revealed landlords are offering one-time discounts or the first few months free to attract renters, which have caused effective rent to fall in some areas.

Per Redfin, median asking rents rose 4.6% from August 2022 to August 2023 in the Midwest and 1.2% in the Northeast over the same period. Median asking rents fell 1.1% in the West and 0.3% during the same period.

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Rent has fallen over 10% over the last year in Lincoln, Fresno, St. Louis, and Tampa, online rental platform Zumper found.

*Have you recently moved to a new state or region due to cheaper rent? Reach out to this reporter at [nsheidlower@insider.com](mailto:nsheidlower@insider.com).*

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