Minutes
Plan Commission
Meeting

May 17, 2021

Members Present: Scott Peters, Peter Bloechl-Anderson, Eric Green, Carolyn Clow, Chris St. Clair

Members Absent:

Staff Present: Andrew Bremer, Andrew Day, Matt Schuenke, Chris Dennis, Karen Knoll, Kong Thao

1. CALL TO ORDER

   Clow called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. NEW STAFF & MEMBER INTRODUCTIONS

   Bremer indicated that Tom Rogers stepped down from the Plan Commission due to commitments, and Bruce Fischer's term expired and he has chosen to not renew his seat leaving two open seats on the Plan Commission. Clow indicated the application is online and they have received some applications to fill the vacancies.

   Bremer introduced Kong Thao who is the Planning and Zoning assistant in the department.

   Clow introduced herself as the chair by Village Ordinance and Chris St. Clair as the new trustee on the Commission.

3. PUBLIC APPEARANCES.

   Anthony Plourde – 6021 Shooting Star Court – spoke on concerns regarding erosion control, site, and street maintenance and general quality of living concerns for active construction sites.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

   a. Review and possible approval of the April 19, 2021 Plan Commission minutes.

      Clow moved to approve the April 19, 2021 Plan Commission minutes. Green seconded the motion. Motion carried 3 – 0 – 2 with Clow and St. Clair abstaining.

5. PUBLIC HEARING

a. Public hearing on a request by Wisconsin Power & Light and Alliant Energy for a Conditional Use Permit for a natural gas regulator station at Grand View Lot 3, parcel 0610-023-5350-7 (approximate northwest corner of Creamery Road and Elvehjem Road), McFarland, WI, property zoned CO Conservancy.

Clow opened the public hearing at 7:14 p.m.

Aaron Welsh, Project Manager for Alliant Energy reviewed their presentation as provided in packets, for the proposed Creamery Road location. He reviewed what a regulator station is, shared photos of existing regulator stations, along with photos and an explanation of the current regulator station which is located in the area of the proposed new above ground one, and photos of the new proposed station.

Welsh indicated the upgrade is due to the age of the current one, maintenance issues, susceptibility to corrosion, and safety issues for employees servicing it along with it being an obsolete design no longer used. Welsh indicated there are currently two stations in McFarland and they are backups for each other unless there is a peak flow day when they need to have both regulators feeding into the system to maintain adequate pressure for all customers; both are also needed for reliability.

Welsh advised they have been working with Village staff to design something which provides acceptable screening. They had planned on arborvitae round the exterior of the fencing, however have found at other locations the trees are eaten by deer, so they are looking for input from the Plan Commission for an acceptable design and plantings. There will be concrete bollards inside the chain link fence to protect the station. The site itself will have a locked chain-link fence around it, along with anything inside of the fence is locked. The fence will include green privacy slats.

Welsh reviewed the location proposal as included in packets with Commissioners. Welsh indicated the closer they are to the infrastructure the less environmental impact and less costs, which are passed on to customers; there are also wetlands and potential wetlands in the area which is why this site was selected to have the least amount of environmental impact. They have staked the site so community members have had the opportunity to see the location in advance of the meeting. Welsh reviewed the location with Commissioners as indicated in their submittal. Per code, there is annual maintenance on the site, but generally, staff is there a couple of times a year to check on the regulator station.

Commissioners discussed the location, the area wetlands, bike path location, any potential risks, and the need for annual access to the bike path for maintenance. If maintenance crews did not need the truck, they would normally park on the street and walk in. The trucks are medium duty and Alliant would repair any damage to the bike path if there were any. Bremer indicated the bike path is constructed to handle the Villages Public Works trucks, which are driven on the paths, the biggest

concern would be during construction period as Welsh indicated, however Alliant would repave any damaged areas. Green inquired what the consequence would be if not approved. Welsh replied they would have to look for an additional site, depending on how far away from the infrastructure they would have to install more piping to feed back in to the McFarland system, potentially more costs which would be passed on to customers. Clow inquired how far could they be from the pipeline, what are the parameters for their location? Welsh replied ideally they want to be as close as possible to the pipeline as they need the high pressure source to feed into the system, they could be a few hundred feet away if they had to be, the further away would mean additional cost and additional environmental impact. St Clair stated he could see putting it somewhere where they later decided to add a bike path but he would have problems putting it in this highly traffic residential area where there is an existing bike path, with plans for expansion, he doesn't see how that would not have impact on the users of the area.

Shannon Morrison 6129 Meadowsweet Trail – spoke against.
Julie Radomski – 6702 Country Walk – spoke in favor.
Scott Marrese-Wheeler - 6401 Hidden Farm Road – had questions
Kathryn Sales - 5404 Wild Cherry Lane - had questions
Amy Sausen - 5422 Dennis Drive - had questions

Questions on the project covered wildlife impact, the location, landscaping, and any potential odor.

Concerns: the location, this is a special location, that this is a power station or a sub-station, impact on the use of the area, erosion of the morals and welfare of the community, agendas not being in writing, potential for electrical towers in neighbors backyards or radiation towers in school playgrounds, possible poisoning of water, unplanned public safety building, that the location is staked out, what would happen to the current regulator site, when can they get answers to questions.

Support: the current station has had no issues since installed in the 70's, no one voiced any concerns over the current location until it needed upgrading, no problems with safety, smell or hazard to the wetlands for decades. It has not been a hazard or safety concern to anyone until now when an updated one is needed.

Clow indicated there would be the opportunity for answers to questions after public comments, and no action will be taken on this agenda item tonight.

Welsh responded to questions, the current station would stay in operation until they can get approval for a new one. If the new location is approved, the current station will be closed including taking out the concrete pit, removing the piping and lids and returning it to natural space. This is not a power station, nor is it a sub-station or tower, it is a regulator station, it does not give off radiation. It is designed to give off no emissions. There would be a relief valve similar to the current site. They do

evaluate the wildlife concerns, are required to follow the DNR statutes, and not allowed to disturb eagles during the nesting season. They did look at the pipeline location, in order to use a site further east Alliant would have to run more pipeline back into McFarland which would cause more impact, including homeowners yards and right – of -way getting torn up, permitting, environmental impact, soil disturbances, and a longer construction process disturbing the area. By staying close to the load center, which is McFarland, there would be less of all of those impacts. When adjacent to wetlands the concerns are all addressed and followed during construction, and they get the proper permits.

Clow asked Bremer to review the responses provided by Alliant to the Conditional Use Standard application as provided in packets. St. Clair advised per the standards he saw nothing addressing this being installed on an existing bike path and there are residents who value this area of the Village so he sees no substantial evidence to support putting a regulator station on an existing bike path that is used by residents, he feels it would be best to choose a different site than one that is of value to the community.

Welsh reviewed the location and other possible locations as discussed, and reviewed the process, the additional piping that would need to be installed and how the piping and load pressure works. Bloechl-Anderson inquired on the future development in this area, what is in the overall plan. Bremer reviewed the future land use map with Commissioners, there is no future development planned in that area at this time. Bloechl-Anderson stated he understands the "not in my backyard" thoughts, but he understands utilities and infrastructure and trying to bring things up to code, the further we push this away from the current one, the more you will be pushing costs up, this location appears to be a good compromise, the current recreational items are in place, we can always require for more screening to keep it hidden from view, and he understands the need to install it in a way to keep employees safe when working on the regulator. Green advised he concurs with Bloechl-Anderson, he understands the need to replace it, there may possibly be a location across from the dog park, however he feels it is a suitable proposal.

Clow closed the public hearing at 8:19 p.m. and indicated there will be discussion and action on this item at the Monday June 21, 2021 Plan Commission meeting.

6. BUSINESS.

   a. Discussion and possible action on a Site Design Review Application from the Village of McFarland for a new McFarland Public Safety Center on parcel 0610-021-9195-1, southeast corner of Holscher Road and Broadhead Street, property zoned R-1 Single Family Residence.

Matt Schuenke – Village Administrator on behalf of the Village, addressed Commissioners. This is for the new Public Safety Center at 6001 Broadhead Street, which will house the Police Department, Fire and Rescue Department and Municipal Court. The application and all required documents are included in the packet. The current schedule is to work with the Village Board on finalizing plans in the early part of the summer. They are attempting to make this a more sustainable building.

Andy Iverson from Bray Architects reviewed the site design submittal as included in packets.

Jim Lumburg from Point of Beginnings reviewed the plans as submitted indicating layout of the building, parking and access driveways. Lumburg also reviewed the stormwater management plan for the proposed site.

Matt Johanek from Point of Beginnings landscape architect reviewed the landscaping plan as proposed and included in packets.

Bloechl-Anderson inquired if there had been a study done on response time for this location. Schuenke advised there was a study done in 2017 for both volunteers getting to the facility and the response time once they have arrived to the facility. This facility is designed for thirty years. Chris Dennis – Fire and Rescue Chief indicated this facility is designed for development in the future as well as the current layout of the Village. While some areas geographically would be farther away, they have a variety of routes they would take, and access to main roads is easier from this proposed site. While the current site is good for today, the Village is growing to the east and this location brings to it the major thoroughfares. Bremer indicated there are staff reports in the packet from Chief Dennis.

Bremer inquired on the ground-mounted accent light on the Broadhead Street side of the building, if this was a feature the Plan Commission wanted to maintain perhaps they could put some small landscaping shrubs around it to help insure the lighting element is not seen. On the west elevation there are a lot of features which break up the massing, but he would suggest it be treated with a little more landscaping, possibly a few larger canopy trees to help break up the massing and visibility of the parking lot. On the public parking side the stall lengths are shown at 18', we normally require 19', but there appears to be room for vehicle overhang The Village engineer did indicate some items from his report dated May 11, 2021 and Chief Dennis had some items in his report dated May 11, 2021. Peters inquired about the cost increases as we are currently in a time where there are mass material shortages, is the Village going to be paying a premium to have this product this if we put it out for bid in the summer with a fall start date due to the current construction rates. Bloechl-Anderson agreed and wanted to know if this project is on budget. Iverson replied they are considering this and keeping a close eye on it as they work through the design with Schuenke and are maintaining contingencies

as they are still in the design process. Green asked if the goal to have this 100% designed and then go out for bid. Iverson replied yes that is the goal. Bloechl-Anderson indicated he would hope there is a healthy contingency based on everything Peters had mentioned, he too has concerns with the way the building industry is going at this time. Schuenke responded they are aware of this and understand the concerns; the Village Board has to be mindful of this as they move forward and they are still in the design phase, and are evaluating what needs to be done along with balancing the options so they can proceed with the project. Commissioners discussed the sustainable features on the proposed project.

Clow moved to recommend approval of the Site Design Review Application from the Village of McFarland for a new McFarland Public Safety Center as submitted, conditioned on submitting revised plans for Village Staff review and acceptance addressing:
1. The comments in the Village Engineer's Staff Report dated May 11, 2021, excepting the first comment under Sheet C2.0.
2. The comments in the Fire & Rescue Department Staff Report dated May 5, 2021.
3. Addressing the additional landscaping considerations raised in the Community & Economic Development Director's Staff Report.
Peter seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

b. Discussion and possible action to make a recommendation to the Village Board regarding Resolution 2021-10: A Resolution Discontinuing a Portion of Johnson Street Abutting Lots 8 and 9, Block 1, Johnson's Addition to Village of McFarland as a Public Way.

Bremer summarized this is continuation of a Conditional Use Permit and site design approved by the Plan Commission at the March 15, 2021 meeting. As part of the approval there were some right of way issues needing to be addressed. Bremer reviewed the resolution as outlined in packets.

Clow moved recommend to the Village Board Resolution 2021-10 A Resolution Discontinuing a Portion of Johnson Street Abutting Lots 8 and 9, Block 1, Johnson's Addition to Village of McFarland as a Public Way as presented. Motion seconded by Bloechl-Anderson. Motion carried 5-0.

c. Discussion and possible action to make a recommendation to the Village Board regarding Resolution 2021-12: A Resolution to Dedicate Right-of-Way for Highway Purposes Abutting Lots 8 and 9, Block 1, Johnson's Addition to Village of McFarland.

Bremer reviewed the dedication for the Bashford Street project as included in packets. The development project will have a sidewalk, the right-of-way will then move to the inside edge. The area to be dedicated has been surveyed to bring the

proposed right-of-way along Bashford Street to the back (inside) of the proposed sidewalk shown on the approved site design plan for 5411Bashford Street.

Clow moved to make a recommendation to the Village Board regarding Resolution 2021-12: A Resolution to Dedicate Right-of-Way for Highway Purposes Abutting Lots 8 and 9, Block 1, Johnson's Addition to Village of McFarland as presented in packets. St. Clair seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

d. Discussion and possible action to make a recommendation to the Village Board regarding Resolution 2021-15: A Resolution Accepting the Dedication of Right-of-Way at 6009 Johnson Street from the School District of McFarland.

Bremer reviewed the area with maps as provided in packets, this is the opposite side of the roadway, this shifts the property line, the school board approved dedicating the area to the Village for right-of-way purposes.

Clow moved to make a recommendation to the Village Board regarding Resolution 2021-15: A Resolution Accepting the Dedication of Right-of-Way at 6009 Johnson Street from the School District of McFarland as presented in packets. Green seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

e. Discussion and possible action to make a recommendation to the Village Board regarding Resolution 2021-16: A Resolution Approving A Declaration of Easements On Property Located At 5411 Bashford Street.

Bremer reviewed the submittal as provided in packets, this is a portion of the land to be vacated. Resolution 2021-16 would create a public utility easement within a portion of the vacated right-of-way created under Resolution 2021-10 for public utility purposes.

Clow moved to recommend to the Village Board Resolution 2021-16: A Resolution Approving A Declaration of Easements On Property Located At 5411 Bashford Street. Green seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

f. Discussion regarding scheduling the review of Plan Commission applications requiring a public hearing.

Clow indicated this is an item she requested to be placed on the agenda. Clow stated over the past year there has been some concerns from the public with the holding of the public hearings by the Plan Commission and taking action the same night. Her concern, and, she feel that of the community, is it is impossible to take public comments into serious consideration if you are holding the public hearing and taking action on the same night, it is impossible to take any comments into account and make any substantial changes within the context of a single meeting. Clow is proposing that action be split from the public hearing and she wanted to discuss this

with the Commission. She understands there are developers who would like action taken as fast as possible. Commissioners discussed options. Bloechl-Anderson stated sometimes he feels the items move to fast, and other times to slow, it is good to have input from the community. He wishes required notices went further, however there is a delicate balance for the community at large and there is the "not in my backyard" viewpoint. His concern is the high-density housing where we are working off an old report and have been approving apartments and condominiums at a rapid pace. This is just an example. Peters stated he can see both sides and understands the public wants their voice to be heard and how they can feel that their voice is not heard when you vote that evening. However if you wait a month it gives Commissioners time to be separated the feelings of the public as you are voting on something which was discussed a month earlier and the public may not have the same impact. Green stated it is sometimes hard to react to public comment on the night of the hearing, or for the developer to respond. Bloechl-Anderson pointed out while there are things someone may not want, due to the CUP laws and requirements there are things while you may want to vote against due to public input, there is not substantial evidence to turn it down, and the public does not always understand this, as a Commissioner, he sometimes feels his hands are tied by what it required by law. St. Clair stated from a resident side and being on a neighborhood association who helped prevent a gas station going in in 2016 and going through the process with some of the developers in his area he can agree to that. He feels it is an entire issue of communication and the residents feeling they are heard, he does not feel this is a final solution but something they can do now to give residents the feeling that they do have a voice and they do matter. He does think it is important that we are a good Village to work with as well and not to be pushing developers off. Clow indicated she is working with Bremer and the Communication and Technology Department to a Q & A to help people know where they can find the information. Clow did indicate an option would be to meet more than once a month to discuss specific items, possibly a meeting on the first and third Mondays of the month. Clow inquired on how Commissioner felt about this. Commissioners discussed the rarity of long meetings, and how an additional meeting would affect their inability to make them. Clow indicated one option would be at the meeting on the third Monday decide to have a meeting on the next month's first Monday, there would likely not be much more notice than that. Bloechl-Anderson pointed out if there is an item, which has to go before the CDA and the Plan Commission by adding an additional meeting this will prolong any action on a project due to the order of which they should happen. There is a balance, which needs to be thought through. Clow indicated she took the initiative to make the change for this meeting without the approval of the body to see how it would work; they may revisit this discussion, for the time being they will continue the practice.

Clow indicated she will try a few new things with the permission of the body, if there is something you feel you would like to see feel free to email herself or Bremer, we will never reach the point of making everyone happy.

7. STAFF REPORTS

    a. Property maintenance report – Bremer reviewed the report as provided in packets, they are seeing more calls for items to be addressed.

    b. Director's report – Bremer reviewed his report as included in packets.

8. SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING DATE

    a. June 21, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

9. ADJOURNMENT.

    Clow moved to adjourn, Green seconded the motion. Motion carried, meeting adjourned at 9:17 p.m.