

CITY OF MEDINA
Special Planning Commission Meeting

November 18, 2014
6:00 p.m.

Medina City Hall Council Chambers
501 Evergreen Point Road

CALL TO ORDER

The Special Planning Commission meeting of November 18, 2014, was called to order at 5:57 PM by Chair Nunn.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Heija Nunn, Jeanne Carlson, Peter May, Mark Nelson,
Peter Papano, Randy Reeves and Shawn Schubring

Absent:

Staff Present: Robert Grumbach, Development Services Director
Donna Goodman, Development Services Coordinator
Michael Sauerwein, City Manager
Tom Early, City Tree Consultant

Tree Committee Present:

Alex Morcos, Council Member
David Lee, Council Member
Robert Rudolph, former Council Member
Curt Pryde, Council Member

ANNOUNCEMENTS (5:57 PM)

Grumbach drew attention to the Giving Tree and encouraged everyone to choose a tag. The tree is sponsored by Childhaven and benefits needy children in the area.

Chair Nunn welcomed members of the Tree Committee.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (5:59 PM)

There were no comments from the audience.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

OTHER BUSINESS

1) Phase Two Tree Code Update Discussion (6:00 PM)

Chair Nunn announced their continued discussion on the purpose and intent statements from the last meeting. Grumbach distributed copies of an email from Douglas Reed to the commissioners. He then addressed revised language from the previous week and discussion followed. Commissioners provided input for further editing and indicated an overall satisfaction with the purpose and intent statements.

Discussion moved next to the criteria for what types of projects should constitute development requiring tree performance standards. Tree Committee members Alex Morcos and Robert Rudolph addressed the commission. Rudolph shared information on a previous study about a high percentage of tree loss during waterfront redevelopment. City Tree Consultant Tom Early shared his observations that many deciduous trees typically have a large canopy and are frequently removed from the waterfront areas.

Chair Nunn opened the meeting to public comment. Responding to previous statements, Paul Saad stated that he built more than thirty homes in Medina and that people are not interested in scraping the trees off their properties, that typically they value their privacy and trees. He also emphasized that the life cycle of trees must be taken into consideration.

Chris Weymouth spoke about the preponderance of trees in the rights-of-way that are not maintained or managed by the City and which block views.

An extended discussion took place among commissioners regarding the difference between performance and restoration standards. Grumbach was asked to make revisions to the criteria focusing on permits as the criterion.

Discussion moved next to the topic of views, which Grumbach explained was raised in public comments received. He stated that the city recognizes the importance and value of views with the View and Sunlight Ordinance, but leaves responsibility for views with private property owners. He noted that view protection is not part of the tree code or work program for updating the tree code. He asked the commissioners if they wished the city to become more involved with view protection and noted that this will require council direction.

Grumbach shared that most jurisdictions do not have view protection regulations as this can be problematic. He added that the efforts to make the current tree code more flexible on replacing trees should help alleviate some of the concerns by making it easier for property owners to work out view issues.

Chair Nunn raised the subject of the maintenance of public views. Papano proposed that those considerations be built into the city's maintenance program in places where the city has control of trees and then give property owners the flexibility to accomplish this.

Nelson distributed excerpts on urban forest zones from the Clyde Hill tree management plan. He suggested that Medina should not guarantee views to anyone, but should acknowledge that they are very important to residents. Nelson stated that he was in favor of recommending to the council that the city undertake a tree management plan which would include allowing lower canopied trees.

Reeves agreed that planting the right tree in the right place is a key concept.

May recommended using the intents statements to strengthen maintaining views and sunlight and voluntary means to allow the planting of smaller trees, and including an incentive to improve views. Reeves added that from the beginning this was a central premise with the Tree Committee.

Grumbach concluded that an urban forest management plan to help educate and manage trees in the city could be a key document in helping property owners with views and trees. He noted that this topic was scheduled for further discussion on the work program.

Commissioners discussed if they wished to make a recommendation to the council to have an urban forest management plan developed for the city. Papano, Carlson & Nunn expressed that they would like more information regarding the expected costs and if grants might be obtained.

MOTION NELSON / SECOND SCHUBRING TO RECOMMEND TO THE CITY COUNCIL TO INVEST IN AN URBAN FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN TO BE CREATED FOR MEDINA. APPROVED 6 – 1, PAPANO OPPOSED. (8:05 PM)

Chair Nunn opened the meeting once again to public comment.

Paul Saad pointed out the photos on the city's website as an example of the importance of views in Medina. He also read from Webster's dictionary the definition of "sylvan", denoting its meaning "of the woods or forest".

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION MAY / SECOND SCHUBRING TO ADJOURN THE NOVEMBER 18, 2014, SPECIAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING. APPROVED 7 - 0. (8:07 PM)

The next Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 2, 2014, at 6:00 PM.

Minutes taken by:



Donna Goodman
Development Services Coordinator