

**CITY OF COHASSET
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
305 NORTHWEST FIRST AVE., COHASSET, MINNESOTA
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6, 2016 – 6:00 p.m.**

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Co-Chair Steve Otto called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. **Roll Call**

- a. **Voting Members Present:** John Chell (arrived 6:30), Johnnie Fulton, Lois Kirschbaum, Steve Otto, and Gary Wheelock
- b. **Absent with Notice:** Steve Brown, Josh Casper, and City Council Liaison Jason Tabaka
- c. **Ex-Officio Members Present:** Zoning Officer Greg Tuttle, and City Attorney John Licke
- d. **Others Present:** Barb Baird and Steve Anderson

3. **Review and Approve the Agenda**

- a. **Additions:** None
- b. **Deletions:** None

A motion was made by Fulton/Wheelock to approve the agenda as presented. Voting in favor: Fulton, Kirschbaum and Otto; voting against: none; absent: Brown, Chell, and Casper. Motion carried.

4. **Resident Input** – None

5. **Review & Approve Planning Commission Minutes of March 10, 2016:** *A motion was made by Wheelock/Fulton to approve the March 10, 2016 minutes as written. Voting in favor: Fulton, Kirschbaum and Otto; voting against: none; absent: Brown, Chell, and Casper. Motion carried.*

6. **Public Hearing** to act on a variance request from Steven Anderson and Barbara Baird to allow a house, attached garage, and patio no closer than 120 feet from the top of the bank of the channel of the Mississippi River (ordinance requires a minimum of 150 feet) for the property located at 35663 Beier Road (PIN# 05-430-0140) and legally described as Lot 8, Block 1 in the Plat of Beier Addition, Section 11, Township 55 North, Range 26, City of Cohasset, Itasca County, Minnesota.

Zoning Officer Greg Tuttle reviewed the informational packet and Attorney Licke reviewed the practical difficulty standard. Steve Anderson explained the variance request. Tuttle reported he received four communications in favor of the variance request as proposed. Otto closed the public portion of the hearing.

After discussion, a motion was made by Wheelock/Fulton to grant the variance request as proposed.

The Findings of Fact were reviewed:

1. Are there practical difficulties in complying with the zoning ordinance? “Practical difficulties” means that the property owner’s proposed improvements are reasonable (economic considerations alone shall not constitute practical difficulties.)

Gary Wheelock responded yes and noted that the variance request is reasonable because of avoiding drainage ditch, utilizing the highest ground, and staying in-line with other homes nearby. All Commissioners agreed.

2. Are the circumstances which justify the variance unique to the property and not created by the applicant?

Fulton responded yes and noted that if the home were setback at 150 feet it would encroach on a wetland area. All Commissioners agreed

3. If granted, will the variance maintain the essential character of the locality?

John Chell responded yes and noted that the variance request will maintain existing residence setback and the area has city sewer. All Commissioners agreed.

4. If granted, will the variance be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the zoning ordinance?

Gary Wheelock responded yes and noted that issue is limited to the setback with no other ordinance conflicts. All Commissioners agreed.

5. If granted, will the variance be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan?

Steve Otto responded yes and noted that the property is on city sewer and water and the ground is flat. All Commissioners agreed.

Voting in favor on a roll call vote: Chell, Fulton, Kirschbaum and Otto; voting against: none; absent: Brown and Casper. Motion carried.

Zoning Officer Tuttle stated there is a 15 day appeal period after which the decision becomes final and the applicants may proceed with the permitting process.

7. Comprehensive Plan Review Process: Tuttle suggested for discussion purposes the Comprehensive Plan discussion is broken down as follows:

First discussion

1. Review Plan
 - a. Impaired waters within Cohasset
 - b. Shoreland/Lake area policies
 - c. Natural Resource area policies
2. Considerations for variances
3. What call to action should be implemented?

Second Discussion – retain rural and shoreland neighborhoods
Third Discussion – Increase Cohasset economic base
Fourth Discussion – grow Cohasset’s small town image

After discussion, it was agreed that the discussion outline is reasonable and the first discussion will be at the next Planning Commission meeting.

8. Septic Overflight Summary: The Septic Overflight was conducted in 2007. After a brief discussion, commissioners selected one or two public waters binders to review for discussion at the next Planning Commission meeting.

9. Updates:

- a) The public hearing for the sign ordinance is scheduled for Tuesday, April 12, 2016
- b) The public hearing for changing rezoning and text amendment public hearings from the City council to the Planning Commission was not scheduled but was tabled for more information.

Adjourn: Steve Otto adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Submitted by Deputy Clerk Karen Mester

Approved: