

**CITY OF COHASSET
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
305 NORTHWEST FIRST AVE., COHASSET, MINNESOTA
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 3, 2016 – 6:00 p.m.**

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Vice Chair Steve Otto called the meeting to order.

2. **Roll Call**

- a. **Voting Members Present:** Josh Casper, Johnnie Fulton, Lois Kirschbaum, & Steve Otto
- b. **Absent with Notice:** Steve Brown, John Chell, Gary Wheelock, and Jason Tabaka
- c. **Ex-Officio Members Present:** Zoning Officer Greg Tuttle
- d. **Others Present:** Rick Seeley-GREF Church, Patty Gould-St. Auben, and John O’Leary, GPLA, Kristie Caverly, Melinda Cook, Kelly Roeder, and Andy Arens, Itasca County Soil and Water Conservation District

3. **Review and Approve the Agenda**

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

A motion was made by Casper/Fulton to approve the agenda. Voting in favor: Casper, Fulton, Kirschbaum, and Otto; Voting against: None; Absent: Brown, Chell, & Wheelock; Motion carried.

4. **Resident Input**–None

5. Review & Approve Planning Commission Minutes of June 1, 2016: *A motion was made by Fulton/Casper to approve the June 1, 2016 minutes as presented. Voting in favor: Casper, Fulton, Kirschbaum, and Otto; Voting against: None; Absent: Brown, Chell, & Wheelock; Motion carried.*

6. **Public Hearing to act on a variance request to allow Grand Rapids Evangelical Free Church the following:**

- a. Impervious lot coverage of no more than 60% for a building and parking lot addition (ordinance allows a maximum of 25%)
- b. 112 square foot “V” sign and a six square foot sign (ordinance allows a maximum of 16 square feet total all signs and eight square foot single sign)

for the property located at 34384 County Road 63 (PIN# 05-013-4303) and legally described as: South 400 feet of the West ½ of the SW-DE, Section 13, Township 55 North, Range 26 West, City of Cohasset, Itasca County, Minnesota.

Zoning Officer Greg Tuttle reviewed the informational packet. Rick Seeley, GREF Church, explained the need for a variance and answered questions.

A motion was made by Casper/Fulton to approve the sign variance request as proposed.

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).

Casper answered yes and noted that the sign in place already exceeds the ordinance limits and the sign is difficult to see being that they are trying to maintain the esthetic view with the trees in the way and having the flat one-sided sign makes it very difficult to see as you are passing by. All Commissioners agreed.

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

Fulton answered yes and noted the existing sign is larger than allowed in a residential area and is not intrusive. All Commissioners agreed.

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

Otto answered yes and noted it's a church and a wooded lot and doesn't feel it's obstructive or negative to the neighborhood. All Commissioners agreed.

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

Casper answered yes and referred to the answers for number three. All Commissioners agreed.

5. If granted will the variance be consistent with the comprehensive plan?

Fulton answered yes and all Commissioners agreed.

Voting in favor: Casper, Fulton, Kirschbaum, and Otto; Voting against: None; Absent: Brown, Chell, & Wheelock; Motion carried.

A motion was made by Casper/Kirschbaum to approve the impervious lot coverage up to 60 percent, provided the City approves the storm water plan and that the perimeter trees around the property are not cut down as much as possible.

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).

Fulton answered yes and noted that the topography of the property does not allow for parking lot improvements the way it stands now. All Commissioners agreed.

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

Casper answered yes and noted the lot is too small for a growing church and it's parking requirements and the property is situated on the edge, not in the middle of a residential district right next to a commercial district which allows 90 percent impervious lot coverage and the area is unlikely to ever become high density residential. All Commissioners agreed.

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

Steve Otto answered yes and noted that's already been stated and the property across the road is zoned heavy industrial and don't see it detracting from the locality. All Commissioners agreed.

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

Casper answered yes and noted for the same reasons stated for question #3.

5. If granted, will the variance be consistent with the comprehensive plan?

Fulton answered yes, with the proposed conditions. All Commissioners agreed.

Voting in favor: Casper, Fulton, Kirschbaum, and Otto; Voting against: None; Absent: Brown, Chell, & Wheelock; Motion carried.

Tuttle noted the decision becomes final once the 15 day appeal period has ended.

7. Review Zoning Ordinance section 10.101 Performance Standards subsection Q. requiring a six foot high protective fence completely enclosing swimming pools.

Kristie Caverly, Cohasset, MN - Caverly has a pool and City ordinance requires a six foot tall fence around pools. Caverly questioned the ordinance and noted in the eight years she has had a pool, this is the first time it has been questioned. After discussion, this item was tabled until the next meeting in order to get input from the City Attorney and sample language from the League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust (LMCIT), City of Grand Rapids, City of Bemidji, and City of Brainerd.

8. Continue Comprehensive Plan Review: Andy Arens, ICSWCD, was present to discuss the protection of public waters and answer questions. After discussion, this item was tabled until the next meeting to invite DNR Waters regional representative Rian Reed for further discussion.

9. Updates:

- a. **Benson Bog Days** went well
- b. **Cohasset Clean Up Days** went well
- c. **Draft Zoning Ordinance Section 10.2100 Subdivision of Land** – Tuttle is working on a rough draft for the next meeting.

Vice-Chair Steve Otto adjourned the meeting at 7:37 p.m.

Submitted by Deputy Clerk Karen Mester

Approved: 9/7/2016