

CITY OF AFTON
APPROVED PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
December 7, 2015, 7:00 PM

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5 **1. CALL TO ORDER** – Chair Barbara Ronningen called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

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7 **2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – was recited.

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9 **3. ROLL CALL** – Present: Langan, Wroblewski, Chair Ronningen, Kopitzke, Kilmer, Patten and Nelson.
10 Excused Absences: Seeberger and Doherty. **Quorum present.**

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12 **ALSO IN ATTENDANCE** – Council Liaison Stan Ross, City Administrator Ron Moore and Deputy Clerk
13 Kim Swanson Linner.

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15 **4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA** – Item 8a, Solar Power Hour was added.

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17 **Motion/Second: Patten/Wroblewski. To approve the December 7, 2015 Planning Commission agenda as**
18 **amended. Motion carried 7-0-0.**

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20 **5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES** –

21 a. November 2, 2015 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes – Line 52: “Meyer’s nephew” was changed
22 to “Meyer’s son-in-law, Chris Wagner;” Line 49, “Federal” was changed to “federal.”

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24 **Motion/Second: Patten/Kopitzke. To approve the November 2, 2015 Planning Commission Meeting**
25 **minutes as amended. Motion carried 7-0-0.**

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27 **6. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS** –

28 a. Washington County Public Health Presentation Regarding the Land Application of Septage – Chair
29 Ronningen gave the floor to the Department of Public Health and Environment staff from Washington County,
30 Jeff Travis and Girard Goder, who presented the changes in the revised Washington County Septic Ordinance,
31 which was adopted in April, 2014. Cities have one year to adopt or revise the County ordinance. The Planning
32 Commission has been studying the portion of the ordinance dealing with the “land spreading of septage” and
33 was why the County was invited to speak and answer questions.

34 Jeff Travis explained that the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rules and the Minnesota
35 Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) have allowed the land spreading of septage for years, but the County has
36 now codified it into their ordinance. The County will administer the permitting, inspection, reporting and
37 notification to cities of maintainers who wish to land spread septage according to each municipality’s wishes.
38 Travis showed the aquifer sensitivity, soil survey and agriculture zones which showed the relative suitability of
39 land in Afton for land spreading of septage.

40 Girard Goder presented the three methods of application of septage to limit pathogens and nuisances to the
41 land and neighbors: injection (not seen or smelled); Incorporation (surface applied and must be turned into soil
42 within 6 hours); Pre-treated with Lime (it is ~~pH balanced~~ highly alkali to kill pathogens prior to application
43 directly onto soil). He reviewed the potential dangers: 1) Chemicals & Metals-are low risk, as septage can only
44 come from residential; 2) Medication Metabolites-animal antibiotics and growth hormones and human
45 antidepressants, etc.; 3) Pathogens-the risk is reduced through time and distance; harvesting food crops must be
46 two years after an application.

47 Commissioners asked whether ordinance language that is “silent” is considered “allowed” or “prohibited.”
48 The County views that “silent” means it is allowed; it must be specifically prohibited in the ordinance. For this
49 ordinance, the County allows land spreading of septage, but they will work with whatever the city wants to do.

50 Other questions addressed were about the permit process and timeline, whether the City could be notified of
51 approved permits, and that the City may restrict the type of application of septage on the land.

52 Moore summarized concerns stating that the City is looking to the County to manage the process for the
53 safety of the land and residents.

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7. PUBLIC HEARINGS – none.

8. NEW BUSINESS –

a. Solar Power Hour – Chair Ronningen explained that the City received information from the Midwest Renewable Energy Association offering a communities a free one-hour educational seminar called “Solar Power Hour.” They will present how solar systems work, outline the benefits and incentives, describe the installation process and talk about available financing options. She felt this would be beneficial to offer to Afton residents.

Motion/Second: Wroblewski/Nelson. To schedule a “Solar Power Hour” for the January 4, 2016 Planning Commission meeting for the benefit of Afton residents, to be advertised on the city website and the city newsletter. Motion carried 7-0-0.

9. OLD BUSINESS

a. Ordinance Amendment Prohibiting the Land Application of Septage – Administrator Moose summarized that at its October meeting, the Planning Commission had recommended to City Council that land spreading of septage be prohibited. At the November 2 meeting, the Planning Commission heard a presentation by representatives of Meyer Sewer Service in support of the land application of septage. To be fully informed, the Planning Commission requested that staff from the Washington County Public Health Department be invited to its December 7 meeting to provide information regarding the land application of septage and other tweaks of the revised septic ordinance which the County adopted in April 2015. It was noted that the City must adopt the new ordinance by reference, or adopt changes to the revised ordinance, by April 2016.

The Planning Commission felt they needed to do due diligence in reviewing the entire Washington County revised ordinance for discussion at the January 4 meeting. After the Planning Commission discussion, a Public Hearing can then be scheduled, possibly for the February 2016 meeting.

b. Draft City Council Minutes - Update on City Council Actions – Council Liaison Stan Ross reported that the Council approved the Wilcox after-the-fact variance with conditions for not allowing the accessory building to be used as a second dwelling unit. The Council also approved the VHS brush regulations with the addition of language that the brush must come from on site of the property requesting the permit.

10. ADJOURN –

Motion/Second: Patten/Nelson. To adjourn the meeting at 8:13 p.m. Motion carried 7-0-0.

Respectfully submitted by:

Kim Swanson Linner, Deputy Clerk

To be approved on January 4, 2016 as (check one): Presented: _____ or Amended: X