

April 4, 2012 Planning Commission Minutes

The Eudora Planning Commission met in regular session on Wednesday evening, April 4, 2012 in the Eudora Municipal Building. Five members were present: Chairman Kurt von Achen, Glenn Bartlett, Erica Ganson, Grant Martin and Johnny Stewart. Vice Chairman Richard Campbell and Ken Adkinson were absent.

Also present were City Administrator John Harrenstein and Economic Development Analyst Collin Bielser.

Chairman von Achen called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm, the pledge of allegiance was recited, and the minutes of the March 7, 2012 Planning Commission meeting were approved as circulated.

Administrator Harrenstein reported that the City Council approved the plat for the planned public safety building as recommended by the Planning Commission, but they shifted the direction of the project, deciding that 2.85 mill levy to cover the cost of a \$4 million building was excessive and they chose to add only a one mill levy to raise \$2 million for the new building.

Harrenstein said the Council discussed either using the original site planned for the new building, or possibly choosing an alternative site that might be a better welcome to downtown. He said he was pleased at how well the Council came together on this project and they gave staff good direction.

Grant Martin asked if there will be a formal presentation to the community on the water quality upgrades that were made last year? Harrenstein said it definitely is on his list of "things to be done" but he has not yet set a date for it. In the course of the conversation, Harrenstein mentioned that it has come to his attention that plumbers and salesmen for water softeners would often advise customers of the deplorable condition of Eudora's water, and that Sears would not offer their 10 year warranty if their softeners were going to Eudora. He said that with the greatly improved condition of the city's water we need to let the public know there is a difference now.

Analyst Bielser told the commission the number of permits issued by the city is almost identical to this time in 2011, 47 each, but due to the Family Dollar store and Westerhouse commercial permits, in 2012 the actual valuation is doubled. Bielser had prepared graphs comparing 2011 and 2012. He said 17 permits had been issued in March for a valuation of \$543,465. The Mike Westerhouse office building accounted for \$392,300 of that total.

No one was present for public comment so the meeting continued with the only item on the agenda: Presentation of the Eudora Parks & Recreation Master Plan.

Administrator Harrenstein gave the presentation, illustrating his talk with slides of the many facets of the plan. He said the Master Plan was one of the goals to emerge from the 2010 Council retreat; that a strategic capital plan should be organized. A committee of local citizens was named with Councilwoman Ruth Hughs as chairperson. They worked for almost a year in the planning process and they chose Doug Pickert of Indigo Design as their designer after being favorably impressed by Century Park at Gardner which Indigo Design had done.

Some of the goals of the master plan, Harrenstein said, are integration with pedestrian trails of all six parks, the addition of playing fields, with ball fields planned near the Elementary School and soccer fields out south near the Middle and High Schools. In addition, they hope for consistent uniformity in the parks, consistent signage and enough parking. They want to upgrade all parks to serve both youths and adults and a new park is needed in the southern subdivision, Shadow Ridge, which is woefully lacking in park space.

Indigo Design likes to add Nature Play features to parks, with rocks and logs to promote children actually climbing and playing, Harrenstein said.

Some of the aims for the present parks include an expanded trail which will be more walkable for senior citizens at Blue Jacket Park, 12th & Cedar Streets, and an expanded shelter area with rest rooms. Grant Martin asked if the rest rooms would be tied into the sewer system? Harrenstein said Public Works Director Mike Hutto would probably make that decision.

Harrenstein said the CPA Park is the city's welcome to downtown and they plan to extend the shelter house and again add restrooms, possibly move the Gazebo, add a stage for music presentations, and perhaps even replace the retaining wall along Main Street.

When talking of rest rooms, someone asked if there is much vandalism, and Harrenstein admitted that there is a problem and they are starting to try to enforce the hours the parks are to be open.

Grant Martin asked about the location of the stage, as loud music might disturb the residential area to the west. Harrenstein said bands typically don't play later than 11:00 p.m.

Harrenstein said East Park at 14th and Chestnut Streets is heavily used and needs more space, but he also said it gets the most vandalism and the most complaints. Pilla Park at the northern entrance to Eudora could have an entry sign for Eudora, and the parking lot needs to be updated. The committee hopes to improve the Wakarusa boat ramp area and add some amenities there, he added.

Glenn Bartlett asked if they are considering a skate park? Harrenstein said, "Yes, the Mayor wants one," and we have skateboarders who need their own place, and several sites have been suggested. Johnny Stewart said the closest one to Eudora is Holcom Park in Lawrence and it is heavily used.

Harrenstein said one reason he wanted the Planning Commission to see these plans is because he believes at least a part of it will need to be incorporated into the Long-Range Comprehensive Plan. Chairman von Achen agreed that at least the trails and sidewalks will need to be included.

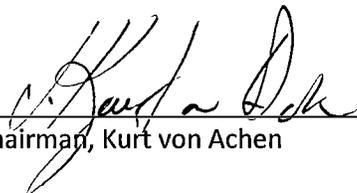
Stewart also asked about dedicated bicycle lanes, for he often rides along County Road 1061 or Church Street. Harrenstein said that they are included.

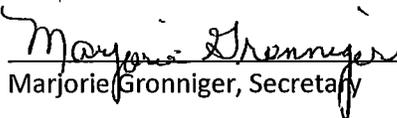
Another knotty problem is finding and building a safe crossing over 10 Highway. Harrenstein said they are considering three sites, but again it will be a very expensive undertaking.

Harrenstein told the commission that if the whole plan could be implemented at once the cost would be about \$8 million, but, he hastened to add, we are going to do it in increments, a little at a time, as we have budget available, \$60,000 per year. He also mentioned that the street budget is \$365,000 per year, which doesn't do very much, and that streets are a higher priority than parks.

This led Erica Ganson to ask if there are any plans to do something about 12th Street, which is narrow with ditches on both sides, and in places is extremely rough. Harrenstein and von Achen agreed that much needs to be done to 12th Street, but that the cost of improving it would be very high. Chairman von Achen stressed that the need is for "good planning."

Erica Ganson moved to adjourn, Glenn Bartlett seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 8:02 pm.

Signed: 
Chairman, Kurt von Achen

Signed: 
Marjorie Gronniger, Secretary

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