January 2, 2013 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

The Eudora Planning Commission met in regular session on Wednesday evening, January 2, 2013 in the Eudora Municipal Building. Six members were present: Chairman Kurt von Achen, Vice Chairman Richard Campbell, Glenn Bartlett, Grant Martin, Tim Pringle and Johnny Stewart. Jason Hoover was absent.

Also present were City Administrator John Harrenstein, Economic Development Director Collin Bielser, and Reporter John Schulz.

Chairman von Achen called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm, the pledge of allegiance was recited and the minutes of the December 5, 2012 meeting were approved as circulated. von Achen asked Administrator Harrenstein for his report.

Harrenstein said he had only one item; Eudora has named a new Fire Chief, Ken Keiter, who is a retired Olathe Fire Department Battalion Chief. His first day will be January 14, 2013.

The December building report showed 12 permits issued with an estimated value of $22,685. All were for remodeling or additions. Bielser said 215 permits were issued in 2012, five less than in 2011, but the valuation was much higher, thanks to three projects: the new Public Safety Building, the Family Dollar Store and the Mike Westerhouse building on 20th Street. He also said several people have been considering building residences, so 2013 could possibly see six to ten new homes, compared to four this year.

No one was present for public comment so the chairman called for the only item on the agenda: "Presentation of Eudora's Transportation Enhancement Grant application for a pedestrian bridge across Highway 10." Director Bielser approached to make the presentation, with a picture on the screen of a bridge in Hutchinson that approximates the one Eudora would like to build.

Bielser said the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) has $15 million available for transportation enhancement grants and Eudora is applying for a grant of one and a half million dollars to build a pedestrian bridge across Kansas Highway 10. If the grant is received, an additional $500,000 will be needed from the City of Eudora to complete the project. Bielser said there is strong competition for these grants, and the City of Lawrence will be applying for one for their Santa Fe Depot.

Bielser said a pedestrian bridge has been desired ever since development began south of the highway, and a survey in 2008 had Eudora water improvement in the two top spots but sidewalks, sidewalks, and sidewalks were the next three, with a need to get across K10. More recently a pedestrian safety committee declared Church Street to be too dangerous for biking or walking, and in 2012, 600 surveys were completed and 75% supported a pedestrian/bicycle system in Eudora. The Parks & Recreation Master Plan, on line to be adopted into Eudora's Long Range Comprehensive Plan, calls for a pedestrian bridge.

Administrator Harrenstein said the first attempt was to find the simplest solution, and since there is room for walkers on the present Church Street bridge over K10 it was suggested that Jersey barriers separate walkers from traffic. However, KDOT said that would not be safe enough and there would be a problem with snow removal.

There were two options for the actual pedestrian bridge, Harrenstein and Bielser said. One was to attach a bridge to the present Church Street Bridge, which would be less costly, but again KDOT refused to consider it

because of the on/off ramps there, so the decision comes down as to where to locate the free-standing style bridge. The present plan places it to the west near the veterinary clinic and the day care center, but building owners there fear the approach ramp will completely block their signage. Incidentally, the bridge must span six lanes of traffic, as KDOT intends for K10 to be a six lane highway some day.

Bielser said he thinks the application may have a good chance because it would directly connect two busy locations; the schools and the Recreation Center, plus the practice field, and the much desired sidewalks/trails will be built. Two walks, each approximately ½ mile in length, will be built on the school side, and one to the Recreation Center on the north side. The school district has approved the trail on school property and the city is in consultation with the private owners who need to approve.

Most of the Planning Commission's discussion centered on the actual location of the bridge and the problem of the ramps blocking signage. Questions were asked about the lot directly west and owned by the veterinary clinic but Harrenstein said the city has been unable to get a clear picture of the use planned for it.

Bielser said it might be necessary, though more expensive, to use an elevator on the north end, but it would be an additional cost, could be subject to vandalism, and might need an attendant at all times. Tim Pringle suggested a ramp spiraling down and von Achen agreed that could be a neat idea, whether round or square.

Johnny Stewart, who had worked on previous committees, said they, at one time, considered getting sponsorship to help with financing by allowing a sign on the bridge, and he mentioned Pepsi but that idea fell through, too.

Administrator Harrenstein said there will be no tax issue with the city money.

Bielser said the application is due February 15 and the actual planning only began November 1, so they have had a very short window of opportunity. He said he has contacted the Video Club at the high school and they will do a testimonial and perhaps a short film. He said he is encouraging everyone interested to write letters of support to KDOT, and that would include the Planning Commission.

Richard Campbell moved that the Planning Commission support the pedestrian walkway and that they send a letter to KDOT stating their support. Grant Martin seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous in favor, 6-0.

There being no other business, **Johnny Stewart moved to adjourn,** seconded by Glenn Bartlett. The meeting adjourned at 7:36 pm.

Signed _____
Chairman, Kurt von Achen

Signed _____
Marjorie Gronniger, Secretary