

CITY OF VERGAS PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES  
Monday, July 24, 2023  
6:00 pm  
Vergas Event Center

A City of Vergas Planning Commission meeting was held on Monday, July 24, 2023, with the following members present Bruce Albright, Neil Wothe and Robert Jacoby. Absent: Rebecca Hasse and Judy Kvam. Also present: Clerk-Treasurer Julie Lammers, Utilities Superintendent Mike DuFrane and Keith Bunkowske.

**Call to Order**

Chairman Bruce Albright called meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

**Agenda Additions and Deletions**

Approved agenda with following additions: Clerk Approved Construction Permit.

**Minutes**

Motion by Jacoby, seconded by Wothe to approve minutes for June 26, 2023. Motion carried.

**Status of Council Recommendations**

None.

**Construction Permits**

Permits Approved by City Clerk

361 S Pelican Avenue

Lammers approved permit for 361 S Pelican Avenue for exterior door on garage, siding pieces on garage and house.

Permits needing Approval.

92 Park View Drive -paving driveway.

Motion by Jacoby, seconded by Wothe to approve paving driveway at 92 Park View Drive. Motion passed unanimously.

840 S Scharf Avenue

Motion by Jacoby, seconded by Wothe to approve riprapping at 840 S Scharf Avenue. Motion passed unanimously.

Active Construction Permits

Grade and Fill Permits

Bunkowske had several yards of dirt moved on his property at 350 Townline Road. This was done without a grade and fill permit. Bunkowske currently has a grade and fill permit for 350 Townline Road but in order to make the Scharf project work he needed to fill a hole to allow heavy equipment to come in through the yard instead of coming down Scharf Avenue. Bunkowske stated he did move 150-200 yards of dirt and the dirt pile was visible to the public. Dirt has been leveled off and road has been made through the project. Bunkowske proposed that he does not get a permit or pay the \$75.00 permit fee or pay the penalty of \$75.00 because he did not get the permit. He is providing this road to avoid destroying East Scharf with heavy traffic. Bunkowske stated, "If we can't forgive the \$150, then I'm going have the trucks come down East Scharf." Wothe reviewed the past 7 grade and fill permits from 2022 which will be renewed for another year (they are good until August 2024). Bunkowske stated, "To route all the truck traffic down East Scharf, and with the hot weather, it's going to damage the heck out of your road." Jacoby stated that it basically comes down to not having the right number of yards on one grade and fill permit. Motion by Jacoby, seconded by Wothe to waive fee for the grade and fill permit. Motion passed unanimously.

**Old Business:**

311 Park View Drive -Shed

Reviewed application for a variance for the shed. Permit has been applied for and paid. Motion by Wothe, seconded by Jacoby to hold a public hearing at 5:45 pm on August 28, 2023. Motion passed unanimously.

241 Bennett Road - trees in right of way

Trees have been moved out of the right of way.

**Ordinances**

Streets & Sidewalks, Ordinance Culverts, Right-a-way permit, Ordinance 151.32, 85 and 93

This is a work in process and the goal is to have an update at the September Planning Commission meeting. The hole by Hardware Store has been filled and Great Plains Natural Gas has been billed.

Shoreline Management Ordinance

This is a work in process and will have an update soon.

Updated Vergas Basic Code

Updated code has been purchased and Lammers is in the process of updating. Lammers is updating the ordinance book with all the updated ordinances which has been approved since past approval. Lammers is also removing the ordinances that are no longer needed. Discussed cannabis ordinance and updates needing to be made. Jacoby stated that Detroit Lakes is currently addressing this. Commissioners requested the Council review this at the August meeting.

Nuisance Properties within Vergas

DuFrane provided pictures of vehicles without licenses at the following locations: 350 S Pelican Ave, 130 E Elm St, 170 S 1<sup>st</sup> Ave, 280 1<sup>st</sup> Ave S, 275 S Railway Ave, 101 E Mill St, 306 E Frazee Ave, 110 N Railway Ave, 261 W Hill St and 281 W Hill St. DuFrane asked about the property at 306 E Frazee Ave and he was told to take pictures and review ordinance and let them know next month what is out of compliance. Motion by Jacoby, seconded by Wothe to send nuisance letters to the following addresses: 50 S Pelican Ave, 130 E Elm St, 170 S 1<sup>st</sup> Ave, 280 1<sup>st</sup> Ave S, 275 S Railway Ave, 101 E Mill St, 306 E Frazee Ave, 110 N Railway Ave, 261 W Hill St and 281 W Hill St. Motion passed unanimously. Discussed procedure for correcting nuisances and Tony License property was bought up. DuFrane question why we do not discuss Sandau’s property if we are discussing License property. Commissioners discussed looking at changing ordinance to address agriculture zone. We need to change the ordinance or get advice from the city attorney.

Vergas Zoning Map

This is a work in progress and will be discussed next month.

**New Business**

2023 Comprehensive Plan Progress

Land Use & Built Form

Identify possible annexation areas and contact owners. – looking at W Lake Street (in progress)  
Pay close attention to and abide by shoreline regulations governed by the state – changed permit process and updating ordinance.  
Participate in preserving the health of lakes and surrounding wildlife – storm water runoff being discussed.  
Planning and Zoning incentives to encourage uses identified above- updating zoning map- review and modifying ordinances.  
Review cannabis.

2024 Budget

Motion by Wothe, seconded by Jacoby to raise the planning and zoning budget from \$500.00 (2023 number) to \$1,000 for GIS work in the city. Motion passed unanimously.

Member-Resignation

Neil Wothe resigned as of August 31, 2023. Motion by Jacoby, seconded by Wothe to recommend to Council to approve the resignation of Neil Wothe. Motion passed unanimously. Albright thanked Wothe for everything he has done for the city and planning commission.

The meeting adjourned at 7:25 pm.

Secretary,

Julie Lammers, Vergas City Clerk-Treasurer

*Follow Up Actions:*

- Snow emergency routes.
- Review and update Ordinance 72.
- Updated Shoreline Management Ordinance (Lammers & Kvam)
- Lammers, DuFrane, Engineers to review and update Ordinance 79, 85 and Ordinance 93 regarding culverts and right of ways.
- Review updated ordinance materials from League of MN Cities. (Sent email with update 3/28/2023)
- DuFrane to review nuisance ordinance.

*Council recommendations:*

Accept resignation of Neil Wothe.