

CITY PLAN COMMISSION
CITY OF WISCONSIN DELLS
MUNICIPAL BUILDING-300 LACROSSE STREET
MAY 6, 2015

Mayor Landers called the meeting to order at 5:15 PM. Notice of the meeting was provided to the Dells Events, WNNO/WDLS Radio, and posted in accordance with State Statutes.

1. Present: Mayor Brian Landers, City Planner/Zoning Administrator Chris Tollaksen, Ald. Mike Freel, Chris Lechnir, Jeff Delmore, and Tifani Jones
Excused: Dan Anchor and Fire Chief Scott Walsh
Others: City Clerk Nancy R. Holzem, PW Office Clerk Monica Dorow-Leis, Public Works Director David W. Holzem, Jane Heller, Tom Heller, Jesse Leichsenring, James Romaine, Dar Mor, John Montgomery, Julee McHalsky, Kari K. Bestul Schultz, Donna J. Anderson, Steve Ennis, Peggy Ennis, Linda Sweeney, Laura K. Breunig, Emily Hammermeister, Dave Cirone, Mike Gurklis, Mary Stanton, Trudy Helley, Phil Helley, Justin Buck, Tracey A. Buck, Jackie Novinska, Kay Goff, Eric Helland, Colleen Fox, Ed Fox, Mark Leeck, Giles Svehlek, and Ed Legge from the *Dells Events*.
2. Motion by Freel, seconded by Lechnir approve the minutes of the April 8, 2015 meeting. Motion carried.
3. Mayor Landers declared the public hearing open for anyone to speak for or against the Site Plan Permit application from Mt. Olympus in order to install camp cabins in the American World Campground at 400 CTH A, Sauk County, City of Wisconsin Dells tax parcel 0142-00000. The property is zoned C-4 Commercial-large scale. With no one speaking on the matter, Mayor Landers declared the public hearing closed.
4. Chris Tollaksen said they have a campground and they currently rent tents. They now want to rent cabins. Chris said the building inspector said they looked good and they are going to permanently mount the cabins. Motion by Freel, seconded by Delmore recommend to council approve the Site Plan from Mt. Olympus in order to install camp cabins in the American World Campground at 400 CTH A, Sauk County, City of Wisconsin Dells tax parcel 0142-00000. The property is zoned C-4 Commercial-large scale. Motion carried.
5. Mayor Landers declared the public hearing open for anyone to speak for or against the Site Plan Permit application from Lost Temple in order to construct a go-cart track at 2255 Wisconsin Dells Parkway, Sauk County, part of City of Wisconsin Dells tax parcel 0109-00000. This is the current site of The Lost Temple Pyramid. The property is zoned C-4 Commercial-large scale. With no one speaking on the matter, Mayor Landers declared the public hearing closed.
6. Motion by Lechnir, seconded by Delmore recommend to council approve the Site Plan from Lost Temple in order to construct a go-cart track at 2255 Wisconsin Dells Parkway, Sauk County, part of City of Wisconsin Dells tax parcel 0109-00000. This is the current site of The Lost Temple Pyramid. The property is zoned C-4 Commercial-large scale. Motion carried with Chris Tollaksen abstaining.
7. Mayor Landers declared the public hearing open for anyone to speak for or against the Conditional Use Permit and Site Plan Applications from Ghost Outpost in order to allow commercial activity without a permanent structure or washroom, outdoor commercial food and beverage service, outdoor vendor, and a walk-up service window located at 2233 Wisconsin Dells Parkway, Sauk County, part of City of Wisconsin Dells tax parcel 0109-00000. The property is zoned C-4 Commercial-large scale. Chris Lechnir noted the restrooms highlighted on the site plan, but asked if there were already restrooms in the building. Chris Tollaksen said not in the building for this application. Chris Tollaksen said one of the reasons for this application is that it utilizes a temporary structure that does not have washrooms. Tollaksen said other restrooms were made available for this. The application to the city has been made on an annual basis, but has not been in use in the last couple of years. With no one else speaking on the matter, Mayor Landers declared the public hearing closed.

8. Motion by Delmore, seconded by Freel recommend to council approve the Conditional Use Permit and Site Plan Applications from Ghost Outpost in order to allow commercial activity without a permanent structure or washroom, outdoor commercial food and beverage service, outdoor vendor, and a walk-up service window located at 2233 Wisconsin Dells Parkway, Sauk County part of City of Wisconsin Dells tax parcel 0109-00000 contingent upon the following:
- 1) All associated licenses are obtained and in good standing.
 - 2) CUP issued for one year to evaluate the operation and impacts of existing city ordinances to see whether it is necessary to encourage a longer-term investment.
 - 3) Adequate restrooms to be provided and open when in operation. This can be provided by the haunted house and/or pyramid bathrooms.
- The property is zoned C-4 Commercial-large scale. Motion carried with Chris Tollaksen abstaining.

9. Mayor Landers declared the public hearing open for anyone to speak for or against the Conditional Use Permit application from Vida Holdings, LLC to allow a Group Lodging Facility located at 1247 River Road, Columbia County tax parcel 368. The property is zoned C-1 Commercial-neighborhood. The following persons spoke in opposition:
- Dar Mor-He is opposed to employee housing mixed in with residential areas at this location. He thinks it will have a negative affect on neighborhoods.
 - Jackie Novinska-She said there are already student rentals at nearby 1240 Oak and she said they have problems. She understands the need for staff, but suggested building it for them like Village of Lake Delton and not in a residential neighborhood.
 - Jim Romaine-He said he came from a neighborhood that tried this and it had a negative impact on property values.

A suggestion included was that employers need to build housing for their staff.

Mike Gurklis, CEO from VIDA Holdings, LLC said he and Dave Cirone, CFO are trying to improve the image of Wisconsin Dells. At the meeting, Gurklis handed out to the commission members a 12-page document that included a mission statement, rules and other miscellaneous information. Gurklis said he understood what the residential property owners were saying, because he himself would not want a college town type of environment in his neighborhood. He said he would not want to have something that was poorly run. He further said he has college aged kids and said he would not want them living in a “shed with a bathroom down the road” (he said no offense to Mt. Olympus). Gurklis also spoke about a house on the 800 Block of Elm Street and said the students from other countries and are packed with about 40 persons into a slum within an area, and then wonder why they do stuff. He said they rent houses and said they are going to have trouble whether they have four or ten persons. Mike said the supervisor listed on the front page of the document lives in one of the rental houses with a regional manager living in Sauk City, WI. Mike Gurklis said he started with four renters on Vine Street and ended up with six renters last year, next to the Leichsenring home with no complaints from them. He said he lives 168 miles away, but anyone can call him anytime and will take care of anything needed. Nick Laskaris of Mt. Olympus said he did not come to the meeting to oppose or agree to this housing, but was greatly offended with the slumlord place comment and said they have spent money on employee housing and further said each of his units have a bathroom in it. Nick added that it is the employer that should take care of their employee housing needs. With no one else speaking on the matter, Mayor Landers declared the public hearing closed.

10. Mayor Landers declared the public hearing open for anyone to speak for or against the Conditional Use Permit application from Vida Holdings, LLC to allow a Group Lodging Facility located at 1029 Capital Street, Columbia County tax parcel 522. The property is zoned R-3 Residential-mixed use. Steve and Peggy Ennis, Mary Stanton, Kay Goff, Julee McHalsky **Opposed** mixing Group Lodging and potential nuisances in residential locations:
- Phil Helley said he is opposed with the same reasons Dar Mor noted for the River Road address. Phil said he did not like the idea the applicant is already advertising on Facebook looking for renters and noted that five Charter vans at the Capital Street address already adding internet lines.
 - Rachael Akright-She feels that renting a home to one family is different then group lodging. She knows VIDA Holdings have rules, but does not know how easy it is going to be to enforce these rules. She is opposed to group lodging at this address.

- Laura Breunig-First Weber realtor for Sauk, Columbia and Dane County markets said she has agreed to be the Regional Manager for VIDA Holdings, LLC and said just because Gurklis and Cirone are not from the Dells, does not mean they do not care about the property or the people that rent from them. She said VIDA Holdings is trying to fill a need in the community the best, safest and friendliest way possible. Laura asked a few questions and Mayor Landers responded saying this is before the commission for a decision on the concept, not the people.
- Tom Heller-Commends the applicants for what they are trying to do. He believes there are plenty of commercial properties available for sale or for development, that can be used in this manner. Integrating this piece with five surrounding families is not the patchwork they want to have in a primarily residential area of our community.
- Linda Sweeney-She agrees that decent housing is needed. She recalled group lodging near her in the past when her children were younger and said it was like a racetrack all night long, with her children witnessing a lot with people sleeping on the lawn, etc. She said there should be a record of the complaint calls made to the police department. She is opposed and feels it depreciates their homes. Group lodging could improve a neighborhood, but not in a residential neighborhood.
- David Cirone, CFO VIDA Holdings, said if they were to rent to a family, it would still be renting to a family of 6-8 persons in a 4-bedroom house. He said they do not want to rent to 15 kids, but maybe 8 or 9 only. He looks at this as being the same.
- Emily Hammerseister, Supervisor said she would be at the housing units 2-3 times per week monitoring them.
- Tracey Buck said she is opposed to it. She said there are local families currently living in hotels trying to save to purchase a home. She said there are a lot of houses for sale on the north side of Broadway and if they sell these homes for group housing, then those homes that we desperately need become unavailable for people who are trying to get out of a hotel and into a home. With no one else speaking on the matter, Mayor Landers declared the public hearing closed.

11. Mayor Landers declared the public hearing open for anyone to speak for or against the Conditional Use Permit application from Vida Holdings, LLC to allow a Group Lodging Facility located at 613 Vine Street, Columbia County tax parcel 1083. The property is zoned C-1 Commercial-neighborhood. Jesse Leichsenring spoke in favor of group lodging at 613 Vine Street. He said it was his understanding the people that will be living at 613 Vine this coming summer (if the application is approved) are the same ones living there last year. He said the ones living there last year were fine. He further said Rainbow Motel at 612 Vine Street, which is also zoned C-1 Commercial-neighborhood was approved and used for group lodging, adding that a precedence has already been there. Alderperson Freel asked if 612 Vine Street was a house or motel. Leichsenring said a motel. Eric Helland, 531 Vine St. business owner, said he agrees with Jesse stating they did not have any problems with 612 Vine Street, but Eric recalled several years ago, when there were around 29 people in student housing, some of them his own employees from a local Midwestern State. Some would destroy the home and disrespected the property they were living in. One of the greatest concerns he has is what conditions, such as the number of persons allowed, are going to be put on the permit, and how the conditions are going to be verifiable and enforceable. With no one else speaking on the matter, Mayor Landers declared the public hearing closed.

12. Alderperson Freel said he received no less than six calls on this just from his district on Capital Street and River Road. Freel said he spoke to Gurklis last week on the phone and had nice conversation. Freel had the following comments:

- Most of the jobs are in Village of Lake Delton and they just developed four major buildings for housing.
- He has lived next to student lodging and has witnessed parties even with a manager on-site.
- Freel spoke to the police department and most calls to group lodging facilities are for partying. Partying destroys the family atmosphere of the neighborhood and thinks it will reduce real estate values.
- He gets calls every month about cleaning up the neighborhood and does not believe a J-1 facility in a residential neighborhood is going towards that.

Motion by Freel, seconded by Lechnir recommend to council deny the CUP application from Vida Holdings, LLC for a Group Lodging Facility located at 1247 River Road, Columbia County tax parcel 368. The property is zoned C-1 Commercial-neighborhood. Motion carried. Chris Tollaksen

noted that even if any of the three applications were denied, VIDA Holdings can still rent these houses out, but they would be limited to four unrelated persons at each location. Freel said that when he spoke to Gurklis on the phone, they had wanted to house nine persons. Chris said it would likely be less of a nuisance with four persons, whereas with nine persons in a house in this neighborhood does seem like a potential nuisance in the neighborhood. Mayor Landers commented saying that what he has found in his experience, the employers in the past, did the best job they could managing the people, but ownership that is off-site, the problems were getting out of control. Even when they paid for management to be on-site or do weekly checks, it was not working. The management became the police department and it became problematic and costly to the city. Mayor Landers said when he was elected several years ago, he feels as if they made great strides to bring an evolution to student housing, being very selective in areas that became student housing. They were primarily old hotels that the residents felt comfortable in allowing it to be there, because they were locally owned and managed and you knew if there was a problem, the owner was there or right down the street, creating a level of comfort. Mayor Landers said he applauds VIDA Holdings for what they are trying to do and said he thinks there is room for a business plan of this nature, but thinks they are addressing this in a primarily residential area north of Broadway where they have seen enough and the residents are making it loud and clear. He further said that he did not think anyone there is saying they are not good property managers or business owners, but they are coming into a neighborhood that is trying to improve and they have many concerns. Even though the city has created ordinances to allow these types of housing, we also created a process, which you see before you, letting neighbors speak.

13. Motion by Freel, seconded by Lechnir recommend to council deny the CUP application from Vida Holdings, LLC for a Group Lodging Facility located at 1029 Capital Street, Columbia County tax parcel 522. The property is zoned R-3 Residential-mixed use. Motion carried.
14. Chris Tollaksen said he would agree that 1247 River Road and 1029 Capital Street do not seem like the right place for group lodging, but asked for more discussion on 613 Vine Street. Ed Fox, resident near 613 Vine Street said nine people living in a four-bedroom house is not doing any good for the neighborhood. Chris said while he thinks 10 people are too many at 613 Vine, he would be open to maybe limit it to a number more reasonable such as six. Chris said keeping the oversight they have had, he thinks they have had pretty good success with the new facilities the city has permitted, with the process they go through now (referring to problems they have had historically). Motion by Delmore, seconded by Tollaksen recommend to council to approve the CUP application from Vida Holdings, LLC for a Group Lodging Facility located at 613 Vine Street, Columbia County tax parcel 1083 with a limit of six people. The property is zoned C-1 Commercial-neighborhood. Motion did not carry with Chris Lechnir, Tifani Jones and Ald. Freel voting to deny the CUP application request. Chris Tollaksen said he has spoken to Atty. Hasler and wanted to make it clear that the specific reason to deny this is really the potential nuisances and non-suitability for this neighborhood.
15. Motion by Lechnir, seconded by Tollaksen table the discussion and decision until next month's Plan Commission meeting. Motion carried.
16. There were no items for referral to future meetings.
17. The next Plan Commission meeting will be Wednesday, June 3, 2015 at 5:15 pm.
18. Motion by Freel and seconded by Lechnir to adjourn. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 6:23 pm.

Monica Dorow-Leis
Public Works Office Clerk