

**WINNETKA PLAN COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 15, 2023**

Members Present:

Bridget Orsic, Chairperson
Jonathan Alt
Matthew Bradley
Mamie Case
Layla Danley
Chris Foley
Liz Kunkle

Members Absent:

John Golan

Non-Voting Members Absent:

Tina Dalman

Village Staff:

David Schoon, Director of Community Development
Ann Klaassen, Assistant Director of Community Development

Call to Order & Roll Call:

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Orsic at 7:00 p.m. Ms. Klaassen took roll call of the Commission Members present. Chairperson Orsic then outlined how the meeting would proceed and the items to be discussed at the meeting.

Public Comment:

No comments were made at this time.

Community Development Report

Mr. Schoon stated there is no Community Development Report.

Comprehensive Plan:

a. Public Hearing on the Proposed Comprehensive Plan for the Village of Winnetka.

Mr. Schoon stated an amended and revised draft was prepared for the Commission for discussion including proposed language changes from the prior meeting. He stated Scott Freres of The Lakota Group would review the overall process and status. Mr. Schoon then stated with regard to comments and questions regarding certain terms in the Comprehensive Plan, he would go over those.

Scott Freres provided a brief presentation to provide clarification for those in the audience. He reiterated the process was built over a three-year period which included a lot of dialogue pre and post pandemic. Mr. Freres stated he would also discuss the revisions which resulted from last month's discussion and referred to the Implementation chapter which reaffirmed all the Plan's initiatives which they hope to get to this evening. He stated they then planned to have further discussion with the Commission in terms of the Implementation plan specifically related to the initiatives and priorities.

Mr. Freres reviewed the process followed to develop the Plan which included several phases, the first of which included analyzing and engaging the community in conversation and topics of concern. He identified the second phase as the Visioning phase which included crafting language and setting goals and

1 key initiatives. Mr. Freres then stated the last couple of months focused on building the Comprehensive
2 Plan and supporting all of its Initiatives. He described the Comprehensive Plan structure as simple which
3 contained a guiding principle which is supported by Pillars, which he identified. Mr. Freres noted the Pillars
4 are not listed in any specific order and include cross synergy between them. He then stated following the
5 prior meeting, the Commission Members made specific recommendations which include a topic Mr.
6 Schoon would further discuss relating to land use classifications in the Plan and zoning.

7
8 Mr. Freres stated with regard to the main revisions, he referred to the Commission's conversation relating
9 to highlighting community discussions and text language and callouts/side bars to ensure the data was
10 accurate and the relevant topics which were the result of community conversations. He stated they would
11 also discuss the distinction between institutional vs. open space land uses in terms of zoning. Mr. Freres
12 then reiterated the Pillars, Goals and Initiatives do not reflect a level of priority. He stated they also plan
13 to ensure in the discussion of open space that it had the same alignment when mentioned in other Pillars.
14 Mr. Freres then asked if there were any questions or comments. No comments were made at this time.

15
16 Mr. Schoon stated at the last meeting, there were questions raised relating to open space, land use
17 classification of the Plan, and zoning, and Village has also received questions from community members
18 regarding this issue, which would now be addressed in more detail. He stated the Comprehensive Plan
19 identified a series of land uses for the community and where they want to see those land uses in the
20 future. Mr. Schoon noted that the Plan does not call for the land use designation of 99% of the community
21 to change since the community is mostly built out and we don't anticipate much change in terms of land
22 uses, except in the business districts and along portion of Green Bay Road.

23
24 Mr. Schoon then stated they identified the types of uses which fall under each land use category. He
25 stated with regard to the open space land use classification, the Plan is referring to Park District and Forest
26 Preserve lands with structures on them and open park spaces without structures. Mr. Schoon stated in
27 the Plan, open space meant park lands and facilities within the community. He identified the uses shown
28 in green in the illustration as representing park facilities and open space uses and the areas in blue
29 representing institutional uses. Mr. Schoon stated the future land use showed where we want particular
30 land uses in the community; however, how those uses are regulated occurs through zoning. He also noted
31 that open space land uses are allowed in many zoning districts. He then compared the future land use
32 map with the existing zoning map. Using the maps, he noted that these examples show how these land
33 uses fall under different zoning districts.

34
35 Mr. Schoon then explained how uses are allowed by right or as special uses in each zoning district and
36 that special uses are required to meet a specific set of standards. He then used a single-family zoning
37 district to illustrate what uses are allowed by right and as a special use. Mr. Schoon then stated schools,
38 which are an institutional use allowed as a special use, almost always must request significant variations
39 for additions for example. Because of this, the idea was included in the Comprehensive Plan to consider
40 studying those uses to see if the Village wants to create specific regulations for those uses, which can be
41 done in a couple of ways that he identified for the Commission. He noted Village staff previously discussed
42 this idea even before the Comprehensive Plan review came under discussion and stated communities
43 which created a separate institutional zoning district often have a separate open space district, which is
44 why the Plan includes initiatives to consider studying institutional use and open space use zoning
45 requirements at the same time. Mr. Schoon then stated it is up to the Commission whether to continue
46 to include such initiatives in the Plan. He then asked if there were any questions.

47
48 Ms. Kunkle stated in previous discussions relating to introducing the idea of the definition of institutional

1 uses, it was presented as updating the language instead of the current language of public/private and if it
2 is used for certain uses in just Winnetka or also in other communities. Mr. Schoon responded the language
3 is also used in other communities. Mr. Bradley referred to the Green Bay Trail being designated as open
4 space and Slide 2. He asked if the trails in general need to be its own category. Mr. Schoon responded it
5 is considered public parks and recreational space. Mr. Bradley then stated with regard to having zoning
6 standards and districts for institutional uses and open space uses, many of them currently exist in the
7 Village and asked if it related to variation requests relating to special use requests for existing uses and
8 asked how zoning standards would be enforced in open space districts. Mr. Schoon provided examples
9 for the Commission such as the request to allow the height of playground equipment on a public park to
10 exceed what is permitted by the single-family district zoning regulations, which are intended for single-
11 family residential uses. Mr. Bradley then asked if the new specific zoning classification would be on top of
12 existing zoning standards. Mr. Schoon explained for example that new requirements for open space uses
13 could be created for within the single-family district or a new specific district created for open spaces uses,
14 which such properties would then have to be rezoned to meet the zoning district requirements. Mr.
15 Bradley asked if certain types of requests could be approved at the zoning administrative approval level.
16 Mr. Schoon responded it would depend on the new zoning standards that are created. Mr. Bradley then
17 asked if there are other villages which moved institutional uses into the planned development process or
18 a new zoning district. In terms of using the planned development process for institutional uses, Mr.
19 Schoon responded we would have to look at our planned development process differently since we expect
20 public benefit for granting exceptions under the planned development process.

21
22 Chairperson Orsic referred to the open space references and streamlining the process for institutional
23 uses and commented the open space process did not need to be streamlined. Mr. Schoon stated if they
24 decided to study the issue, the Commission and the Village Council would have to decide the process for
25 these uses. Even with the new standards, special use permit approval could still be required. He added
26 the matter would not be studied until they receive Village Council direction and referred to language on
27 page 40 as a further explanation. Chairperson Orsic and Ms. Kunkle suggested adding the wording "study
28 and consider establishing a specific zoning district."

29
30 Mr. Bradley referred to language on page 33 in the Existing Land Use section relating to the "tree streets"
31 and suggested alternative language not limiting it to "tree streets". He referred to page 35 and the
32 reference to the North Shore Country Day School athletic field which is more part of an institutional use
33 and suggested the Green Bay Trail be used as an example instead. Mr. Freres agreed with Mr. Bradley's
34 suggestion.

35
36 Ms. Danley referred to page 35 and the wording under Open Space and asked if the word "Parks" was
37 removed because it was repetitive. Mr. Schoon confirmed that is correct. Ms. Danley then referred to
38 other changes that were made which were not flagged. Mr. Schoon responded only major changes were
39 highlighted, and the other changes made did not change the meaning. Mr. Bradley then referred to page
40 39 and the last sentence of the Special Uses section and suggested simplifying the language as well as
41 language relating to the retail overlay district.

42
43 Chairperson Orsic referred to page 64 and a sentence in Goal 1.4 and suggested revising the language.
44 The Commission Members suggested separating it into two separate Goals, one of institutional uses and
45 one for open space uses. Mr. Foley stated the community would be concerned that there is language in
46 the Plan that is going to adversely affect open spaces and suggested they be separated. He also stated
47 every reference containing open space and institutional use together would need to be changed.
48 Chairperson Orsic stated open space should be designated as open space instead of being designated as

1 residential and the open space designation would be there to protect the space and not fast track any
2 potential development, which is different than institutional use situations which have standards which
3 can be addressed at a more basic level. She also referred to page nos. 81 and 110 where the references
4 should be separated. She suggested wording for a separate Goal relating to open spaces. Mr. Schoon
5 clarified that open space land use designation did include sites with buildings. Ms. Danley also referred to
6 Goal 3.3 on page nos. 110 and 119 which included examples and suggested the language be clarified. The
7 Commission Members discussed removing the words open space from Goal 3.3.

8
9 Chairperson Orsic then referred to page 236 and Goal 1.4 and asked the Commission Members for their
10 comments. Mr. Schoon stated the Commission Members agreed to create separate goals. Chairperson
11 Orsic asked if there were any comments on this section. Mr. Schoon stated in terms of clarification, he
12 asked the Commission Members if they agreed with the alternative language that was provided at the
13 meeting. Mr. Bradley suggested the same language they previously discussed relating to the open space
14 study be added here. The Commission Members agreed with Mr. Bradley's suggestion. Chairperson Orsic
15 asked the Commission Members to review the alternative language on page 2 of the alternative language
16 as well as the second part on page 81. She stated a separate Initiative would be added relating to open
17 space. Mr. Schoon confirmed the Goal would be separated into two separate Goals. Mr. Bradley suggested
18 using the wording religious institutions instead of churches or temples. The Commission Members agreed
19 with Mr. Bradley's suggestion. No additional comments were made at this time.

20
21 Chairperson Orsic asked the Commission Members for any other comments relating to wording in the
22 body of the Plan. Ms. Case referred to page 146 and the high school student reference and stated they
23 discussed removing non-authentic language and suggested removing the paragraph. Ms. Kunkle stated
24 she worked with high school students who have shared similar comments and suggested it should be left
25 in. The Commission Members discussed whether it should be left in. Ms. Case suggested the consultants
26 refine the language so that it did not feel like consultant-speak. Mr. Schoon agreed the language can be
27 reworded. Ms. Case then stated the high school students were interviewed in 2020 and indicated some
28 factors have changed. The Commission Members confirmed they previously discussed the statement that
29 information was reflective of a snapshot in time. Mr. Schoon confirmed a note can be added to the
30 language. Chairperson Orsic referred to page 73 and their previous discussion relating to language in
31 connection with demographic housing options which has changed since the pandemic. She suggested the
32 removal of the wording "Chicago is a more appealing option."

33
34 Chairperson Orsic then referred to page 71 and the previous discussion relating to high vacancy rates
35 which is not accurate. She then identified various vacancy rates in surrounding villages from an MLS
36 search. Mr. Schoon confirmed outdated information would be removed or be updated. Ms. Case
37 suggested that cross referencing between Initiatives should be clarified throughout the Plan. Mr. Schoon
38 asked for those cross references to be provided to him.

39
40 Mr. Bradley referred to the Future Land Use comparison on page 53 and suggested alternative wording.
41 Mr. Schoon responded with regard to land uses, certain areas have been clarified which were previously
42 public or semi-public which have gone into the transportation, communications and utility uses with
43 others going to institutional uses. Mr. Bradley then referred to page 2 relating to the overview and
44 suggested adding a reference to our amazing schools. Ms. Kunkle suggested adding the lakefront to the
45 wording as well. The Commission Members agreed with the suggestions made. No additional comments
46 were made at this time.

47
48 **Public Comment**

1 Chairperson Orsic swore in those speaking to this matter.

2
3 Shawn Scott, Doyle Optics, 565 Chestnut, stated he understood in the Plan that the C-2 designation in the
4 Elm Street Business District was changing to C-1 asked what businesses qualify in the C-1 district. Mr.
5 Schoon responded that the future land use map designated the commercial areas in that District as a
6 mixed-use commercial district and the Plan did not change in the land use designation nor is the zoning
7 changing.

8
9 Charles Dowding, 968 Elm Street, asked for an initiative to be added to conform the 2040 Comprehensive
10 Plan to a current issue being discussed by the Village Council with respect to lakeshore beach access. He
11 stated the draft Plan mentioned several times the importance of access to public land and the lakeshore
12 and there is no initiative which specifically addressed its maintenance or improvement. Mr. Dowding
13 referred to a petition signed by 1,700 residents against armor, stone, breakwater, and louver fences which
14 block beach access and views. He stated following several public meetings, the Park District abandoned
15 plans for a lake fill plant-based fence that blocked beach access and views. Mr. Dowding then referred to
16 several articles relating to lakefront construction and the Village Council held a special meeting with the
17 representatives from the US Army Corp and IDNR. He then referred to the Village's ability to regulate
18 construction within a half mile of the Lake Michigan shoreline.

19
20 Mr. Dowding then referred to the contentious discussions relating to beach and lake construction with
21 several lawsuits being threatened or filed against the Village. He stated he raised the subject of access to
22 the Lakeshore Advisory Commission in 2014 and was told to go away since it is such a contentious subject.
23 Mr. Dowding then stated it should be described in the Plan and asked for Initiative 6.6.5 to be added to
24 Pillar 6 which would read as follows: "Update existing or develop new ordinances to preserve and enhance
25 access to and views of public lands along the Lake Michigan shoreline." He also suggested wording be
26 added to Initiative 6.4 as follows: "The Village will support health and wellness through innovative and
27 diversified recreational learning and cultural opportunities in the public parks, plazas, trails and open
28 spaces."

29
30 Theresa Lucas, owner of Good Grapes, 821 Chestnut Court, stated she attended last month's meeting and
31 referred to the Pillar on business vitality where no changes were made in connection with parking based
32 on the data. She stated business owners' input was not addressed in relation to parking concerns. Ms.
33 Lucas also commented it was upsetting that a letter with 27 signatures from last August opposing losing
34 parking for a proposed public plaza concept did not make it into the draft Plan. She described it as a
35 disconnect with regard to all of those who signed the letter and sent a negative message for all of those
36 who signed it in that there should be collaboration and input from everyone. Ms. Lucas stated she spoke
37 with Mr. Schoon to discuss why there were no modifications and distributed information to the
38 Commission for their review. She then referred to Initiative 2.5.6 relating to off-street parking
39 requirement reductions based on proximity to transit. Ms. Lucas reiterated no business owner wants any
40 reductions in the number of parking spaces. She then referred to the mobility section and stated there
41 are no connections in that Winnetka is not a walkable community. Ms. Lucas referred to the phrase in the
42 Plan that stated Winnetka businesses cannot survive on Winnetka residents alone. She then referred to
43 the Plan's statement to promote downtown as a walk-to destination and described various examples of
44 how that would not work. Ms. Lucas reiterated Winnetka is not a metropolitan area and added what they
45 are proposing would not work in inclement weather. She added the fact that they are attempting to make
46 Winnetka a walkable community is not valid and would not serve to promote businesses.

47
48 Leslie Farmer, 388 Berkeley, stated she is a member of the empty-nester, fast-growing demographic of

1 the Village who patronizes Village businesses. She also stated there are no housing options for seniors
2 looking to downsize or smaller homes for families who want to live in the Village. Ms. Farmer referred to
3 the amount of housing options in several surrounding communities which are not offered in Winnetka.
4 She commented on President Rintz's perception of the Post Office site as being ideal for open lands since
5 the Village is 99% built out and encouraged the consideration of having another park, which she stated is
6 not needed. Ms. Farmer stated a multi-family development would serve several facets of the issues the
7 community faced. She then suggested the Post Office site be developed to accommodate a demographic
8 need of the Village.
9

10 Colleen Root, 326 Woodland Avenue, stated she supported Mr. Dowding's comments and thanked the
11 Commission and consultants for the document's creation. She stated she would like to see comment
12 relating to maintaining lakeshore vista and asked for it to be integrated into the Plan. Ms. Root also
13 thanked the Commission for their discussion of creating a separate zoning standard for institutional uses,
14 and she also referred to page 159 relating to public comment for a marina and restaurants. She asked the
15 Commission to consider the fact that open lands and parks are in residential areas and if there is to be
16 commercialization of park land, there should be careful consideration of how that would occur and to
17 retain the current level of checks and balances in terms of any streamlined authorization. Ms. Root added
18 the Commission should not only study but carefully study and consider the creation of a separate zoning
19 standards for open space.
20

21 Melissa Mizel, 939 Tower Road, questioned the household projection number in the plan. She referred
22 to the school referendum that passed during the last election where it was previously proposed to close
23 one of the five District 36 schools without the knowledge there would be an additional 45 households
24 coming in which would have abbreviated the discussions if had they had known about it. Ms. Mizel added
25 the Commission has meticulously undertaken the editing process and appreciated their documentation
26 of the schools as being excellent and stated there is the ability to document how they excel.
27

28 Pat Collins, 860 Summit Street, referred to Pillar 4 and stated it was not emphasized enough that Winnetka
29 should take immediate steps to reduce its reliance on coal burning as an energy source and the movement
30 to solar energy should be incorporated as an immediate need.
31

32 Chairperson Orsic thanked the public for their comments and stated the next draft would be posted on
33 the website as soon as possible. The Commission Members took a break at this time.
34

35 The Commission then began discussion of the prioritization of the initiatives in the Implementation
36 chapter. Mr. Schoon asked the Commission Members if there were any comments on Pillar 1 in terms of
37 priority of initiatives. Ms. Case referred to Initiatives 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 and questioned whether they should
38 both be medium or high and asked for an explanation for why they are categorized that way. Mr. Bradley
39 questioned if further language could be added to the high, medium, and low categories in terms of long
40 term, with regard to achievability, or whether they could be quickly implemented, etc. Mr. Schoon
41 explained the reasoning behind the determination of the high, medium, and low categorizations. He then
42 suggested Initiative 1.1.1 be made high. The Commission Members discussed whether all three Initiatives
43 should be categorized as high. Mr. Schoon provided the Commission with an explanation of the items
44 which were categorized as high and are interrelated and provided several examples.
45

46 Mr. Alt described the Implementation section as the most important part of the entire process, and it
47 must be achievable. Chairperson Orsic stated their goal is to try to determine what they think the Village
48 would look like in 20 years as a broad vision in terms of shaping items as they come as opposed to giving

1 the Village Trustees specific directions.

2
3 Chairperson Orsic suggested they regroup and for the Commission Members to review the
4 Implementation portion and hold another special meeting. The Commission discussed the
5 implementation plan and agreed that it is more appropriate for the Village Council to determine what the
6 high, medium, and low priorities are, especially since the Council makes the decisions on how resources
7 are spent and distributed.

8
9 Mr. Schoon suggested special meeting dates and start times for the continued public hearing. The
10 Commission Members discussed the action to be taken at their next special meeting.

11
12 Chairperson Orsic asked for a motion to continue the public hearing to March 1, 2023. A motion was made
13 by Ms. Case to continue the meeting to March 1, 2023. The motion was seconded by Ms. Danley. A vote
14 was taken, and the motion unanimously passed, 7 to 0:

15 AYES: Alt, Bradley, Case, Danley, Foley, Kunkle, Orsic

16 NAYS: None

17
18 **New Business:**

19 a. Next Regular Meeting Quorum Check - February 22, 2023.

20 The Commission Members discussed their availability.

21
22 b. Joint Meeting with Village Council Quorum Check - March 14, 2023.

23 The Commission Members discussed their availability.

24
25 **Adjournment:**

26 Chairperson Orsic asked for a motion to adjourn. A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Kunkle and
27 seconded. A vote was taken, and the motion unanimously passed, 7 to 0:

28 AYES: Alt, Bradley, Case, Danley, Foley, Kunkle, Orsic

29 NAYS: None

30 The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

31
32 Respectfully submitted,

33
34 Antionette Johnson

35 Recording Secretary