

1411160

**City of Merrill  
City Plan Commission  
Monday, November 3, 2014 at 6:00 P.M.  
City Hall Common Council Chambers, 1004 East First Street**

Voting members present: Mayor Bill Bialecki (Chairperson), Melissa Schroeder, Alderman Peter Lokemoen and Steve Hass. Ken Maule had an excused absence.

Other attendees included: City Administrator Dave Johnson, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator Darin Pagel, Alderman Dave Sukow, Alderwoman Kandy Peterson, Todd Knoblock, Gregory Sommer, David Jirovec, Dan Sukow, Jared Schmidt, Karen Karow, Brian Hoffman, Mollie Hartwig, Pastor Brad Main, Jeni Main, Jeannie Lokemoen, Alissa Brewer, Diane Rell, John Rell, Ken Sutton, Jonathan Harris, Scott Brandenburg, James Bartelt, Steve Silverman, Jolenda Westbrook, Christine Vorpapel and City Clerk Bill Heideman.

**Call to order**

Mayor Bialecki called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

**Public Comment**

None.

**Minutes of October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2014 meeting**

The minutes were in the meeting packet.

Motion (Hass/Lokemoen) to approve, as presented, the minutes of the October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2014 City Plan Commission meeting. Carried.

**Hearing #1 – Rezoning request from Journey Church**

Journey Church (Pastor Brad Main) is requesting that the property at 1212 South Center Avenue be rezoned from Thoroughfare Commercial (T.C.) to Public District. A tavern is currently located there, but Journey Church is proposing that the property be used as a church.

City Attorney Hayden read the public hearing notice.

Motion (Hass/Schroeder) to open the public hearing. Carried.

Pastor Brad Main spoke in favor of the rezoning. He stated that the Journey Church congregation is now three years old, and this property would work well for their congregation.

Jolenda Westbrook stated that she is involved on the real estate portion of the pending property sale. She noted that the property has been on the market for the past 15 months, but that the offer from the church is the first bona fide purchase offer received since the property was put on the market.

Jared Schmidt currently leases the building on the property to house the 1212 Sports Lounge. He hopes to continue running that business, and added that the business is much more than just a bar, because other events are held there that bring people to Merrill. He is against the sale of the property to the church.

Gregory Sommer stated that the City recently sold property that will eventually be a tavern, so the closing of one tavern and the opening of another seems to be sensible trade-off.

Alderman Lokemoen reminded everyone that the purpose of the hearing was to gather information related to the rezoning request, not to consider one particular owner.

Scott Brandenburg stated that he appeared in order to support Jared Schmidt. Mr. Brandenburg stated that he holds a fundraiser at the 1212 Sports Lounge, and it would be fiscally impossible to hold it at another site, Therefore, he supports the continued operation of the 1212 Sports Lounge.

Jolenda Westbrook noted that the property was annexed to the City of Merrill several years ago.

Dave Jirovec stated that the amount of available parking makes the property attractive for use as a church.

Motion (Schroeder/Hass) to close the public hearing. Carried.

Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator Pagel reported that, if approved, the rezoning would remove a large parcel from the City tax roll. He added that a rezoning would be contrary to the guidelines in the City Comprehensive Plan.

Mayor Bialecki spoke against the rezoning.

City Administrator Johnson stated that, from a business standpoint, a church would not be the best use for the property.

Alderman Lokemoen stated that the property would work for either a church or for commercial use, but that the best use would be for commercial use.

Motion (Hass/Schroeder) to deny the application from Journey Church to rezone the property at 1212 South Center Avenue from Thoroughfare Commercial (T.C.) to Public District. Carried.

An ordinance on the rezoning will be on the November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2014 Common Council meeting agenda.

**Hearing #2 – Rezoning request from City for former Ranger Station property**

The City of Merrill is requesting that the property at 1100 East Tenth Street be rezoned from Public District to Thoroughfare Commercial (T.C.). This is the former Ranger Station property. This request is being made to facilitate commercial development of the property.

City Attorney Hayden read the public hearing notice.

Motion (Hass/Lokemoen) to open the public hearing. Carried.

Christine Vorpapel spoke in favor of the rezoning request.

Motion (Hass/Lokemoen) to close the public hearing. Carried.

Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator Pagel reported that a rezoning change to Thoroughfare Commercial would be in accordance with the guidelines of the City Comprehensive Plan.

Motion (Hass/Schroeder) to approve, as submitted, the application from the City of Merrill to rezone the property at 1100 East Tenth Street from Public District to Thoroughfare Commercial (T.C.). Carried.

An ordinance on the rezoning will be on the November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2014 Common Council meeting agenda.

**Next meeting**

Tuesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014. The time of the meeting was tentatively set for 5:45 P.M.

**Adjournment**

Motion (Hass/Lokemoen) to adjourn. Carried. Adjourned at 6:28 P.M.

Minutes submitted by:

William N. Heideman, CMC, WCMC  
City Clerk