



TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members
FROM: 
Brian C. Peterson AICP, Planning Director; 4-20-11
Meeting Date: April 25, 2011

Agenda Item

Item # 9H – Planning Commission Review City Proposal to dispose of property involving Mississippi National Golf Links

Action Requested

Motion to Accept Report from the Advisory Planning Commission that finds that the proposed sale of Mississippi National Golf Links is not in compliance with the City's Comprehensive Plan because of insufficient information about the sale

Attachments

- State Statute 462.356
- Excerpts of the Red Wing Comprehensive Plan, April 9, 2007 and the Open Space Preservation Plan, 2008
- Map Showing Parcels Acquired by the City for Mississippi National Golf Links
- Map Showing Proposed Land to be Conveyed and Retained by the City of Red Wing

Background

The City Attorney has determined that the Planning Commission should review acquisitions, land disposal, and capital improvements as per State Statute 462.356. The statute states that prior to the governing body acquiring or disposing of land, or authorizing a capital improvement, the planning agency (Advisory Planning Commission) is to review the action and report in writing its findings as to compliance with the comprehensive plan. The City Council is considering the sale of the municipally owned Mississippi National Golf Links property to private interests as a budget strategy to address significant economic and budget realities. The Planning Commission is asked to make a determination whether the proposed sale is consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Proposed Sale: The terms of the sale were not finalized, and so the Planning Commission received information based on some of the principles that have been

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developed that would be followed in any sale of the property. Many of these principles are explained in the document: Proposed Sale of Mississippi National Golf Links: Commonly Asked Questions. The general parameters for the sale were summarized as follows.

The current municipal golf course is located on city owned property that has been developed as a golf course and is used for a number of other public recreational purposes. Terms of the sale will include:

- Continued use of the property as a public golf course by including restrictions on the property
- Much of the property has use restrictions that require that it be used for recreational use
- Reversion clauses that require any property no longer used as a public golf course to revert back to the City
- City will retain property north of the existing Golf Links Road and maintain the hiking trails, mountain biking trails, cross country skiing trails and snow shoeing trails
- City will plat the existing Golf Links Drive and maintain drainage and utility easements and parking
- City will obtain an easement or license for the rights for public cross country skiing trails on the golf course property that is sold

Comprehensive Plan

Attached are excerpts of the Comprehensive Plan that have some relationship to the proposed sale of the property. The Comprehensive Plan is meant to be used as a guide for policy making decisions that impact on the future development of the City. Below is a summary of these policy directives and how they relate to the proposed sale.

Page 2-1 Vision and Guiding Principles
Page 2-2
Page 2-3

The City vision statement and guiding principles establish the City's overall vision for the future development of the City. The City Vision Statement is: "The Community Vision for the City of Red Wing is to capture the vibrancy of growth while preserving and enhancing the City's unique historic and natural environmental character." The Guiding Principle that appears to have the most relevancies to the issue at hand reads: "**Preserve Sensitive Environmental Amenities:** The Mississippi River is recognized as a priceless and irreplaceable natural and cultural asset. Red Wing should identify what land areas should be preserved and require protection and implement strategies to preserve these natural resources."

Page 4-1 Community Systems
Page 4-2
Page 4-3
Page 4-19

The City's Comprehensive Plan is organized with an early chapter on Community Systems where the "Green Infrastructure" was first identified. In general, the

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Comprehensive Plan encourages the preservation and networking of the green infrastructure. On page 4-2, Mississippi National Golf Links is shown as part of the green infrastructure as a sensitive landscape. On page 4-3, Mississippi National Golf Links is shown as a part of the Green Network that the City should work to preserve.

Page 5-2 Settlement Patterns

This page shows Figure 5-1, Future Land Use Map – this map provides guidance for future land use development. Mississippi National Golf Links is shown as part of the Green Network on the future land use map.

Page CI-7 Community Initiatives

Page CI-8

The Community Initiatives section of the plan included a number of major initiatives that should be pursued by the City. Initiative 7 states: “Develop a Strategy for Open Space Preservation.” This is an important initiative that was undertaken by the Planning Commission in 2008 with the adoption of the Open Space Plan described below.

Page 35 Open Space Plan

The Open Space Plan completed in 2008 identified existing open space already protected by public ownership or conservation easements and also identified Open Space Priorities. Page 35 shows Figure 3.1 with the Open Space Priorities. Mississippi National Golf Links was not shown in this figure as a priority for protection because it was already owned publicly. Restrictions on the reuse and/or conservation easements that maintain the property as open space should be considered as part of the sale of the property.

Public Hearing

The Advisory Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on April 19, 2011. Citizens spoke at the hearing and the general comments are summarized below:

Kent Laugen, 445 East Seventh Street – Pointed out the requirements of State Statute 462.356 and his concern that the Planning Commission did not have information on the final sales agreement and therefore could not make a determination about whether the sale would be in compliance with the City’s plan. He also pointed out that the statute allows the Planning Commission 45 days to make its findings.

Paul Grinnell, 2985 Cougar Court – Also did not think that the Planning Commission could make a decision without more information.

Gary Fridell, 503 Summit Avenue – Voiced a number of concerns including:

- Concern that the State Legislation that was introduced was not yet approved and that this could impact on the sales agreement
- The City owns the property fee title and this gives the City the highest level of control over the future use of the property
- Concern over the developers interest in a hotel development on the property
- Disputed the golf course costs that the City is listing

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- Noted that the telephone survey that was completed in 2010 lists that 79 percent were in favor of selling the golf course not 92 percent. Brian Peterson pointed out that the difference is attributed to the fact that some citizens did not respond at all to the question and so if you just look at the actual responses, the percentage in favor of selling the golf course was 92 percent.
- Noted that private covenants terminate after 30 years unless they are renewed and could we trust that the city would renew the covenants
- Voiced concerns about the appraisal process
- Stated that if the City sells the property it will be gone forever

Finding

The Planning Commission voted 6:1 to report to the City Council its finding that the proposed sale of Mississippi National Golf Links is not in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan because the commission has not received enough information on the details of the sales agreement to determine if the conditions of the sale would be sufficient to protect the public's interest to maintain the property as open space for public recreation. The Commission would reconsider this finding at a later date when the details of the sales agreement can be provided.

462.356 PROCEDURE TO EFFECT PLAN: GENERALLY.

Subdivision 1. Recommendations for plan execution. Upon the recommendation by the planning agency of the comprehensive municipal plan or sections thereof, the planning agency shall study and propose to the governing body reasonable and practicable means for putting the plan or section of the plan into effect. Subject to the limitations of the following sections, such means include, but are not limited to, zoning regulations, regulations for the subdivision of land, an official map, a program for coordination of the normal public improvements and services of the municipality, urban renewal and a capital improvements program.

Subd. 2. Compliance with plan. After a comprehensive municipal plan or section thereof has been recommended by the planning agency and a copy filed with the governing body, no publicly owned interest in real property within the municipality shall be acquired or disposed of, nor shall any capital improvement be authorized by the municipality or special district or agency thereof or any other political subdivision having jurisdiction within the municipality until after the planning agency has reviewed the proposed acquisition, disposal, or capital improvement and reported in writing to the governing body or other special district or agency or political subdivision concerned, its findings as to compliance of the proposed acquisition, disposal or improvement with the comprehensive municipal plan. Failure of the planning agency to report on the proposal within 45 days after such a reference, or such other period as may be designated by the governing body shall be deemed to have satisfied the requirements of this subdivision. The governing body may, by resolution adopted by two-thirds vote dispense with the requirements of this subdivision when in its judgment it finds that the proposed acquisition or disposal of real property or capital improvement has no relationship to the comprehensive municipal plan.

History: 1965 c 670 s 6

2 Vision & Guiding Principles

The Red Wing Comprehensive Plan is intended as a guide for policy makers to use in making decisions about the growth and development of the city over the next twenty years. The first step in creating the plan is to start with a clear community vision for what the citizens of Red Wing want to see their community become. This involves collecting the ideas and dreams of the people who make Red Wing their home.

Red Wing 2020, a leadership organization appointed by the Mayor, agreed to help coordinate the process of updating the Community Vision. This was a perfect fit for the City because Red Wing 2020 represents a diverse group of organizations, agencies, and interest groups with a mission to help develop, promote, support, and communicate a community vision in cooperation with other public and private agencies. Starting early in 2005, a number of community involvement opportunities were provided in order to involve as many citizens as possible in creating this Community Vision. In coordination with the Mayor's Steering Committee three Imagination Inspiration Events were conducted where panel speakers were invited to public forums to discuss

current economic issues, riverfront planning experience, and the keys to success in small towns.

Community Vision and Guiding Principles

Community Vision

One of the keys to big success in small towns listed by Boom Town USA author Jack Schultz was the importance of "Shaping Your Vision". Red Wing has traditionally been known to have an extremely active citizenry devoted to civic progress. This is why the identification of a collective community vision is so important. With a shared vision, a clear plan to bring that vision to fruition can be established. The community vision forms the basis for the more detailed recommendations that follow in the Comprehensive Plan.

Guiding Principles

The following list of guiding principles is intended to support the community vision. The community vision and guiding principles becomes the framework to be used to construct the comprehensive plan. The guiding principles are not listed in any priority order.

Red Wing's Vision Statement

"The Community Vision for the City of Red Wing is to capture the vibrancy of growth while preserving and enhancing the city's unique historic and natural environmental character."

*--adopted
March 27, 2006*



Active citizens participated in efforts to establish a Community Vision for Red Wing, which was adopted in March 2006.

Preserve Community Character: Red Wing should encourage and support locally owned businesses and help strengthen the historic downtown and pottery districts that shape the community's distinctive sense of place.

Great Place to do Business: Red Wing should aggressively establish a community infrastructure that encourages business and industry growth; attracts talent; invests in education and workforce training; and nurtures an entrepreneurial spirit that will result in new tax base and employment opportunities.

Open Government: Red Wing should commit itself to encourage continued involvement by citizens, businesses, and organizations in the public decision making and act to be responsive to public consensus.

Diverse Community: Red Wing is dedicated to creating a welcoming community that thrives on the diversity of its citizens.

Safe and Secure: Red Wing should coordinate and prepare for emergency response and continue to provide for personal and family safety.

Support Partnerships: Red Wing should communicate a clear and unified community vision and support community partnerships that help to achieve that shared vision.

Healthy and Active Community: The Red Wing community should continue to improve and promote healthy living and family wellness for its residents.

Quality Land Development: Red Wing should place a high priority on promoting high quality land development that promotes redevelopment that is compatible with our community character.

Preserve Sensitive Environmental Amenities: The Mississippi River is recognized as a priceless and irreplaceable natural and cultural asset. Red Wing should identify what land areas should be preserved and require protection and implement strategies to preserve these natural resources.

Quality Educational Opportunities: Red Wing promotes exceptional educational opportunities for lifelong learning. We view our educational system as a vital economic, social and community development asset.

Think Regionally: Red Wing should be considered the gateway to the Lake Pepin region, and should build on the cultural, economic, and natural assets.

Support for the Arts: Red Wing should continue to plan for and support the development of a wide range of arts and cultural programs and provide facilities that enhance the quality of life and attract new talent to the community.

Sustainable Community: Red Wing should always consider the long term impact of decision making with an understanding of the interdependence between our community and the natural ecosystem.

Embrace Technology: Red Wing should be a technologically superior community.

Housing Choices: Red Wing should offer housing opportunities for a broad range of incomes, lifestyles, and age groups.

Five Indicators of Community Health

The visioning process gathered more than 25 residents to evaluate previous community visioning documents as a foundation for future planning. The reports were organized around five indicators of community health, which each contributed to establishing the community's new vision.

1. Economic Development

Previous documents established the vision that Red Wing should work to become a regional economic center by growing its retail and tourism sectors and diversifying its manufacturing base. Retail expansion and tourism-based businesses have grown considerably over the past decades, and the development of the River Bluffs Business Park has positioned Red Wing to attract new business. Global trends, poor transportation linkages

and the loss of locally-owned companies have created some challenges to local development.

2. Learning

Educating residents by providing lifelong learning opportunities has always been a central value to this community. Declining school enrollment and legislative instability have created difficult fiscal constraints for the school district leading to larger class sizes. These challenges have been balanced by several positive trends such as expanded training opportunities at the technical college, the School District moving out of statutory operating debt and many collaborative efforts between the City of Red Wing and educational institutions in providing education and recreational services.

3. Health and Wellness

Red Wing has seen tremendous changes in health and wellness services and facilities offered to the community. In the last five years, the most visible changes include the integrated and expanded services provided by Fairview Red Wing Health Services with a new medical facility and the expansion of the Red Wing YMCA. Issues on the forefront include the need for better access to mental health resources, national trends related to health care costs and the need to build community wellness into the design of existing and new neighborhoods.



Mayor Dummer led a successful visioning campaign to lay the foundation for the Red Wing Comprehensive Plan of 2007.

4 Community Systems

As suggested in chapter one, this plan is organized around the three physical layers of a community: community systems, settlement patterns and design character. The subject of this chapter, community systems, can be described as sets of infrastructure that are critical to community health and function. We can think of community systems as multiple networks of infrastructure. Just like individual streets are networked to form one system, other sets of infrastructure form networks to make up the full range of community systems.

Even though infrastructure is usually thought of as something built or what this plan calls “grey infrastructure”, the word can also describe unbuilt landscapes and ecological functions called “green infrastructure”. Green infrastructure, like grey infrastructure, has limited value and diminished health unless it is networked to form a system. A street that doesn’t connect to any others would be ridiculous for the car-owner living on that street. The same is true of an unconnected patch of open space. Eventually both places would be abandoned for more functional environments.

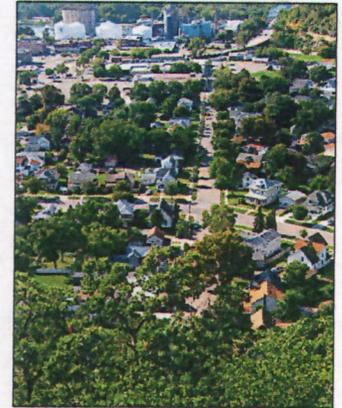
What does all this have to do with Red Wing’s comprehensive plan? This plan suggests that Red Wing should critically evaluate its community systems for 1) their presence, 2) their health, and 3) their sustainability. The plan also suggests that Red Wing continually innovate and strengthen these community systems through normal capital investment cycles, agency partnerships and the process of development. The community systems specifically addressed by this chapter are:

Green Infrastructure

- Surface Water
- Ground Water
- Greenway Corridors & Patches
- Parkland
- Urban Forest
- Green Roofs
- Archaeological Sites and Villages

Grey Infrastructure

- Recreation
- Transportation
- Education
- Emergency Services
- Drinking Water
- Communications
- Energy
- Waste Management
- Stormwater Management



Community systems play a vital role in supporting life in Red Wing.

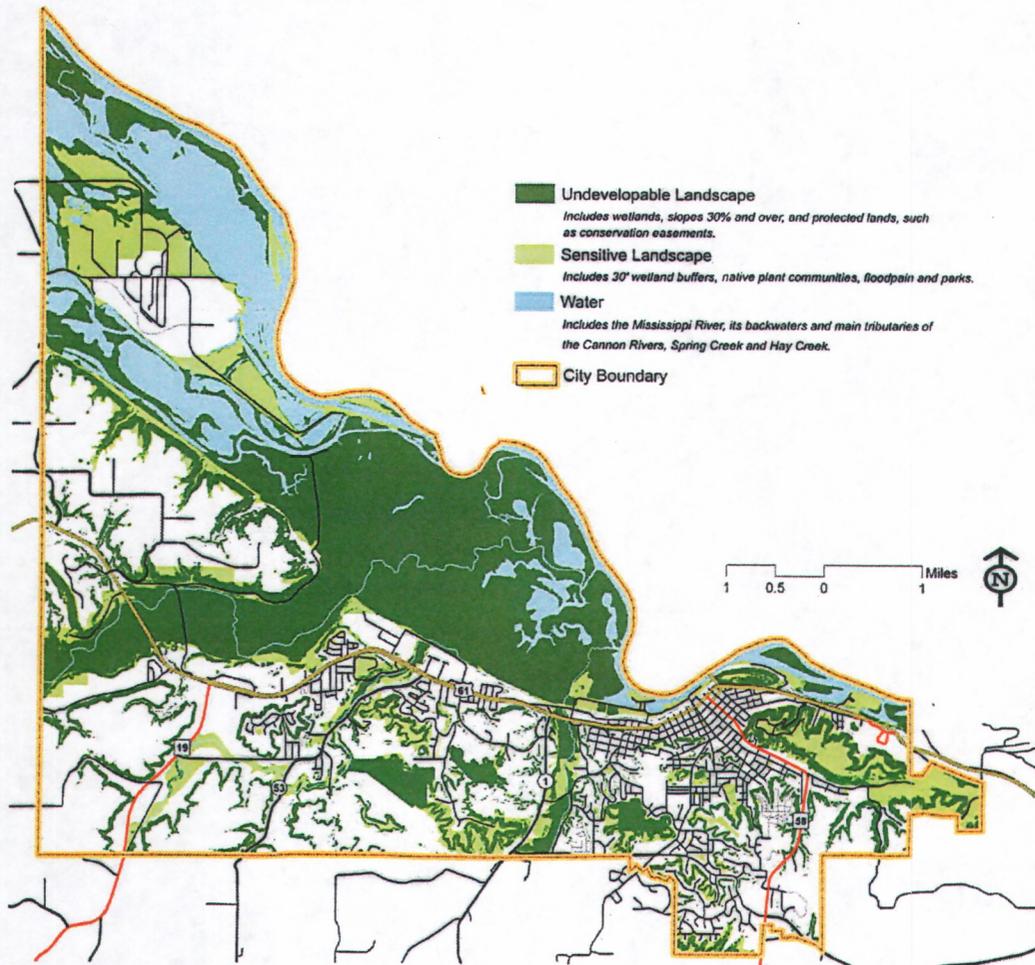


Figure 4-1. Sensitive Landscapes

Defining the City's sensitive landscapes provided a starting point to identify the green infrastructure already present and areas to conserve in the future that contribute to a broader green network.

Green Infrastructure

Society's recognition of green infrastructure's importance continually evolves. Until the establishment of Central Park in New York City 150 years ago, there was little appreciation for the impact of parkland on our social and emotional well-being. Until the environmental movement of the last century, our primary interest in surface water was transportation and waste disposal.

Preserving a network of green infrastructure figures prominently in this comprehensive plan because Red Wing cannot realize their vision or claim their identity without its strong presence. Success in regard to green infrastructure means the community must strengthen existing methods and find new approaches to protecting, managing and enjoying open spaces and public waters. This plan envisions Red Wing's green infrastructure as a linked system that maintains ecological integrity, provides public access and preserves scenic character and important views. Figure 4-1 illustrates the natural systems and sensitive landscapes in Red Wing. Preservation of these lands will contribute to the overall health and livability of the city.

Green Network of Corridors & Patches

As illustrated in Figure 4-2, a green network is identified, taking advantage of existing natural systems, open