

Memorandum

To: Sunfish Lake Mayor Dan O'Leary and City Council Members

From: Lori Johnson, City Planner

Date: December 27, 2021

Re: Sunfish Lake – Planner's Report for the January 4, 2022 City Council Meeting
WSB Project No. 017240-000

At the January 20th, 2022 Planning Commission meeting I will be presenting an item for major site plan review for 2150 Charlton Road. This application involves the installation of a pathway down to the lake from the top of the slope, as well as a fire pit and seating area in the rear yard adjacent to the lake. The City Engineer, City Forester and I agree that the path chosen is the most minimally invasive path to the lake. Look for more information on this in my staff report for the Planning Commission meeting.

December Planning Updates

1. 369 Salem Church Road: Mayor O'Leary, the City Engineer and I met with the homeowners and contractors for this project on December 15th at the WSB St. Paul office. This meeting was held to discuss the outstanding escrow payment required for this project. The meeting was very constructive in that everyone came to agreement on the Certificate of Occupancy and a payment plan for the outstanding balance. Some research still needs to be done with regards to this payment and I will provide an update on this project at the City Council meeting.
2. 300 Salem Church Road: The homeowner has requested that a final inspection be conducted on the pool and retaining wall work that was approved for this site. There are some outstanding escrow payments that need to be submitted before this inspection can take place. The homeowner has been notified of this issue. At this time, there has been no response from the homeowner since prior to the December City Council meeting.
3. Zoning Ordinance Updates: In 2022, it is my goal to process the desired zoning ordinance updates that the City Council wishes to implement. My notes from Tom Ramler-Olson indicate that the following items could be addressed in a zoning ordinance update:
 - a) Addition of a demolition permit application and process. (Likely added to a different code section)
 - b) Building height
 - c) Signs
 - d) Water Extraction
 - e) Shoreland Alterations
 - f) Submittal Requirements
 - g) Escrow process
 - h) Accessory buildings

Of course, these are only the items that I have learned about through my short time working for the city. There are really two options for moving forward. The first option is to move forward with an overall zoning ordinance update. This would allow the City Council to review every section of the ordinance to determine if any updates would be required. The second option is to focus on the items listed above and any other items that the City Council identifies as needing attention. Prioritization of items would then need to be determined.

Whichever path is chosen, I will need to review time estimates and budget requirements to ensure that the city is still in alignment with their WSB budget goals for 2022.

4. Escrows: In addition to working on the two escrow issues listed above, it has become increasingly clear that the city's escrow requirements are inadequate for the type of construction that is occurring in the city. Currently, the city's fee schedule indicates that \$2,500 is required for an escrow for major site plan review. Many times, this amount does not cover the time that staff spends on these reviews; therefore, a lot of research is underway to determine what escrow amount is appropriate based on WSB's time on projects and what other cities require for escrows. I will also be looking at the land use applications for process clarifications and the incorporation of an escrow agreement.

As you can see, 2022 will be filled with a lot of research, new processes and new requirements. Hopefully, all the changes to come will create more efficiency and better customer service for the City of Sunfish Lake.

As always, I'm open to any questions or concerns about any of these issues. See you next year!