

**MINUTES**  
**SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING**  
**COOK COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING**  
**COOK CITY COUNCIL**  
**OCTOBER 23, 2014 – COOK CITY HALL – 4 PM**

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**TIME AND PLACE:** A Special Meeting of the Cook City Council was held at 4 PM on Thursday, October 23, 2014 at the Cook City Hall.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Harold Johnston called the Special Council Meeting to order at 4 PM.

**ATTENDANCE:** Present were Mayor Harold Johnston and City Councilors Kim Brunner, Karen Hollanitsch and Elizabeth Storm. Absent was City Councilor Jody Bixby. Also present was Administrator-Clerk/Treasurer Theresa Martinson, Deputy Clerk/Treasurer Cindy Palm, Rock Gillson – Redwater, Inc., Nicole Peterson – ARDC, Cook News Herald and the Timberjay.

The City of Cook does not have an existing Comprehensive Plan. The city has received a 2014 IRRRB grant and has contracted through ARDC to complete a plan. The Cook City Council is serving as the planning committee for the process. The IRRRB will require a comprehensive plan in place for future funding and this is an opportunity for the community to view its future direction as communities are changing.

The Council is serving as the Planning Commission for the Comprehensive Planning Process with Members of Planning and Zoning also invited.

The ARDC Agenda:

Review the Cook Comprehensive Plan survey results summary

Decide how to incorporate survey results into the Comprehensive Plan process through information and education

Review final draft and allow a public input session

Schedule of next meeting date – November 20<sup>th</sup> at 4 PM to continue review of final draft and allow a public input session. The council will review the official draft prior to this meeting

**Acknowledgements**

Spelling corrections – Acknowledgements (title) and Treasurer. No additional comments

Change the following to read:

**City Vision and Goals**

*Vision Statement*

The economy in Cook has an array of local businesses that provide residents and visitors with necessary goods and services and offer diverse employment opportunities. Removed some language including, “is thriving with local businesses” and discussed the definition of ‘thriving.’

Transportation Goal Statement:

Cook, in collaboration with other government entities, strives for a safe, high quality and well maintained transportation system.

Housing Goal, Strategies, Action Steps

**Housing Strategy A:**

1. Action Step: Consider conducting a housing assessment, if a funding source is available, that identifies the gaps in housing variety and the needs and wants of the community.
2. Action Step: Support a diversity of housing types in Cook, with aging in place and energy efficient-building standards in mind (see following strategies). (Insert Appendix of Housing Agencies and Programs)

**Housing Strategy B: Address blight in the community**

1. Action Step: Review and enforce existing policies and ordinances on removal of blighted, vacant properties and other aesthetic and community health concerns. (Reference current blight ordinance)
  - a. Examine the potential for community assistance programs to promote aesthetics (e.g. spring cleanup day)
  - b. Promote property demolition programs when appropriate, including programs from the IRRRB and St. Louis County CDBG.

**Housing Strategy C: Promote maintenance and upkeep of existing owner-occupied and rental housing**

2. Action Step: Consider the development of a rental registry in the City.
3. Action Step: Consider informing owners and rental property owners of land use regulations (e.g. landscaping, parking).
4. Action Step: Continue and expand the housing program (property recognition and City beautification).

Omit line 5. In regard to wildlife in the City and landscaping, research techniques that allow the peaceful co-habitation of people and wild-life (i.e. deer, squirrels, butterflies, etc.)

For omitting: Councilors Brunner, Storm and Hollanitsch

Opposed to omitting: Mayor Johnston

5. (former line 6 changed to line 5) Action Step: Promote home ownership through promotion of homebuyer assistance programs and affordable housing programs such as.....

#### **Housing Strategy D: Promote aging in place and low-mobility housing options**

1. Action Step: Support and promote aging in place and low-mobility housing options in future housing development and redevelopment in Cook.
  - a. Consider review of zoning, housing development standards, and/or subdivision codes to address appropriate design standards for future residential units and lots. Reference aging in place information within this Comprehensive Plan.
2. Action Step: Encourage aging in place .....  
Reference: a, b and c

#### **Housing Strategy E: Encourage sustainable buildings**

1. Action Step: Resources for sustainable building.  
Reference: a-e

#### **Transportation Strategies and Action Steps**

*Transportation Goal Statement: Cook, in collaboration with other government entities, will strive for a safe, high quality and well maintained transportation system.*

#### **Transportation Strategy A: Improve Highway 53 through Cook in order to enhance safety of drivers, walkers, cyclists and all other users**

1. Action Step: (note to leave action steps in place but mark as completed as have been accomplished over the last two years).
2. Action Step: (note: Mayor Johnston is concerned that if too much focus is on the danger of the existing highway, MNDOT may consider bypassing Cook affecting current businesses along route. Councilor Hollanitsch suggested mentioning that education and safety meetings are conducted and in place regarding the highway 53 existing route). Meetings with MNDOT are in progress in 2014. Omit item c. Pedestrian and bicycle bridge or tunnel.
7. Omit entire Action Step

#### **Transportation Strategy C: Support public transit**

(Further discussion is needed on this entire strategy)

Research the need for additional paving and re-paving existing streets and funding sources available.

1. Action Step: Encourage use of public transit available by Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency and Big Woods Transit (AEOA comes once a week – Duluth and cities).
  - c. Support connections and shuttle to Bois Fore Reservation and ensure tribal members and tribal employees living near or in Cook are aware of the transit option.
2. Action Step: Research and encourage a public park & ride lot.

**Transportation Strategy E: Maintain and improve local streets, alley and sidewalks on a routine and established schedule**

2. Action Step: Replace North River Street Bridge.
4. Action Step: Include sidewalk regulations in a revised zoning ordinance.

**Transportation Strategy F: Continue to collaborate with the railroad for traffic and pedestrian use to support safe transport through Cook**

Note: Completed a safety study and improved crossings over the years.

2. Omit Action Step

**Transportation Strategy G: Work with the airport to promote Cook amenities**

Administrator Martinson noted the importance of the being on the County and State five year plan for transportation funding and improvements.

**The Comprehensive Plan Committee Notes of October 23, 2014 as recorded by Nicole Peterson of ARDC are included in this document.**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business brought before the Council, motion to adjourn at 5:00 PM was made by Councilor Brunner and second by Councilor Storm. **MOTION CARRIED**

CITY OF COOK – Cook, MN 55723

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Harold Johnston, Mayor

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Recorder: Cindy Palm, Deputy Clerk/Treasurer

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Recorder and Attest: Theresa Martinson, Administrator-Clerk/Treasurer