

**MINUTES**  
**SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING**  
**COOK COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING**  
**COOK CITY COUNCIL**  
**MAY 15, 2014 – CITY HALL – 5 PM**

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**TIME AND PLACE:** A special meeting of the Cook City Council was held at 5 PM on Thursday, May 15, 2014 at the Cook City Hall.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Harold Johnston called the Special Council Meeting to order at 5 PM.

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

ARDC Andy Hubley and Nicole Peterson were present to discuss the agenda for the Comprehensive Planning for the City of Cook as follows:

A. Schedule Public Visioning Session

Tentatively scheduled for June 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM at the US Forest Service Visitor Center located at 320 Hwy 53 North – subject to availability. Notification will be mailed once a contact list is identified.

B. Form Planning Committee

The following were identified:

Chamber of Commerce – President Lisa Ojanen

Health Care – Hospital Al Vogt and Clinic Mike Holmes

Youth Representative – Baptist Church Youth Pastor Jared Bangs

Lake Vermilion Resort Association / Boy Scouts – Rock Gillson

Recreation Commission – Secretary Tammy Palmer and all commission members

Housing Redevelopment Authority - Executive Director Jennifer Krenz

Finance Committee – Rich Crettol Cook Area Credit Union

Citizen Groups – Cook Lions Club Jerry Storm or Mark Eyre

Friends of the Library, Friends of the Airport, Northwoods Friends of the Arts

Cook Ambulance and Fire

US Forest Service – Minnesota DNR

Cook Area Farmer's Market

Cook Area Assisted Living

Large Employers

Planning and Zoning Commission

Business owners – Tom Musech, Ed Tausk, Tim Johnson, Lois Pajari

Upon identifying items A, B and C as part of the initial comprehensive planning process, a motion is needed to accept the ARDC contract in the amount of \$15,000 for the 2014 Comprehensive Plan for the City of Cook.

Motion by Storm, second by Hollanitsch to approve and accept a contract in the amount of \$15,000 with Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC) for the 2014 Comprehensive Plan for the City of Cook. **MOTION CARRIED**

C. Input will be gathered from the formed committee input through monthly sessions by covering specific subject areas of the Comprehensive Plan

D. IRRRB Section Requirements:

(Listed items for discussion specific to Cook)

#### Issues and Opportunities\*

##### Housing\*:

(Most discussed in comprehensive planning processes) –

Availability of housing, acceptable for habitat, minimal rental opportunities, affordable low income housing, surplus of lots for housing development

##### Transportation\*

No mass transit, minimal other transport i.e. AEOA, Fortune Bay etc., heavy railroad use through city causes frequent traffic obstruction, airport runway 4000 feet with master layout plan in progress, Highway 53 corridor to Cook (new 4 lane to Cook completed in 2014) with safety through Cook a concern, County Roads 24 and 115 safety concerns along with numerous safety and bypass routes through and around downtown Cook which address sidewalks, crosswalks and biking lanes.

##### Utilities and Community Facilities\*

City infrastructure is 95% complete for water and storm sewer with new treatment facilities, a 200,000 gallon elevated storage tank and two new wells. Wi-Fi, a cell service tower and fiber optic for critical services are available. An area for discussion is the excessive cost to connect residential customers to fiber optics and the possibility of forming a cooperative as done in other communities.

ARDC commented that community facilities should be a benefit to many and not a few when being implemented. Priority should always be a high importance based on needs versus wants. The City of Cook has a library, parks, ball fields, a community center in progress and a city hall (that ARDC commented could use replacement).

##### Mining, Timber, Tourism, Natural and Cultural Resources\*

Many residents are active in the mining and timber industries along with a local wood based manufacturing company employing 50 plus employees and a locally owned equipment maintenance garage that repairs logging and heavy equipment. An IT/Disability Specialist based business employs 40-50 educated applicants.

Tourism is based off Lake Vermilion with a visitor center, golf course, area resorts and casino along with a full service community hosting a federal forest service, state department of natural resources and transportation, county land office, retail, insurance, real estate, title, license bureau, funeral home, medical and dental, pharmacy, restaurants, convenience, grocery, liquor, movie theater, post office, banks, churches etc.

Natural Resources provide a river and trails for snowmobiling, skiing and sled dogs along with cultural resources such as the annual Timber Days community event, border to border triathlon, a yoga studio and the oldest movie theater in the state.

##### Recreation, Open Space and Cultural Arts\*

The area is abundant with federal and state forest lands and campgrounds, etc.

Economic Development\*

The City of Cook does not have an Economic Development Authority and would like to focus on the main street, business park location development, Highway 53 corridor and to assist the owner of the former school with community based re-development opportunities.

Intergovernmental Cooperation\*

Cooperation based organizations include neighboring communities, IRRRB, DEED, CDBG, County etc. and the school relocated four miles north of town which has been detrimental to the community.

Land Use\*

City zoning and mapping needs review and designation and annexation needs further review and completion. The city ordinance needs review and updating, and a wetland and floodplain establishment process can be further updated to follow new federal requirements.

Implementation\*

Annual review as part of a year-end process on the final council agenda of the year could be an anticipated way to follow through on the comprehensive plan implementation.

\*ARDC common topic in previous comprehensive plans

E. Healthy community comprehensive plan model pilot:

Health will be considered throughout the process with the intension to incorporate health considerations into each section. Some health-related topics could include:

1. Housing for “aging in place”
2. Active transportation
3. Access to health care and social events
4. Health food access (distribution analysis and best practices)

Item 4 is addressed with Ruby’s Pantry, Cook Area Food Shelf, local grocery store, and numerous area restaurants.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business brought before the Council, motion to adjourn at 6 PM was made by Councilor Hollanitsch 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

Attest: Theresa Martinson, Administrator-Clerk/Treasurer