

**MINUTES**  
**SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING**  
**COOK VISIONING SESSION**  
**COOK CITY COUNCIL**  
**JUNE 10, 2014 – US FOREST SERVICE BUILDING – 6:30 PM**

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**TIME AND PLACE:** A special meeting of the Cook City Council was held at 6:30 PM on Tuesday, June 10, 2014 at the US Forest Service Building at 320 N Hwy 53 Cook MN.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Harold Johnston called the Special Council Meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

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

The following were also present:

Mike Holmes - Scenic Rivers Health Services  
Caitlyn Bangs – Resident  
Tom Soderberg - Resident  
Rock and Josh Gillson – Redwater Inc. and Life of Riley Resort  
Diane Brunner – Field Township  
Tim and Anita Mankowski – Residents and Cook Ambulance Director  
Lois Pajari – Cook’s Country Connection and Cook Chamber of Commerce  
Andrea Vogel – Resident and Northwoods Friends of the Arts  
Richard Boldt – Resident  
Jim Nyhus – Laurentian Holdings Inc.  
Arlee and Doreen Olson – Residents  
Eric Burckhardt – Cook Building Center  
William Whiteside – Resident  
Tim Engrav – US Forest Service  
Jim Ganahl – Lake Vermilion Planning Committee and MN SHIP Coalition  
Carol Booth – Lake Vermilion Planning Committee and MN SHIP Coalition

The City of Cook does not have an existing Comprehensive Plan and now has a 2014 IRRRB grant in place and has contracted through ARDC with the Cook City Council as the planning committee for the Comprehensive Planning 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. Tonight’s Visioning Meeting is an informal meeting to gather input for the formal planning process.

Attached are the notes of the Cook Visioning Session as provided by the Arrowhead Regional Development Committee (ARDC) whom conducted the Visioning Session Meeting:

**Cook Visioning Session**  
**Meeting Notes**  
**June 10, 2014 / 6:30 PM**  
**US Forest Service Building, Cook, MN**

**Meeting Summary**

Present: 26 people were present and 14 paper surveys were collected

The purpose of the Cook Visioning session was to gather public input in the Comprehensive Plan process. Attendees at the Cook Visioning Session Comprehensive Plan meeting took part in a visioning and asset mapping exercise. Attendees were also asked to complete a community survey that is also available online at: <http://www.arrowheadplanning.org/Cook>. The meeting was facilitated by ARDC (Arrowhead Regional Development Commission).

The meeting began with attendee introductions and their personal visions for Cook. Responses are below:

1. Younger families
2. Diverse and growing
3. More year-round outdoor activities
4. More accessible
5. Town be a destination
6. Beautiful
7. Surviving
8. Home destination
9. More service businesses
10. Police protected
11. Youth attractions
12. More things to do
13. More employment
14. More community opportunities
15. Unique draw/ events
16. Safe roads
17. Pedestrian friendly
18. Bike friendly
19. Benefitting from natural resources/ public lands
20. Senior housing
21. Connected to Lake
22. Diverse, affordable housing
23. Clean
24. Medical mecca/thriving businesses
25. Improved economics
26. Business friendly
27. Connected through technology
28. Themed
29. Shopping local

## **Assets & Issues**

During the meeting, participants identified assets and issues that laid the foundation for the Comprehensive Plan goal statements and strategies. Results below:

### Assets

- Little Fork River – water & aesthetic
- Hwy 53 – main corridor – brings people
- Large employers (Comet, Zup's, DT businesses, resorts, hospital)
- Airport
- New sewer and water facilities
- Doug Johnson Park
- Wakemup Hill – nice views
- Small town atmosphere
- Strong community groups – NW arts, sports, Lions, Resort Association
- Industrial/business park and land availability
- Lakes & fishing
- Local foundation (Hwy one fund)
- Strong faith community
- Golf courses (Wolf Ridge/ Vermilion)
- Government offices – DNR/Forest
- Funeral home
- St. Louis County Transfer Station
- Youth
- Farms, farmer's market
- Mill
- Community Pride
- Northwoods School
- Restaurants
- Mesabi Trail – Vermilion Spur
- Music in the Park, Timber Days, Dog Race, 5K run, Bike event (Border to Border)
- Snowmobile/ski trail – well maintained

### Issues - Opportunities

- Safer crossings, walkway over 53
- Improve River – access, clean it, flood issues, improve recreation
- Deer eat gardens
- Fluoride is added to our water – banned in Canada and Europe
- City has a small tax base but services a larger area – (Provide figures on amount of annual sales, property tax – GIS) Some discussion about exempt property (Churches, Government)
- Bring back local police vs. the cost and perceived benefits of the service (Never had 24 hr. police – 8 hr. shifts)
- Hwy 24/115 intersection – improve aesthetic and safety
- Better street lighting
- More sidewalks/biking

- Low bridges
- Flooding/floodplain rules
- Town aesthetics/blight
- Get school back
- Lack of diverse housing
- 53 and railroad divides community
- More direct school – job opportunities
- Finish the Doug Johnson Park
- Swimming pool - lessons
- Better access to Wakemup Hill – trails, interpretation
- Preserve small town character – fear of over-expansion
- Sustainable growth
- Wilding – bio-diversity
- Farm practices
- Do not want to rely on Federal / state funding – sustainable economy
- Keep local businesses thriving
- More trails (10 foot wide)
- Recycling services – more convenient
- Harvest Moon Festival could come back – did have the event at one time
- Nursing home – assisted living
- Improve trails
- Improve government – instead of townships, city it's something else
- Wellness center
- Railroad safer crossings
- Better connectivity to Northwoods School
- Restaurants not open in evening

The next step in the Comprehensive Plan is to encourage the City of Cook to solicit responses to the community survey online.

During the next month ARDC will draft strategies and action steps to address identified issues.

The City and ARDC will schedule the next meeting in July to review drafted strategies.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business brought before the Council, motion to adjourn at 8:10 PM was made by Councilor Storm and second by Councilor Brunner. **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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Attest: Theresa Martinson, Administrator-Clerk/Treasurer