

Bennet Planning Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
April 17, 2024

The Bennet Planning Commission held a regular meeting on April 17, 2024 at 7:00 PM, at City Hall, 685 Monroe Street in the City. The session was open to the public and proceeded by advance publicized notice duly given in strict compliance with the provisions of the Open Meetings Act, Chapter 84, Article 14, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska by posting at the City Clerk Office, the Post Office, and First Nebraska Bank.

Chairperson Greg Pohl called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and announced the Open Meetings Act was posted. City Clerk/Zoning Administrator Michele Lincoln conducted roll call and recorded the minutes. Roll call: **Present:** Josh Buck, Kevin Hiatt, Greg Pohl, Marilyn Maney, Matt Tyler. **Absent:** Tyler Anderson. A quorum being present, and the meeting duly commenced, the following proceedings were taken while the meeting remained open to attendance by the public.

Hiatt moved and Maney seconded a motion to approve the February 21, 2024 regular meeting minutes. Roll call: Hiatt, Buck, Pohl, Maney, Tyler voted yes. Motion carried.

Jordon Bang, District Manager, and Terry Kuhl, Assistant Manager, of the Lancaster County Rural Water District #1 attended the meeting to share the water capacity situation with the Planning Commission. Bang explained that the Rural Water District sells water to the City of Bennet, Roca, and Panama in bulk by contract. Bennet's purchase agreement is for about 6 million gallons a month (actual agreement states 180,000 a day) and not to exceed 150 gallons per minute. Lancaster Rural Water does not have the capacity to offer more water. They have had a moratorium in place since 2021. Their 1857 service connections use an average of 11 million gallons a month from October through March and average 33 million a month from May through September. Some customers are using 120,000 to 300,000 gallons a month. This excessive non-household use is a problem from coast to coast and is what has them at maximum capacity. When engineers calculate potential usage for long range plans, they figure 200 gallons per person, not excessive lawn watering or pools. To increase their capacity, they would need additional infrastructure which they cannot fund. As a rural water district, they are not eligible for grants or forgivable loans as municipalities, so funding has to go through USDA. The only way for the water district to grow is to change legislation, so they would be eligible for grants and forgivable loans. Lancaster County gave the water district 2 million dollars of ARPA funds, which went to maintaining four different service areas. The Commission questioned the possibility of expanding their service if the City of Lincoln were to take over Cheney. Bang explained that the City of Lincoln wants to take over as long as customers are not involved. They are required to pay the water district \$340 per acre for undeveloped land but must pay \$7,000 for each existing customer. If they annex, they are not required to provide service for ten years. Water quality is a frequent complaint, but what the customers do not understand is what they are providing is raw well water. Again, grants are available for municipalities for water treatment, but not to the water district. Finding wells in the vicinity is pretty scarce, but Bang believes the City should investigate the feasibility of purchasing an acre or two by Pella Rd to drill a couple of test wells. If one were found that pumped 1500 gallons a minute, it could serve as the City's main water source, with the water district being a backup source.

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The Planning Commission had a brief discussion and review of a map showing potential infill development areas and the available lots left in the newer subdivisions. They questioned how many lots remained in Evergreen Place 1st Addition Corrected, Cedar Brook and Cochrane Corner Additions.

Keith Marvin of Marvin Planning Consultants (MPC) was in attendance to discuss the ETJ (Extra Territorial Jurisdiction) and Annexation, to review the Annexation Chapter and final review of the draft Comprehensive Plan. Marvin said that the Open House for the Comprehensive Plan was going to be Tuesday, April 23rd from 6-8pm and be a come and go event. UNL student MC Raterman who worked on the Downtown Economic Development Plan, will be attending to present his project which was a supplement to our Downtown Economic Development Plan showing streetscaping and park plans. Marvin shared that cities can annex land contiguous to its corporate limits, which is urban or suburban; how the land is valued determines the urban or suburban. The city is to provide a plan for extending services within one year. If a unilateral annex (without parcel owner permission) takes place, their recourse is to file in District Court. He recommends, if that does happen, to continue to the Supreme Court, which has a better understanding of primary locations. He also recommended not moving the ETJ for one year until after it is annexed. Marvin and the Commission reviewed the Future Land Use map, noting the prime areas for annexation and secondary areas for annexation.

Ryan Forney came to the Planning Commission seeking guidance on a plan to expand on-street parking for his business at 415 Fir Street.

Pohl moved and Buck seconded a motion to adjourn at 8:34 p.m. Roll call: Hiett, Buck, Pohl, Maney, Tyler voted yes. Motion carried.

Michele Lincoln, CMC
City Clerk/Zoning Administrator