



**Planning Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
May 2, 2024
6:30 PM**

North St. Paul City Hall – Council Chambers
2400 Margaret Street

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Patrick Blees called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

COMMISSION

Patrick Blees, Chair
Andrew Wise, Vice-Chair
Arthur Alvarez, Jr., Commissioner
Stephanie Kane-Burback, Commissioner
Elizabeth Gadbois, Commissioner
Cameron Muhic, Commissioner
Jim Rathe, Commissioner

STAFF/LIAISONS

Jason Nordby, City Council Liaison
Brandy Howe, Community Development Director
Chris Cherne, Planning Commission Secretary

III. ADOPT AGENDA

Blees asked for a motion to adopt the May 2, 2024 meeting agenda.
M/Rathe, S/Muhic.
Motion carried 7-0.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval of April 4, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Blees asked for a motion to approve the April 4, 2024 meeting minutes.
M/Muhic, S/Rathe.
Motion carried 7-0.

V. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

There were no public comments.

VI. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- a. Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance – Fences

Chair Blees opened the public hearing at 6:34 PM.

John Schmahl, 2750 Chisholm Avenue, stated that Chair Blees indicated the Planning Commission will not discuss walls at this meeting. Blees stated he would differentiate a wall from a retaining wall and recommended staff to make sure it gets addressed in the future. Mr. Schmahl stated that in Wisconsin a fence cannot be placed without a survey, but that is not the case in the City of North St. Paul. Later in the ordinance, there is a written agreement requirement between property owners for private fence connection. That would be a wonderful thing to keep peace. Mr. Schmahl reviewed the regulations on day care nurseries and schools, commercial properties, and questioned the enforcement of opacity requirements.

Chair Blees closed the public hearing at 6:52 PM.

Chair Blees indicated there could be language added that doesn't require a registered land survey, but that property corners be identified prior to construction of a fence. Muhic stated that it would make sense to require the property owner to locate utilities. Howe stated that it is an application requirement to call Gopher State One Call prior to fence installation. Muhic inquired about Sections 4 and 9 that both relate to day care and day nurseries and if it would make more sense to combine them or make them adjacent to each other. Howe stated that is a different discussion for the future as that relates to uses. Gadbois and Kane-Burback clarified that there are licensing requirements for day cares that would regulate fence height.

The Planning Commission agreed that the language underlined under Section 9 [If the property abuts a residential use, a fence shall be constructed in accordance with the regulations of §154.010(A)(11).] should be added after the first sentence of Section 8, and to strike "public streets and," and add the word "residential" between "adjacent" and "property" in the last sentence.

Wise stated that the resident that spoke during the public hearing indicated that the City should include language requiring the owner to visibly mark the property pins; however, if the pins aren't there, a survey would be required to place them. Alvarez stated a survey can be three to four thousand dollars, and the goal is to make the permitting process less prohibitive to property owners. Howe stated that issues are fairly rare. If there is an issue, it is a civil issue between neighbors.

Chair Blees asked for a motion to recommend approval of the amendment to the zoning ordinance to City Council with the modification to Section 8.

M/Gadbois, S/Alvarez.

Motion 7-0.

- b. Delaware Place (2329 17th Avenue)
 - 1. Rezoning from R-1 to R-2
 - 2. Preliminary Plat
 - 3. Planned Unit Development

Howe presented the staff report for the preliminary plat, preliminary Planned Unit Development (PUD), and rezoning from R-1 to R-2 of the subject property at 2329 17th Ave. The City issued an RFP in the spring of 2022 for development proposals, and City Council reviewed the proposals in August and December of 2023.

The project consists of 10 townhouse units across 1.5-acres. Each structure will contain 2 dwelling units across 2 lots. Four units will front Delaware, and the remaining 6 will front 17th Avenue. There will be designated open space area dedicated for stormwater, and it will be owned and maintained by an HOA.



The flexibility requested in the PUD application is for a few of the zoning requirements, including the minimum lot width and side yard setback for the R-2 district. The site is presently zoned R-1, but the project aligns with the R-2 standards. Staff reviewed the PUD application and found it aligned with the criteria. Some of the information was not available yet, as it will come with the final platting process. As a preliminary project, staff believes it meets the criteria and is consistent with the subdivision ordinance. Staff recommends the Planning Commission recommend approval to City Council of the preliminary plat, PUD, and rezoning applications, subject to the approval conditions.

Howe stated the applicants have gone to Ramsey County and received preliminary approval of the driveways. Howe clarified that there will be no wells, and the entire development will be connected to city water.

Chair Blees opened the public hearing at 7:22 PM.

Jack Cuchna, 2714 Chippewa Ave – Asked for clarification for the setback and lot width requirements and how the applicant can get around it. Howe stated the PUD approval allows for flexibility with the zoning ordinance. The applicant cannot develop the site without the rezoning, PUD and the preliminary plat. Mr. Cuchna stated that previous proposals included more dwelling units than the current proposed project. Mr. Cuchna expressed disappointment in the public hearing notifications being sent to properties within 350 feet of the subject property.

James Eng, 2704 Chippewa Avenue - Stated he received the notification letter, but Mr. Cuchna did not. Mr. Eng asked how wide the road going in will be, and if there be room for emergency vehicles. Mr. Eng asked how many fire trucks can go in and who will do snow removal. Mr. Eng stated there are only a couple of ways for Mr. Cuchna and him to get home, and questioned how they will get around if there are going to be a lot of kids or another school bus stop. Mr. Eng stated he is trying to figure out why they have to go through this process again when they shot this down several years ago. Mr. Eng asked about appearance and architectural standards. Howe stated that the architectural standard piece comes at the next step. Muhic stated that the HOA will maintain the green space and property. Mr. Eng stated he knows people who have an HOA and have issues with them.

Monica Cuchna, 2714 Chippewa Ave – Asked if on Delaware there will be 4 driveways and on 17th there will be 6. If there are 4 on Delaware with 2 on the other side, how will that work? Ms. Cuchna asked about the open space behind.

The developer, speaking from the audience, stated these townhomes are single level and mostly for seniors. This project is similar to the Kari Ln townhomes, where the youngest owner is in their 50s. There won't be a playground in the backyard, and the space would be left for the people. The developer indicated that the homes would be sold as they go and the project will take about a year and a half. The valuation would roughly be about \$500,000. The developer stated that this HOA would be responsible.

Chair Blees closed the public hearing at 7:45 PM.

Alvarez asked if it is possible to have project developers involved in an informal meeting or community discussion. Howe stated community meetings should occur for future projects. Blees stated it may be worth having an informal neighborhood discussion aside from the formal public hearing.

Chair Blees asked for a motion recommending approval of the preliminary plat, PUD, and rezoning applications to City Council based on the conditions in the staff report and engineering report.

M/Muhic, S/Alvarez
Motion carried 7-0.



VII. REPORTS

Nordby thanked the Planning Commission for all of their hard work.

Wise thanked Howe and wished her well on her next adventure.

Howe thanked the Planning Commission for their work, and indicated that this Planning Commission is one of the best she has ever worked with.

Gadbois stated that Flyby Coffee at 2535 7th Ave E is now open.

Rathe thanked Blees for his hard work on letting people speak and provided kudos to Howe.

Alvarez stated that the Planning Commission could include an earlier notification and neighborhood discussion requirement within the PUD ordinance. As a municipality, it may be worth looking into inviting more. Blees stated perhaps this can be resolved with staff awareness or something in the ordinance. Alvarez thanked Howe for her hard work with the Planning Commission.

Muhic stated there are ways to get the news out besides mail and email. Howe concurred and indicated she once saw a physical sign at a construction site in River Falls indicating what is proposed and the meeting day and time.

Blees stated that the annual North St. Paul City Cleanup Day is May 11, 2024 from 8am-11am.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Blees asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:09 PM.

M/Rathe, S/Gadbois.

Motion carried 7-0.

The next regularly scheduled Planning Commission Meeting is Thursday, June 6, 2024 at 6:30 PM.

Members, please notify any planned absences to:

Chris Cherne
Planning Commission Secretary
651-747-2440
chris.cherne@northstpaul.org