

**CITY OF NORTH ST. PAUL
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, JUNE 6, 2019
6:15 P.M.**

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

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Barton called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

COMMISSION

Elaine Barton, Commission Chair

Michael Stahlmann, Commission Vice-Chair

Tom Sonnek, Commission City Council Liaison

Chris Bathurst, Commissioner

ABSENT

Rick Gelbmann, Commissioner

Trisha Hamm, Commissioner

John Wahl, Commissioner

Allan Worm, Commissioner

STAFF

Erin Perdu, City Planner

III. ADOPT AGENDA

Motion by Commissioner Worm, seconded by Commissioner Gelbmann, with all present voting aye (6-0), to adopt the June 6, 2019 Agenda.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Commissioner Gelbmann, and seconded by Commissioner Wahl, with all present voting aye (6-0), to approve the May 2, 2019 regular meeting minutes as submitted.

V. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Mark Huus, Architect Amcon Construction, Minnetonka, gave a presentation regarding the apartment complex development proposed for the former City Hall site, which is currently in preliminary design phase.

Mr. Huus stated the proposed structure was designed with the intent of maintaining the historic nature of the downtown area. He added a 3,000 square foot retail space is planned for one of the ground floor corner spaces, and many residents have expressed their desire for a restaurant. He

noted many amenities are proposed, including a patio on the east side of the building to open the space for pedestrian activity at the street level

Commissioner Worm asked what the timing is on the project, and what rents will be. Mr. Huus stated it is hoped that units will be available for rental within 12 months. Mr. Huus stated the proposed building will be a high-end development with amenities and underground heated parking.

Commissioner Wahl asked how waste management will be handled. Mr. Huus stated there will be waste depositories on each floor and a collection room at ground level.

Commissioner Stahlmann asked whether there will be sufficient parking available for the number of apartments. Mr. Huus stated the development will meet parking requirements.

Commissioner Gelbmann asked whether there is a potential for renewable solar energy. Mr. Huus stated that option was reviewed and was not pursued by the developer. He added it would be a nice amenity but it was a decision based on economics.

Chair Barton asked whether parking is a shared lot, 52 stalls, or part of the property. Mr. Huus stated the developer is working on parking areas, and there was some desire to connect the lots. He added there is a large driveway currently entering the site, and the curb line will need to be redesigned. He added parking and trees will be added to fill in the existing driveway area, and there is the possibility of parking across the street.

Chair Barton stated additional parking should be considered if there is a first-floor retail space. She added the requirement is 2 spaces per unit. Mr. Huus stated the proposal includes 1.6 parking spaces per unit. Commissioner Huus stated there is additional parking across Margaret Street. Mr. Huus agreed.

Chair Barton stated the Planning Commission had discussed reviewing parking requirements for new development. Ms. Perdu agreed that should happen soon.

VI. PUBLIC HEARINGS

Conditional Use Permit – Pawn Shop – 2231 11th Avenue E

Ms. Perdu presented this agenda item, stating a proposed pawn shop to be located in Polar Plaza is allowed via CUP due to the recently adopted Ordinance regulating pawn shops. She added City Staff have found the pawn shop use to be consistent with Comprehensive Plan guidance for this area, and compatible with adjacent properties. She noted each pawn transaction will be recorded with the Police Department to be covered under a licensing fee.

Ms. Perdu stated the pawn shop will not represent any undue burden on City services and will not have a negative effect on nearby residential property. She added business hours are proposed

to end no later than 7:00 p.m. with no outdoor operations. She noted the draft signage plan appears to be in compliance with the City's sign Ordinance.

Ms. Perdu stated City Staff is recommending the CUP application be forwarded to the City Council for their approval.

Commissioner Wahl asked whether a requirement that window signage is not illuminated outside of hours of operation. He asked whether that is a City regulation. Ms. Perdu stated City Staff believed that requirement was appropriate in this case and the applicant is amenable to it.

Chair Barton asked whether the pawn transactions are electronically submitted to the Police Department.

A representative of Twin Cities Pawn (TCP) stated the entire operation is run electronically, and all pawn transactions are processed through a system set up by the Minneapolis Police Department.

Chair Barton opened the public hearing at 6:37 p.m.

There were no comments.

Chair Barton closed the public hearing at 6:38 p.m.

Commissioner Gelbmann stated smaller signs spread out over the whole frontage would have more impact than a larger sign concentrated in one space. He added this is in line with what the City is trying to achieve from its sign Ordinance. Chair Barton agreed, adding the signage would still need to meet requirements in the sign Ordinance.

Commissioner Worm asked how security will be handled. The TCP representative stated surveillance, motion sensors, 24-hour security lights and security bars will be utilized, and jewelry and other valuables will be locked in a safe when not on display. The Police Department will be involved on an as-needed basis.

Commissioner Stahlmann asked how the pawn process works. The TCP representative stated a representative of Twin Cities Pawn evaluates the item to be pawned and negotiates a price. He added customers have 90 days to re-claim the item. He noted a contract is signed by both parties.

Commissioner Gelbmann asked whether the area will be well-lit, and whether there are any restrictions regarding outward facing lighting. He added the exterior lights could shine into the adjacent wetland. The TCP representative stated exterior lighting will be directed at the north wall, and they are hoping to switch over to LED lighting soon.

Motion by Commissioner Hamm, seconded by Commissioner Worm, with all present voting aye (6-0), to recommend City Council approval of a Conditional Use Permit with the four conditions listed in the Staff Report.

Chair Barton stated this request will be reviewed by the City Council at their June 18, 2019 meeting.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

2557 12th Avenue – Variance (Corner Lot Side Setback, Lot Frontage, Lot Size)

Ms. Perdu requested that the Planning Commission make a recommendation to the City Council expressing their support of the transfer of City-owned property.

Motion by Commissioner Stahlmann, and seconded by Commissioner Gelbmann, with all present voting aye (6-0), to make a recommendation to the City Council that the land transfer is appropriate.

Ms. Perdu stated the applicant addressed the concerns expressed by the Planning Commission and City Council and resubmitted their plans. She added changes include more windows on the Margaret Street side of the proposed home, and garage and home lined up in the side-yard setback. She noted variances are being requested related to lot width, which is 41.4 feet on the survey rather than the required 60 feet, and side-yard setback, which would be 13.4 feet rather than the required 15 feet.

Commissioner Worm asked whether the alley is considered part of the square footage. Ms. Perdu stated the depth of the lot is 132 feet, with square footage of 5,127 square feet, as provided by the surveyor. She added the variance is being requested for the lot width, but the lot depth meets Ordinance requirements.

Commissioner Worm stated the actual square footage is 5465 square feet, or 41.4 feet x 125 feet. He added this actual square footage should be included in the Planning Commission's recommendation to the City Council.

Ms. Perdu stated she would be hesitant to change the area that was recorded on the survey and approve a variance that does not accommodate the actual area of the site. She added there is a piece of the property at its southeast corner where a pedestrian ramp encroaches on the property. City Engineer Morgan Dawley recommended that an easement dedication be requested for that portion of the property.

City Council Liaison Sonnek stated the revised plan reflected the correct lot dimensions, and the home design is much improved. Commissioner Stahlmann agreed, adding the home height has been raised and there are more windows on the Margaret Street side.

Joe Jablonski, Lennar Homes, stated the project will be great for the community, and there is a lot of excitement surrounding it. He asked whether the Commissioners have any questions about the proposed site plan.

Chair Barton stated she likes the lawn in the back, and the additional windows are nice.

Commissioner Stahlmann asked whether an additional 6-foot fence is proposed between the two buildings. He added there is an existing fence on the west side. Mr. Jablonski stated the fence is intended to provide privacy and safety for children in the backyard.

Chair Barton asked whether there is a landscaping plan. Mr. Jablonski stated a typical foundation landscaping plan is planned, including the front yard.

Commissioner Gelbmann asked whether there will be egress windows on the west side. Mr. Jablonski confirmed this.

Motion by Commissioner Hamm, and seconded by Commissioner Gelbmann, with all present voting aye (6-0), to recommend City Council approval of a variance to reduce the lot size requirement at 2557 12th Avenue E. to 5,127 feet.

Motion by Commissioner Wahl, and seconded by Commissioner Hamm, with all present voting aye (6-0), to recommend City Council approval of a variance to reduce lot width requirement at 2557 12th Avenue E. from 60 to 41.4 feet.

Motion by Commissioner Stahlmann, and seconded by Commissioner Gelbmann, with all present voting aye (6-0), to recommend City Council approval of a variance to reduce the side-yard setback on Margaret Street for the primary structure at 2557 12th Avenue E. from 15 to 13.4 feet.

Chair Barton stated this recommendation will be reviewed by the City Council at their regular meeting on June 18, 2019.

VIII. COMMISSION BUSINESS ACTION ITEMS & RECOMMENDATIONS

-None.

IX. REPORTS FROM STAFF

Ms. Perdu stated the Planning Commission's June 20, 2019 meeting will include two applications: Terry DeRosier and Window World, and the Burke alley vacation.

Chair Barton stated the Burke alley vacation also includes a public hearing related to the 6th Street subdivision. Ms. Perdu agreed.

X. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

City Council Liaison Sonnek stated the History Cruzers Car Show starts this Friday, June 7, 2019.

City Council Liaison Sonnek stated a June 20, 2019 groundbreaking is planned on the proposed home for veteran's families.

City Council Liaison Sonnek stated construction at the Anchor Block south development site is moving forward, with work commencing on the first two townhome units. He added the City Council's recent work session included a discussed about rearranging road construction projects to address 7th Avenue repairs from the proposed veteran's house to the new apartment complex and postpone the Casey Lake area project. He noted the 7th Avenue corridor is an important gateway to North St. Paul and needs to be updated, and traffic management addressed, especially at the 3rd Avenue intersection.

City Council Liaison Sonnek stated this has not been finalized, but the City Council discussed taking a look at what the City can handle and how road repairs will impact development over the next few years.

Commissioner Worm asked for City Council Liaison Sonnek's opinion on the new apartment complex in downtown North St. Paul. Sonnek stated he likes the location, and the creation of a center point in the downtown area. He added the complex, with 86 units, will bring many consumers to downtown area businesses. He added he hopes the proposed first floor retail space will be successful.

Ms. Perdu stated the first-floor retail proposal would fit in well with downtown retail, and the developer is conducting market studies.

Commissioner Worm stated he had asked the developer what the apartments will rent for. City Council Liaison Sonnek stated rents will probably be market rate for the downtown North St. Paul area.

Commissioner Stahlmann stated he would support the addition of more community spaces, as those types of amenities are usually available in higher end apartment complexes.

City Council Liaison Sonnek stated City Staff received a letter of support from Ramsey County regarding infrastructure changes at the Anchor Block north site.

Chair Barton asked whether the crosswalks are under the jurisdiction of the City, and whether the right turn on red could be eliminated from the exit ramp from eastbound Highway 36. Ms. Perdu stated she believes that would be the Department of Transportation. She agreed to look into that.

Chair Barton asked whether there are any updates on the tattoo shop on 7th Avenue. City Council Liaison Sonnek stated he has not heard any updates, and there is no deadline for them to open their shop. He noted their signage has changed.

Commissioner's Reports

Commissioner Gelbmann stated offshore treatment was completed at Silver Lake in mid-May, and more recently, onshore treatment was completed as well. He added some invasive plants were found that were significant, but not overwhelming. He noted a liaison worked with the City and the Silver Lake Association to ensure the process is streamlined.

Chair Barton stated three public hearings are scheduled for the City Council's June 18, 2019 meeting, including a public hearing regarding a PUD proposal from Window World at the Ace Hardware site.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, motion to adjourn by Commissioner Gelbmann, and seconded by Commissioner Worm, with all present voting aye (6-0). Motion carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:27 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled Planning Commission Meeting is Thursday, June 20, 2019 at 6:15 p.m.

Members, please notify any planned absences to: Olivia Boerschinger
Planning Commission Secretary
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