CITY OF NORTH ST. PAUL
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5, 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, Commissioner
Tom Sonnek, Commission City Council Liaison
Chris Bathurst, Commissioner
Rick Gelbmann, Commissioner — ABSENT AND EXCUSED
Trisha Hamm, Commission Vice Chair
John Wahl, Commissioner
Allan Worm, Commissioner

STAFF
Erin Perdu, City Planner
Olivia Boerschinger, Planning Secretary

III. ADOPT AGENDA

Chair Barton requested that Agenda Item 8 be moved to Agenda Item 7.

Motion to adopt agenda by Commissioner Stahlmann, and seconded by Commissioner Wahl, with all present voting aye (6-0). Motion carried to adopt the December 5, 2019 Agenda as amended.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve Minutes by Commissioner Wahl, and seconded by Commissioner Worm, with all present voting aye (6-0). Motion carried to approve the November 7, 2019 regular meeting minutes as submitted.

V. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

There were no comments.

VI. PUBLIC HEARINGS

a. Rezoning, Major Subdivision, and Planned Unit Development – 2242 7th Street N

City Planner Erin Perdu reviewed the Comprehensive Plan process, which is different from the Zoning Ordinance. The Comprehensive Plan is updated once every 10 years, looking 20 years into the future. She noted that process has just been concluded and will be referenced in the Staff Report on this agenda item.

Ms. Perdu reviewed three applications for townhomes at 2242 7th Street N: a subdivision to create new lots; rezoning from R-1 Single Family to R-2 Mixed Residential, and a Planned Unit Development (PUD). Planned Unit Developments allow flexibility from zoning regulations to allow for creative development that is more in line with the Comprehensive Plan than what the rules of the underlying zoning will allow.

Ms. Perdu stated the four parcels have frontage on 7th Street N and 6th Street, and the lot is heavily wooded, and located across from the Urban Ecology Center. The total size of the lot is 4.23 acres. The City's 2040 Comprehensive Plan identifies this area as one may have a changing land use in the future, to medium density residential zoning to meet the increasing demands for types of housing that are missing in North St Paul.

Ms. Perdu stated the proposal is for 6 duplex units and 2 four-unit buildings, a 22-foot wide private drive with access from 7th Street, and 3 new lots for single family homes on 6th Street. These single-family homes are another reason that the PUD is being proposed. The overall proposed density is 6.5 dwelling units per acre, which meets the zoning ordinance standards. A homeowner's association would take care of lawn maintenance and snow removal and each lot would be owner-occupied.

Ms. Perdu stated a deviation is being requested related to front yard surface, of which there is a limit of 40%, and the townhomes range from 50-60%. She added the front yards are small, there are shared driveways on the parcels, and they are a little wider than normal to accommodate guest parking.

Ms. Perdu stated the townhome lots have a higher lot coverage than what is required, with narrow lots and driveways spanning the front yard. Overall requirements are met.

City Council Liaison Sonnek asked whether the single-family homes must be included in lot coverage calculations, and whether they fit current R-1 standards. Ms. Perdu stated the percentage for the town homes ranges from 42-73% depending upon the side of the street, with an average of 50%.

Chair Barton asked how wide the driveways would be as that dimension is not listed on the plan. Ms. Perdu stated the driveways are shared, and they would be right on the lot line. She added

they comply with front yard surface requirements. She noted the footprints in the Block 2 development are larger than Block 1. She agreed to provide some calculations.

Ms. Perdu stated there is 500 square feet of open space per townhome due to a greater setback on the south side. The City Engineer has included several comments and revisions, including proposed onsite stormwater retention to prevent runoff onto surrounding properties. All utilities will be required to be located underground.

Ms. Perdu stated, in terms of landscaping requirements for the townhomes, the applicant will be required to plant 23 trees, as there will be significant tree removals on this site. City Staff have asked for information regarding specific tree removals, although there is no ordinance requirement for tree replacement. Details on grading plans and building placement would be required, as well as which significant trees can be saved. Ms. Perdu stated the owner agrees that the goal is to save as many trees as possible.

Ms. Perdu stated the City Engineer and Fire Chief have reviewed the plan, including the turnaround at the end of the driveway, access via the private road, shared driveways and attached garages. The Fire Chief has indicated the plan meets standards, and the City Engineer has provided additional comments related to grading, water retention areas, easement for sanitary sewer, and additional detail on the water main. City Staff recommends Planning Commission recommendation of conditional approval.

City Council Liaison Sonnek stated, in the R-2 District, this development proposal has relatively low density, and could potentially have higher density. Ms. Perdu agreed, adding there are 6.5 proposed units, and the R-2 District allows for up to 7.3 units per acre.

City Council Liaison Sonnek stated there could be complications for other developments if this townhome development is a low density for the R-2 district. Chair Barton stated zoning code changes will be reviewed to determine what is a reasonable building and lot size for townhomes that can still meet standards.

Chair Barton opened the public hearing at 6:58 p.m.

Chair Barton stated City Staff received 3 written responses from residents prior to the meeting.

Joann Kelly stated her property abuts the development on her western and southern borders, so her property will be greatly impacted. She added her property is included in the plans, which she does not appreciate. She questioned the assertion that there will be no impact on traffic or stormwater flow. She expressed concern about increased traffic.

Ms. Kelly stated there are many new developments in the City, including the Anchor Block townhomes development, that are more appropriate in the downtown area. She expressed concern that property values will be impacted. She expressed concern about the effect that construction will have on the wildlife at the Ecology Center.

Ms. Kelly requested clarification regarding the retaining pond for the townhome units, and whether it will empty into the pond on 6th Street. Ms. Perdu stated that is proposed to be a single collection area, with infiltration into an underground stormwater system.

Ms. Kelly stated she would like to be notified when tree removal starts. She added construction hours should be limited.

Chair Barton stated all the details will be handled by City Staff, and notices will be sent out to nearby properties.

Rob Aurelius, 2271 7th Street N, stated the developer is not showing respect for the land, the environment and the neighborhood residents. He added the survey did not identify significant trees. He expressed concern with this disrespect for the environment. He noted the first pair of units would be too close to the street.

Mr. Aurelius stated setback requirements would be met, but this is an established neighborhood, and townhomes would not fit in, and the proposed narrow road would not be pedestrian friendly. He added high density is appropriate in the City center, where there is higher population, and not in a heavily wooded neighborhood.

Rob Aurelius stated the single-family homes on 6th Street should be separate projects, with their own separate building permits.

Mike Kuhl, 2210 6th Street N, stated he is opposed to rezoning on 7th Street. He added he has lived on the street for over 40 years, and the single-family residential quality of the neighborhood has not changed. He expressed concern with rezoning that is not consistent with the neighborhood; density; and water run-off. He urged the Planning Commission to consider the impact on neighboring properties when making their recommendations.

Richard Hanson, 2213 South 7th Street, asked whether it will be a safety issue with the 6-foot deep pond and 12-foot high hill. He asked whether it will be fenced, and if it will be insured. He added people will park out on the street rather than on the private drive.

Christopher Bay, 2180 7th Street N, stated there is a lack of guest parking, and there will be a lot of parking on 7th Street. He added there is a lot of ground water in this area, and his sump pump has been running continuously. He noted he feels the addition of impervious space will cause more basements to flood.

Karen Ivers, 2202 Pond View Court, stated she lives to the south of the proposed development. She added she does not feel that the development follows any of the City's commitments to neighborhoods, character, and preservation of natural resources. She noted the numbers should be recalculated for the Planning Commission to truly understand the impact of the project.

Ms. Ivers stated this is a heavily wooded area with wetlands and green space. This development would eliminate the wildlife and the proposed pond will not be adequate to handle run-off from the proposed development. She noted home values will change significantly.
Shannon Ques, 2241 7th Street N, stated she is concerned about the large number of homes and increased traffic on the street. She added the proposed development will destroy a beautiful forest and plenty of wildlife. The additional 20-40 vehicles on the street is a major increase.

Jennifer Rouland 2302 7th Street N, stated she lives north of the proposed development and she gets a lot of stormwater runoff in her basement, and a pond develops in her yard. She added the Comprehensive Plan indicates a push toward multi-family homes like townhomes, and the types of homes that are currently missing in North St. Paul. She added some developments address that, like the new townhomes at Anchor Block. She noted multi-family development is appropriate there, close to major roads and amenities, and ample parking, and where the entire community can share in the burden and the risk.

Ms. Rouland stated this development, with the traffic impact focused on a single street, will cause traffic issues for both old and new residents. She added many residents chose to live in that neighborhood because of its large lot sizes. She added the loss of the character of the neighborhood would mean losing some of the identity of the people who live there.

Tom Witner, 2224 Pondview Court, stated he would be greatly impacted by this development, as he would have 4-5 townhomes butting up to his backyard. He added they purchased the property because of its privacy. He expressed concern that there will be no easement between his property and the new townhomes. Ms. Perdu stated the drainage and utility easement is not proposed to be changed.

Mr. Witner stated the trees will become vulnerable if you start taking them down, and other trees will die. He added the residents of the neighborhood are not happy with this proposal.

Dan Frank, 2199 6th Street N, stated his taxes have gone up in the past few years, and this proposed development means that his house will be worth even less. He added he does not want a lot of people in the neighborhood living in townhomes.

Bonnie Olson, 2273 6th Street, stated her family built their house 32 years ago, and was one of the first homes in the neighborhood. She added oak trees are very sensitive and destroying their root system can affect other trees as well.

Mary Colson Burns, 2261 6th Street, stated she has water problems constantly all year long. She added this new development would make the problems worse.

Steve Dewald, 2264 North 7th Street, stated he has lived in his home for 45 years, and he agrees with his friends and neighbors. He expressed his support of his neighbors who have come forward to speak.

Rebecca Lassit, 2208 6th Street, stated new families in the proposed townhomes will have to cut through other people's yards to gain access to the Ecology Center trails. She asked whether there will be an environmental impact study. Chair Barton stated an engineering study was completed, but an environmental study is not required.

Jerry Klaas, 2292 7th Street, stated they love the small-town feel of North St. Paul and they love their neighborhood. He added 20 new townhomes will destroy the nature and character of the neighborhood.

Wendy Klaas, 2292 7th Street, stated she loves her neighborhood and 20 townhomes will negatively impact their neighborhood. She asked how many people are allowed to live in a 1-mile radius. She asked whether Emergency Services access has been considered. She urged the Planning Commission not to support the request.

Angela Ocampo, 2247 7th Street N, stated she is concerned about construction noise during the process of developing the property. She added her house is right in front of the property, and she has small children.

Julie Hanson, 2213 7th Street N, stated she is concerned about safety and the loss of wildlife. She added there will be many additional cars, walkers, and bikers from the development. She noted cars never stay parked where they are supposed to. She asked the Commission to consider the character of this little corner of the City.

Jason Wales, 2318 7th street N, stated the inclusion of single-family homes in the development changes the numbers, and he does not appreciate that fact. He added this calls the development into question.

Nancy Dewald, 2264 7th Street N, stated she and her neighbors love the nature and quiet street. She added there is a home nearby for disabled adults who like to visit the Ecology Center, and do not have many other opportunities for being out in nature. She expressed concern for their safety. She thanked the Planning Commission for their time.

Chair Barton closed the public hearing at 7:43 p.m.

Ms. Perdu stated the Commissioners had raised the question of lot coverage requirements. She added none of the lots on Block 1 meet lot coverage requirements. She noted, on Block 2, lot 1 and lots 4-10 meet lot coverage requirements, and 2 lots at 50.2% are just above standard.

Ms. Perdu stated the density of the proposed townhomes would be 6.45 units per acre, with 20 units on 3.4 acres. She added, under the current R1 zoning, 18 single family homes would be allowable at that same density. She noted many of the concerns that have been expressed tonight would also apply to a development of single-family homes.

Commissioner Worm asked for the lot dimensions of 2242. Ms. Perdu stated the lot is 465 x 330 feet, or 3.4 acres.

Chair Barton stated many residents commented about nature in the area and the large number of trees that would be lost. She added it is a discussion topic, and of great concern. She added the City of North St. Paul does not have many urban forests. She asked whether a development of medium density lots would require extensive deforestation. She noted removal of a lot of trees is not in line with the City's resiliency goals.

Chair Barton stated she believes it is important for disabled residents to have access to the open space, as there are no other parks within a mile of this neighborhood.

City Council Liaison Sonnek agreed the retention of trees and forests are important in an urban city like North St. Paul. He added the goal of providing housing is a part of a regional effort to create greater density as the population grows. He added he understands the residents' concerns about adding a townhome development in their neighborhood. He stressed the importance of finding a balance.

City Council Liaison Sonnek stated he is also concerned about surface water and run-off. He added the new development in downtown North St. Paul at Margaret Street and 7th Street will mitigate surface water run-off as part of their project, installing underground holding tanks. He added there is potential to improve water issues with new developments.

Ms. Perdu agreed, adding City standards prohibit new development from creating additional run-off. She added the City Engineer could attend the next Planning Commission meeting to provide additional information. Chair Barton agreed that would be helpful.

Commissioner Wahl stated the City has some control over Planned Unit Developments. He added he understands the concerns about increasing density in the City using the few parcels that are left for redevelopment. He expressed his disappointment with the plans to clear-cut the property. He noted the development on 17th Street was based on residents' and Commissioners' concerns.

Chair Barton stated asked why it is necessary to rezone 2231 – 6th Street. Ms. Perdu stated that is not necessary under the PUD, and that could be corrected. She added PUD approval locks in the site plan, including the specific arrangement of proposed units.

City Council Liaison Sonnek asked why the single-family homes are included in the PUD. He added one single family home could be eliminated to create space for a potential private drive egress onto 6th Street. He noted traffic would have an alternative way in and out of the development. Ms. Perdu agreed the single-family homes do not need to be included in the PUD.

Commissioner Stahlmann stated he does not support putting in as many units as possible based on the R2 zone. He added the amended plans on 17th Avenue are a good example, adding a park

was added and additional trees, creating a positive attractive development. He noted he thinks this is the wrong way to go about this development.

Chair Barton stated concessions can be granted within the PUD to get public benefit. She added she does not see any public benefit in this proposal. She asked whether the zoning should go back to R1 because of the mature trees and forest canopy and consider how it can be developed without destroying the forest. She noted there would be more options if the property was not zoned R2. She expressed concern that environmental goals should be considered, as the purpose of the design section of the Code is to protect natural systems.

Commissioner Bathurst stated he would recommend separating the zoning of Block 1 and Block 2 but keep 6th Street zoned R1. He added there would be more possibilities for maintaining the ecosystem before moving forward with the PUD.

Commissioner Hamm agreed, adding the proposed PUD is too much development for the space, and the water issues need to be addressed, including the depth of the retaining pond.

Commissioner Stahlmann stated he would like to see the sidewalk situation addressed.

Chair Barton stated 6th Street is a Tier 2 area from 11th to Holloway. She added the water retention issue should be addressed by the City Engineer. She noted the entire neighborhood has major water problems and removing the tree canopy and mature trees will affect the entire neighborhood.

Commissioner Worm stated he supports leaving the area zoned R1 and having the developer come back with a plan that meets all the standards.

Ms. Perdu stated the Comprehensive Plan would have to be changed if the current zoning of R1 remains. She added there would be potential to develop the property as it is. She noted the purpose of the R2 zone and PUD request is to condense units and create higher density.

City Council Liaison Sonnek stated it would be a complicated process to change the Comprehensive Plan back to the way it was, and rationale would need to be provided as to why that is necessary.

Motion by Commissioner Bathurst, and seconded by Commissioner Stahlmann, with all present voting aye (6-0). Motion to table this topic to a date to be determined until additional information is received from the applicant.

City Council Liaison Sonnek requested that nearby residents receive notice of when this issue will be addressed again if the public hearing is tabled. Ms. Perdu agreed, adding public notice would be re-sent as it would be a new public hearing.

b. <u>Minor Subdivision, Preliminary Plat and Final Plat – 2300 McKnight Road</u>

Ms. Perdu reviewed the Preliminary and Final Plat request for minor subdivision at the City-owned Anchor Block North site at 2300 McKnight Road. The proposed subdivision would create 3 lots and a new public street, Anchor Drive, with no change to current MU3 zoning. All utilities are proposed to be constructed by the City as part of the redevelopment, and the new roadway connection has been reviewed by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT).

Ms. Perdu stated City Staff recommends Planning Commission recommendation of City Council approval of the preliminary and final plat.

Chair Barton opened the public hearing at 8:38 p.m.

There were no comments.

Close public hearing at 8:39 p.m.

Chair Barton requested that the Table 3 on page 104 related to proposed lot requirements should read "Mixed Use" and not "Residential".

Motion by Commissioner Stahlmann, and seconded by Commissioner Wahl, with all present voting aye (6-0). Motion to recommend City Council approval of a request for Preliminary and Final Plat for 2300 McKnight Road (Anchor Block North).

VII. COMMISSION BUSINESS ACTION ITEMS & RECOMMENDATIONS

a. Preliminary Planned Unit Development - 0 Burke

Ms. Perdu stated this is the second review of a request for preliminary PUD for 0 Burke to cover 2120 5th Street N and property with no address. She added the PUD would cover both parcels which are split-zoned R3 and MU3.

Ms. Perdu stated the Planning Commission requested clarification of a number of items at the first review of this request. She added the question of a vehicle turnaround area was reviewed by the Fire Chief, who comment that a turnaround is not necessary as the building will have a fire suppression system. She noted the required turning radius can be addressed at the final PUD.

Ms. Perdu stated the Planning Commission requested information about the open space and how it was evaluated. She added the open space would be shared between the two buildings, and 2500 square feet of open space is required. She added the applicant is proposing 3200 square feet which exceeds the requirement but might not meet the definition of usable open space.

Ms. Perdu stated the Planning Commission requested additional comments from the City Engineer regarding impervious surface. She added the City Engineer confirmed that all runoff

would be captured by a proposed stormwater system before it is discharged into the existing wetland.

Ms. Perdu stated City Staff recommends Planning Commission recommendation of approval to the City Council of the preliminary PUD, with issues to be addressed at the final PUD, including shared access and parking easement and wetland buffer restoration. Other issues to be addressed are screening of underground utilities, a developers' agreement, and relocation of plantings to help screen parking areas.

Ms. Perdu stated the City Engineer can be present at the final PUD to address questions regarding water quality.

Chair Barton stated there are no proposed additional sidewalks or walkways on the site plan. She added there are sidewalks from the existing garage to the existing building, but no sidewalks are proposed from the existing building to the new building. She added she would like to review that and accommodate pedestrians, including people with disabilities who use the ADA parking spaces.

Jim Graham, architect for the project, stated sidewalk access was included in the plans to link the existing patio and building to the walkway. He added other issues need to be addressed as well.

Commissioner Bathurst stated two areas of the property are graded for run-off to meet requirements, with a velocity of 2.5 feet per second and 4.7 feet per second. Ms. Perdu agreed, adding the City Engineer expressed concern in reviewing grading issues.

William Kostelnik, 2219 Eldridge Avenue, stated he works at an engineering firm, and he and a colleague were concerned about the drainage system when they looked at the plans. He added properties to the east including his property will have flooding issues. He noted the parking lot at the old animal hospital has been expanded due to water issues.

Ms. Perdu stated water mitigation requirements would be part of any approval.

Kathy Anderson, 2227 Eldridge Avenue, stated the berm has been removed from the northwest corner of the parking lot, and water will drain right into the wetland. She added the City created the wetland many years ago. She noted the phone box on the east side is dead due to water.

Chair Barton stated water is obviously an issue of concern that needs to be addressed. She added she is unsure whether there is enough accurate data about the wetland to come up with a plan.

Ms. Perdu stated wetlands are regulated by the Ramsey Washington Watershed District.

Motion by Commissioner Bathurst, and seconded by Commissioner Hamm, with all present voting aye (6-0). Motion to recommend City Council approval of Preliminary Planned Unit

Development for 0 Burke, with Conditions A-S as listed in the Staff Report, and the addition of Condition T – additional internal sidewalks.

Ms. Perdu stated the applicant must submit a final application that addresses the conditions in the staff report within a number of days. She added residents can contact the City Engineer with questions or comments.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

a. Parking Ordinance Discussion

Commissioner Wahl presented his findings regarding proposed revision of the City's parking Ordinance. He added he reviewed parking ordinances from many other local cities. He noted the Commission is not being asked to act on this tonight.

Commissioner Wahl requested the Planning Commission's consideration of the parking table on page 8. He added it is a challenge to make a recommendation about what size truck should be allowed in residential driveways. He noted the City of Maplewood allows exceptions for residents working in their driveway, and Little Canada includes a detailed diagram of where it is acceptable for residents to store items, which might be too restrictive.

Chair Barton asked whether any other cities differentiate between length and height instead of weight. Ms. Perdu stated the City of White Bear Lake has a regulation related to length.

Chair Barton stated the Planning Commission should consider whether to incorporate these changes into the parking ordinance. She asked how street parking of trucks is addressed. Ms. Perdu stated that would be part of the vehicle code and zoning code.

Chair Barton stated the Planning Commission had discussed an exemption for residences with driveways that are too short to park a car.

Ms. Perdu stated this issue can be reviewed again when the Planning Commission works on updates to the parking ordinance. Chair Barton agreed.

Chair Barton thanked Commissioner Wahl for his hard work and contributions.

IX. REPORTS FROM STAFF

X. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Chair Barton stated this meeting will be Commissioner Wahl's last meeting. She added Commissioner Wahl's input and comments will be greatly missed. She noted one of the first initiatives of his tenure was the alternative energy Ordinance that eventually was adopted.

City Council Liaison Sonnek thanked Commissioner Wahl for his service. He thanked Commissioner Wahl and all the Commissioners for their commitment and service.

Planning Secretary Olivia Boerschinger presented a gift to Commissioner Wahl in recognition for his service to the community.

a. Update from City Council Liaison

City Council Liaison Sonnek reviewed the City Council's last Regular Meeting, at which the City Council voted to eliminate dog and cat licenses from the fee schedule, as well as park building rental deposits. He added sale of the community center to Kokoro Volleyball School is still moving forward but nothing has been finalized. He noted Kokoro has agreed to honor the library's contract for rental space in the community center building.

Commissioner Worm stated he plans to remain on the Planning Commission for at least another 3-year term, or for as long as his health lets him continue.

Chair Barton requested that the City Council be encouraged to reinstate the EAC, in light of tonight's discussion regarding forestry and resiliency, as well as the City's open spaces.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, motion to adjourn by Commissioner Hamm, and seconded by Commissioner Bathurst, with all present voting aye (6-0). Motion carried to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled Planning Commission Meeting is Thursday, January 2, 2019 at 6:15 p.m.

Members, please notify any planned absences to:

Olivia Boerschinger
Planning Commission Secretary
651-747-2400
Olivia.boerschinger@northstpaul.org