

**CITY OF NORTH ST. PAUL
PLANNING COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, AUGUST 13, 2020
6:15 P.M.**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Barton called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. The meeting was conducted via Zoom.

II. ROLL CALL

COMMISSION

Elaine Barton, Commission Chair

Patrick Bles, Commissioner EXCUSED ABSENT

Rick Gelbmann, Commissioner EXCUSED ABSENT

John Monge, Commission Vice Chair

Tom Sonnek, Commission City Council Liaison

Michael Stahlmann, Commissioner

Allan Worm, Commissioner

STAFF

Erin Perdu, City Planner

Morgan Dawley, City Engineer

Olivia Boerschinger, Planning Secretary

III. ADOPT AGENDA

Motion to adopt agenda by Commissioner Stahlmann, and seconded by Commissioner Worm, with all present voting aye (4-0). Motion carried to adopt the August 13, 2020 Agenda.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There were no minutes to approve.

V. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

There were no comments.

VI. PUBLIC HEARING

- A. Preliminary/Final Planned Unit Development, Preliminary/Final Plat for development of 12 townhouse units at 2239 17th Avenue E.

City Planner Erin Perdu reviewed a request for consideration of proposals related to the Delaware Place townhome development application. The concept was approved by the Planning Commission in October 2019, and the City has since renegotiated the purchase agreement which was finalized in March 2020 at which time the deadline was set for August 18, 2020 to finalize approvals for the project. City Staff has met with the developer numerous times, including most

recently on July 21, 2020 to review submittal timelines and expectations, as nothing new had been received. This special meeting has been scheduled as it was past the deadline for the Planning Commission's regular meeting in August.

Ms. Perdu stated City Staff and consultants have been very accommodating toward the applicant and this development. She added details and information have been received by City Staff up until the last minute and continue to get more details. She noted City Staff will do the best they can to communicate the plans and review what has been received so far.

Ms. Perdu stated the development would be located on one parcel on the northeast corner of 17th Avenue and Delaware Avenue, with frontage on both streets. The 2.5-acre parcel is zoned R2, and it is surrounded by detached single family homes. The Comprehensive Plan guides this area for Medium Density Residential with 5.6-12 units per acre. The townhomes will be arranged in two unit attached buildings, and an Outlot A covers the private roadway and stormwater drainage utility, while Outlot B is proposed to be dedicated back to the City for public open space. The private road is 28 feet wide on the east-west portion, and 24 feet on the north-south portion.

Ms. Perdu stated the site plan calls for 12 duplex townhome units, with 1 of the 2-unit buildings having access directly from Delaware Avenue. The developer is requesting deviations related to lot and building setback requirements. The City has flexibility with granting deviations under the PUD.

Ms. Perdu stated the impervious lot cover on the site is 29.7% compared to a maximum allowed amount of 40%. She added there would be a deviation for individual lots, as well as side yard setbacks, lot coverage, front yard surfacing, height and minimum livable space.

City Council Liaison Sonnek asked whether the total lot coverage includes Outlot B. Ms. Perdu confirmed this.

Ms. Perdu stated the proposed density is consistent with the requirements of the R2 District and Comprehensive Plan. She added requested relief from dimensional standards will accommodate attached units and Outlot A with stormwater and access drive. She noted that is a common request in a PUD.

Ms. Perdu stated the townhome units will have 1,180 square feet of open space which is calculated separately from the public park dedication. She added a minimum of 500 square feet is required. She noted City Staff is recommending a paved access path to the open space. Open space requirements are met in this plan.

Ms. Perdu stated, with regard to landscaping, only 12 trees are required for the 12 residential units, and 28 trees are provided. Two trees on the site plan located within stormwater drainage areas will need to be moved. Additional landscaping is recommended at the rear of the units that face 17th Avenue.

Ms. Perdu stated the 1-story units show HVAC units on the side that are not screened, and would need to be screened per Ordinance. She added trash pickup is would be for each individual unit with containers stored inside the garages.

Ms. Perdu stated City Staff received details on lighting for the 2-story units but not the 1-story units. She added wall-mounted garage-front lighting on the units is the only lighting proposed on the site plan. She noted it is anticipated that these will be typical residential style outdoor lights.

Ms. Perdu stated the previous plan showed sidewalks connecting units with their individual driveways and that is not shown in this version of the site plan. She added that will need to be cleared up by the applicant. She added City Staff have requested a sidewalk to the entrance of the development on Delaware, to connect to the pathway that leads to the open space.

Ms. Perdu stated parking requirements are met as each unit has a 2-car garage. Additional visitor parking would be accommodated in driveways or on the private road, which has been widened.

Ms. Perdu stated bike parking is required because this is multi-family development, which is 10% of the vehicle parking stalls, or 2 spaces. She added there is plenty of room for bike parking on driveways and in garages.

Ms. Perdu stated the private drive would be between 24-28 feet wide in different locations. City Staff did not feel there would be congestion or safety issues for residential streets in the area.

Ms. Perdu stated City Staff received details on building materials for the 1-story units, but not the 2-story units. She added the style that is proposed is consistent with the residential character of the neighborhood. She noted the rear facades that would be visible from 17th Avenue are designed with covered porches and windows so they would have a similar look to a front façade.

Ms. Perdu stated the site plan shows all the buildings with the same setback and no variation. She added City Staff recommends variation in the setbacks to provide visual interest. She noted the applicant would need to provide additional information regarding unit placement on the lots.

City Engineer Morgan Dawley reviewed engineering requirements that have been determined after conversations with the applicant, including stormwater calculations which are not complete. He added, however, the applicant provided this information in previous versions of the application. He noted the applicant will need to complete the stormwater calculations between now and City Council consideration.

Mr. Dawley stated a condition of approval is that the proposed City access to Outlot B would be paved with a curb cut or something similar. The park would need to be transferred to City ownership in the developer's agreement. He added a hydrant is requested to be moved to the north, and more than minimal patching on Delaware will be required after utilities are installed. He noted existing easements on the property will need to be vacated

Mr. Dawley stated a section of 17th Avenue will need to be dedicated to Ramsey County to show consistency to the east and west in terms of overall corridor on either side of this development. He added there is a possibility that changes will be required to the final plat after Ramsey County's review.

Mr. Dawley stated, from an engineering standpoint, there is a fair amount of work to be done because of the compressed time frame. He added he recommends that the Planning Commission request that the developer and the developer's engineer confirm where they are in the plans, now that all comments have been clearly communicated, and do they have the ability to quickly address concerns.

Ms. Perdu stated, based on overall plan, the application meets the intent of earlier concept approvals. She added there are many details to cover and issues that are not finalized. She noted it is the sentiment of the City that work should begin on the site this fall, and the developer's agreement should be in place in September with permits issued by October 1, 2020.

Ms. Perdu stated City Staff recommends that the Planning Commission recommend City Council approval with conditions. She reviewed the conditions of approval: developer's agreement by September 2020; permits by October 1, 2020; all engineering comments addressed; sidewalk between 17th and Delaware project entrance; paved pathway to access public open space; light fixture details; screening for HVAC units; setback/façade variation; move landscaping out of drainage and utility areas as determined by City Engineer; confirmation of hydrant locations; all necessary permits from watershed, MPCA and MDH; water/sewer publicly owned, stormwater management privately owned; stormwater management and maintenance agreement; individual refuse containers for units; Ramsey County review of final plat; Ramsey County right-of-way dedication for 17th Avenue; existing drainage and utility easements vacated and recorded prior to recording final plat; permanent drainage and utility easements dedicated on final plat; Outlot B dedicated in ownership to City; and permanent drainage and utility easements dedicated to City over all of Outlot B.

Chair Barton requested input from the applicant on their progress on site plan updates, and whether they can meet the time frame.

Karen Keenan, the developer's engineer, thanked City Staff for their hard work and support. She added she knows this is a tight time frame, and she appreciates their responsiveness. She noted they are working hard to get all the comments addressed, and will submit updated plans on Monday August 17, 2020, incorporating the issues and comments that have been expressed tonight.

Ms. Keenan showed the site plan with grading, including the stormwater quality basin. She added the sidewalk connection will be made from the corner of 17th Avenue and Delaware Avenue going north, to connect to the private road into the site.

Commissioner Worm asked whether trees will be planted on Outlot B. Ms. Keenan stated no landscaping is proposed at this time. She added her understanding is that will be a passive park.

Chair Barton stated that area would be dedicated to the City, so the City could plant trees.

Commissioner Stahlmann asked what materials will be used for the base of the water basin. Ms. Keenan stated there will be plantings on the side slopes and a mix of materials in the bottom. She added she can provide greater details on that issue.

Commissioner Stahlmann asked how wide the pathway to the open space will be, and whether it will have a base.

Mr. Dawley stated it will be a paved path that will cross over the emergency flood control area, which are critical elevations. He added it will be wide enough to be accessible for vehicles, but the pond may restrict City vehicles from reaching the sewer line and the pond area. He encouraged the developer's engineer to work on this issue. He noted the path would have a gravel base and asphalt top and would be approximately 10-12 feet wide.

Commissioner Stahlmann asked whether the stormwater basin will be more of a water garden, or if it will have a rock base. He added there is an area near the North St. Paul Snowman that has a gravel base, and it is not appropriate for an area where there will be kids playing. He noted he would be more comfortable with a garden area with wildflowers and plantings.

Mr. Dawley stated stormwater areas are usually planted with vegetation and plantings that are tolerant of occasional flooding. He added it would usually not be a rock or gravel basin. He noted other similar basins are older, and more recent designs do not follow that aesthetic, but the developer may have to inform the City Council on that issue.

Chair Barton asked which of the units are 1-story and which are 2-story.

Ms. Keenan stated the 1-story units are in the northwest corner, and 2-story units run along 17th Avenue.

Paul Bruggeman, the developer, stated the building materials will be similar on both the 1-level and 2-level plans. He added no stone is planned for any of the units. He noted it has not been determined where buildings will go in relation to each other, and that is why he included three separate elevations in the site plans, for consideration.

City Council Liaison Sonnek asked why the review was rushed and last minute. He added engineering notes were given in the fall of 2019.

Mr. Bruggeman stated he does not have an answer for that question.

Ms. Perdu stated she and Mr. Dawley have been in touch with Mr. Bruggeman periodically throughout the past several months to check in on his progress.

City Council Liaison Sonnek stated the trail leading to the open space will be for pedestrians and bikes, but also City equipment and vehicles. He added the path will connect with the private drive, which will not have public parking. He asked whether it will be okay for neighborhood children to walk down the private drive to get to the path, and whether there will be any signage.

Mr. Dawley stated there has not been any discussion about wayfinding for this park. He added these are valid points that should be considered. The private drive and path to the outlot are encompassed in easements to the City for drainage and utilities. He noted reference to the public space should be included in the developer's agreement, allowing for access for maintenance and drainage purposes, but also for public recreation.

City Council Liaison Sonnek stated the Parks & Recreation Commission should be made aware of the open space as it will be public property for public use. He added a sign should be added that indicates the area is open to the public, just to make it clear.

Commissioner Monge agreed, as it may seem as though the space is part of the development and only available for use by the residents of the development.

Mr. Dawley stated how the park will be dedicated to the City is unknown at this time. He reiterated that access should be clarified in the developer's agreement.

City Council Liaison Sonnek stated exceptions that were added to R-2 zoning requirements may affect this site plan. He added lot size area and density were added as exceptions.

Ms. Perdu stated the zoning requirements have not yet been modified, so this development is being reviewed against current standards. She agreed the density is on the low end of what is recommended in the Comprehensive Plan, and the site layout meets the intent of the Ordinance.

City Council Liaison Sonnek expressed concern about setback allowances in corner and side yards as shown on the site plan. He added they appear to be 9-14 feet, where 25 feet is required. Ms. Perdu stated the setbacks do not include common areas that are being dedicated, and setbacks are measured from the smaller lots, which is why setbacks are reduced. She added setback measurements to the houses to the east have not been received from the developer, but she believes the rear yard setback is 17 feet. She noted setbacks are measured from the property line, but there is the additional area of open space.

City Council Liaison Sonnek asked what the setbacks will be compared to homes across Delaware Avenue to the east. Ms. Perdu agreed to pull that information up on the screen.

Commissioner Monge asked whether there will be a fence delineating the open space and defining property lines. Ms. Perdu stated that is one of the conditions, that the pathway be screened with fence or landscaping extending to the length of the park.

Chair Barton stated, on page 6 of the staff report, related to lot coverage, the requirement in the R2 district is 50%, and not 40% as listed in the Table 4. Ms. Perdu agreed to verify that.

Chair Barton stated the other two units on Delaware Avenue fall below front and sideyard setbacks fall below the requirement. Ms. Perdu confirmed this.

Ms. Perdu stated setbacks vary, so additional right of way will be dedicated along with this plat, with a range from 25 feet – 30 feet. She added some are tight to the right of way, which is fairly large.

Chair Barton opened the public hearing at 7:20 p.m.

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There were no comments.

Chair Barton closed public hearing at 7:22 p.m.

Chair Barton stated condition #6 related to access should be amended to clarify that it is not just for service vehicles but also for pedestrian access to the open space. Ms. Perdu agreed. Mr. Dawley recommended that a statement be included that legally defines “public access”.

Chair Barton stated it will be necessary to see whether the access path will affect impervious surface percentages, before this is reviewed by the City Council.

Mr. Dawley stated the path will not have an effect on impervious surface requirements, but it will need to be included in the stormwater management plan.

Chair Barton stated condition #8 in the staff report relates to screening for HVAC and other proposed equipment or service areas. She added that language should be added to the condition. Ms. Perdu agreed.

Chair Barton asked whether the condition related to setbacks relate to the lots that have their rear yard facing 17th Avenue. Ms. Perdu confirmed this, adding information was received tonight from the developer that they are intending to use different elevations on those units.

Chair Barton requested that condition #9 be changed to read “variation in façade/elevation design”. Ms. Perdu agreed.

Barton requested input from Commissioners.

Commissioner Monge stated he is looking forward to the development. He added he drives on 17th Avenue every day, and he looks forward to having some beautiful new homes instead of empty lots.

Commissioner Stahlmann stated he likes the plan, and he is looking forward to it as well.

Commissioner Worm asked what will happen when someone drives down the private road to get to the park. Chair Barton stated that is related to the issue of park access via the private road, which City Staff and the developer will need to review.

Commissioner Monge asked whether there will be street parking, and signage. He added there will be on-street parking on 17th Avenue and Delaware Avenue.

Mr. Bruggeman stated a sign can be placed at the head of the trail, stating it is “Delaware Park”, and no motorized vehicles are allowed. He added there will be street parking on the north side of the private road, but only for residents and their guests.

Mr. Dawley confirmed there will be street parking on one side of the roadway where it is 28 feet wide.

Commissioner Monge requested clarification about the open space, and whether it is a passive park. Ms. Perdu stated that is up for discussion and will be reviewed by the Parks & Recreation

Commission. Chair Barton stated it would be a small passive park that will not draw a lot of people.

Mr. Bruggeman stated he believes it was set up to be a passive park.

Commissioner Worm asked whether trees will be planted. Ms. Perdu stated it will be a City park, so the City will have control of the area and will be able to plant trees.

Commissioner Worm stated he really likes the layout of the development. He added he is looking forward to seeing the finished product, which will add a lot to the neighborhood.

Ms. Perdu stated Chair Barton was correct that lot coverage in the R2 district is 50%, so not every lot in the proposed development exceeds the standard.

City Council Liaison Sonnek stated the proposed elevations look good, and the design will be nice in the neighborhood.

Ms. Perdu stated condition #6 can be revised to ensure that the parkway is defined in the conveyance documents and/or development agreement as open for bikes and pedestrian access to open space.

Ms. Perdu stated condition #9 will be changed to read “variation in elevation or façade design” rather than variation in setbacks.

Chair Barton requested that condition #8 be changed to language related to service area.

Motion by Commissioner Monge, and seconded by Commissioner Worm, with all present voting aye (4-0). Motion carried to recommend City Council approval with conditions for Preliminary and Final Planned Unit Development for development of 12 townhouse units at 2239 17th Avenue E.

Motion by Commissioner Worm, and seconded by Commissioner Monge, with all present voting aye (4-0). Motion carried to recommend City Council approval with conditions for Preliminary and Final Plat for development of 12 townhouse units at 2239 17th Avenue E.

Chair Barton stated this application will be reviewed by the City Council at their August 18, 2020 meeting.

Mr. Bruggeman thanked the Planning Commission for their time, adding he appreciates their input.

VII. COMMISSION BUSINESS ACTION ITEMS & RECOMMENDATIONS

-None.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

-None.

IX. REPORTS FROM STAFF

-None.

X. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

City Council Liaison Sonnek stated there is a lot of construction and development going on around town, in the downtown area and in the Anchor North development. He added the City Council is getting into budget discussions. He noted 8 residents have filed for candidacy for 2 City Council seats.

Commissioner Worm requested that the Planning Commission receive a regular update on applications and projects that were approved in the past.

Chair Barton stated there will be an Open House at the new Veteran's Home across from Veteran's Park on Saturday August 15, 2020. She added details about Saturday's events can be found on the City's website.

City Council Liaison Sonnek stated the 5-year anniversary of Veteran's Park will also be celebrated that day at Veteran's Park. He added the new Veteran's home looks great.

Chair Barton encouraged people to sign up on the City website to get weekly email notices from City Communications Staff.

Chair Barton stated the Planning Commission's next meeting is scheduled for September 3, 2020.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, motion to adjourn by Commissioner Worm, and seconded by Commissioner Monge, with all present voting aye (4-0). Motion carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled Planning Commission Meeting is Thursday, September 3, 2020 at 6:15 p.m.

Members, please notify any planned absences to: Olivia Boerschinger
Planning Commission Secretary
651-747-2400
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