

**MINUTES OF THE  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION  
CITY OF EDINA, MINNESOTA  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
FEBRUARY 11, 2015  
7:00 PM**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**II. ROLL CALL**

Answering the roll call were: Hobbs, Scherer, Schroeder, Lee, Seeley, Halva, Olsen, Carr, Forrest and Platteter

**III. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA**

Chair Platteter asked if there were any additions or corrections to the agenda; being none, Chair Platteter ordered the February 11, 2015 agenda filed as submitted.

**IV. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

Commissioner Carr moved approval of the January 14, 2015 meeting minutes. Commissioner Hobbs seconded the motion. All voted aye; motion carried.

**V. COMMUNITY COMMENT:**

Chair Platteter opened public comment.

Lori Grotz, 5513 Park Place, addressed the Commission and informed them in her opinion the new house being built at 5509 Park Place is being constructed too tall.

Jim Grotz, 5513 Park Place, agreed with Lori Grotz that the neighboring house is being constructed too tall and with graphics highlighted the areas he has issue with.

John Crabtree, 5408 Parklawn Avenue addressed the Commission and stated in his opinion it would be best if the City put a "stop" on demo and new building permits until the issue is resolved on how/where to measure building height is clarified.

Chair Platteter asked if anyone else would like to speak to the issue; being none, Commissioner Olsen moved to close the public hearing. Commissioner Carr seconded the motion. All voted aye; public hearing closed.

Commissioner Scherer commented that she finds the topic raised by Lori and Jim Grotz and John Crabtree interesting.

Chair Platteter said the ordinance was recently amended and pointed out when ordinances change there are always unintended consequences.

## **VI. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

### **A. Variance. Andrew Alkins. 4000 Hazelton Road, Edina, MN.**

#### **Staff Presentation**

Planner Teague reported that Andrew Akins is proposing to add two surface parking lots to the existing apartment building located at 4000 Hazelton Road. To accommodate the request, the following variances are required:

- *Front street setback variances from 20 feet to 1, 2 and 12 feet; and*
- *A side yard setback variance from 10 feet to 5 feet.*

Teague explained that the site exists today with a 3-story, 16-unit apartment building with two detached garages that total 16 stalls. Each unit contains two bedrooms. Currently there are no surface-parking stalls on the site. Tenants of the building complain that there is not enough off-street parking stalls associated with the apartment. Some residents are forced to park on the street. With the winter parking ban on the street, this becomes problematic for residents. Continuing Teague said there is an existing triangular shaped pool on the west side of the building that is in a very poor state of repair. The applicant is proposing to remove the pool and construct a new surface lot, and add additional surface parking stalls adjacent to the detached garages. In all, the applicant is proposing 13 new surface parking stalls for the residents of the building.

Planner Teague concluded that staff recommends approval of the requested variances for 4000 Hazelton Road subject to the following findings:

1. There are no surface-parking stalls on the site today.
2. City Code requires 12 surface parking stalls, based on the 16 unit apartment building.
3. There is no room on the site to construct the required stall without the need for variances.
4. The practical difficulty is caused by the small size of the lot and the location of the existing building and detached parking garages.
5. The proposed request is reasonable given the large green space located within the right-of-way and between the proposed parking lot on the west side of the building and the drive-aisle on the adjacent property to the north.

Approval is also subject to the following Conditions:

1. The site work must be consistent with the plans date stamped January 12, 2015.
2. The Final Landscape Plan must meet all minimum landscaping requirements per Chapter 36 of the Zoning Ordinance, and subject to review and approval of the city forester.
3. Compliance with all of the conditions outlined in the director of engineering's memo dated February 5, 2015.
4. Review and approval of the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District.

### **Appearing for the Applicant**

Andrew Akins, applicant and Roger Anderson, surveyor.

### **Discussion**

A discussion ensued with Commissioners noting their goal of limiting the view of parking lots from city streets and raising the following questions and concerns:

- Can over-story trees and vegetation be planted on the right-of-way- and if so would the plantings have the ability to screen the hard surfaces being introduced.
- Is lighting proposed?
- Is the impervious surface on the site increasing?
- Does the site have too many curb cuts?
- Is there a limit on how many curb cuts are permitted on a site?
- Headlight wash internally and externally.
- Turn radius for vehicles; especially farthest parking stall.
- Existing looped driveway; can it be widened to accommodate more parking.

### **Applicant Presentation**

Mr. Atkins addressed the Commission and explained to the Commission he purchased the subject property in 2013 and after purchasing the property he found out on-street parking was prohibited in Edina during the winter months. He noted when the apartment complex was originally built most couples only had one vehicle; however, now if a couple is renting a unit there are two vehicles; not one. Akins reported that an enclosed garage parking space is provided on site for each unit; however there is minimal visitor or tenant parking. Continuing, with the aid of graphics Akins pointed out the pool area and the existing trees around the pool area, adding in his opinion there won't be much of an increase in impervious surface because the proposal includes filling in the existing pool to create the much needed off-street parking.

Roger Anderson explained the proposed location and functions of the infiltration areas and informed the Commission they have applied for a 9-Mile Creek Watershed District permit. With regard to vegetation Anderson explained that they are open to suggestions from the Commission; however, near entrances/exits the height of the vegetation needs to meet clear view standards. Concluding, Anderson pointed out there is a decorative fountain located in the looped driveway area that is part of the architectural era of the building that they would like to

keep. He further reported that driveway is used as a drop off /pick up area for residents, deliveries, etc.

### **Discussion**

Commissioner Scherer said to her getting vehicles off the street is a plus; however, she acknowledged it's a difficult site; it's not an ideal solution; but, in her opinion it's better for the neighborhood to have off street parking. Scherer concluded that with an increase in vegetation she can support the proposal as presented.

Commissioner Forrest asked the applicant if he ever considered putting the parking in the rear. Mr. Anderson responded it is difficult to get behind the building.

The discussion continued on how to achieve surface parking with Commissioner Schroeder suggesting that the proposed west parking area (pool area) be moved closer to the street. Schroeder pointed out if the parking stalls are moved farther to the west the last parking space would be easily navigated versus the present situation. Mr. Anderson responded when he approaches a project he tries to minimize or eliminate the need for variance. He added he would be happy to slide the parking area farther to the west. The discussion ensued with Commissioners in agreement that with proper landscaping and sliding of the parking area closer to the street (west) a better product would be achieved; not perfect, but one that the Commission could support.

### **Motion**

**Commissioner Carr moved variance approval based on staff findings and subject to staff conditions to include the additional conditions of adding shrubs to screen lots from street view (The applicant is to work with the City Engineer to develop a plan that would include appropriate plantings in the City right-of-way); and moving the west parking area closer to the street. Commissioner Scherer seconded the motion. All voted aye; motion carried.**

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## **VII. REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **A. Update of 2015 Work Plan**

Chair Platteter asked Planner Teague to address the 2015 Work Plan.

Planner Teague reported that he revised the 2015 Work Plan by moving the "earmarked" small area plan study for the 70<sup>th</sup> and Cahill area to 2016-2017 and in its place initiate a small area plan or density plan study for the Greater Southdale area.

Chair Platteter explained this seemed like the perfect time to implement this study. He reported that currently a study is being done in this area on sewer capacity and transportation and piggy backing the land use element makes sense.

Planner Teague agreed he reported the City Council is conducting a work session with the Planning Commission on February 17<sup>th</sup> and at that time the Council and Commission can discuss details of the small area plan.

2015 Work Plan approved with revision.

## **IX. CHAIR AND COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENTS**

Commissioner Lee asked Commissioners to refer to the Wooddale Valley View Small Area Plan draft that was included in the packet. Lee said the plan is in the “comment” period, adding she would like Commission comments on the draft plan either this evening or via e-mail by Tuesday, February 17<sup>th</sup>.

Chair Platteter asked if the draft plan was posted on the city’s website. Lee responded in the affirmative. Continuing, Lee stated the goal of the plan was to provide a useful, accessible and easy to understand plan. Commissioner Forrest reiterated that the plan is still considered in “draft form” with further “tweaking” needed to produce the final draft. Forrest said all comments are welcome, content, readability, etc. Forrest did note they are also in the process of gathering all the appendixes that will complement and support the text and the document.

Chair Platteter thanked Commissioners Lee and Forrest for their work and referred to page 29 of the draft plan that addresses building height limits. Platteter pointed out that the plan needs to be realistic in building heights; noting that allowing up to four stories isn’t necessarily 48 feet; especially with commercial. Platteter said it is not uncommon to have a first floor retail ceiling height of 20-feet. He further noted on the majority of new projects there will be electrical and mechanical equipment that also need to be considered to accommodate height. Concluding, Platteter said he just wants the task force to be aware of what realistically would work in this neighborhood node. He said in his experience having a height limit may not achieve what’s intended.

Commissioner Schroeder said he agrees with Chair Platteter’s observation, adding design and layout in these nodes will be very important. Planner Teague agreed, pointing out the ortho building on West 65<sup>th</sup> Street is a four-story building but the building height is in excess of 70-feet.

Commissioner Forrest said she understands their concern; however, the task force was very aware of this nodes close proximity to single dwelling unit properties; agreeing special attention will need to be paid to any redevelopment. Platteter and Schroeder said they have no problems with height; however, pointed out what’s depicted in some photo’s may exceed the height limit in this node.

A discussion ensued on the goal of adopting this small area plan to include an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. It was further observed that at present the three-story building height cap noted for specific lots indicate 2-stories in the present Comp Plan.

Commissioner Schroeder commented that in reading the draft plan the content is suggestive of a form based code; adding the Zoning Ordinance isn't form based. He said this could create some issues in implementation.

Commissioner Carr said she didn't view any references in the draft plan to "Living Streets", adding that she feels "Living Streets" should be added or referenced. (Goals & Policies and/or Landuse possibly).

Commissioner Olsen stated she thought that a small area plan was guidance. Planner Teague responded the Comp Plan is a guiding document, reiterated the goal here is to adopt the plan and amend the Comprehensive Plan to include the plan. Commissioners agreed if the Comprehensive Plan is to be amended the small area plan needs to be right.

It was recommended that all Commissioners e-mail their opinions, additions, concerns, etc. to Planner Teague and he would forward all comments to Lee and Forrest. Lee reiterated all comments need to be received by February 17<sup>th</sup>.

### **Further comments**

Chair Platteter commented that after new members are appointed to serve on the Planning Commission there will be a new member orientation with the City. Platteter said he would also like an orientation with the Commission, adding his goal is to also have Roger Knutson, City Attorney address the Commission and new members. Commissioner Forrest commented that a number of years ago Mr. Knutson provided the Commission with a document highlighting what's expected of members of the Planning Commission. Forrest asked Teague to see if Knutson could provide that same information. Teague responded he would look into that.

### **X ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Olsen moved meeting adjournment at 9:00 PM. Commissioner Hobbs seconded the motion. All voted aye; motion to adjourn carried.

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Respectfully submitted