

**MINUTES
CITY OF EDINA, MINNESOTA
PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
AUGUST 22, 2012
7:00 P.M.**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Grabiell called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

II. ROLL CALL

Answering the roll call were Commissioners Scherer, Forrest, Schroeder, Platteter, Carpenter, Staunton, Grabiell.

Absent from the roll: Fischer and Potts

III. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

Meeting Agenda was approved as submitted.

IV. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

The minutes of the July 25, 2012, meeting was filed as submitted.

V. COMMUNITY COMMENT

None

VI. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A Front Yard Setback Variance for Daniel Wagner & Lindsey Gerrity, 5000 Schaefer Road, Edina, MN

Staff Presentation

Planner Aaker informed the Commission the subject property owned by Daniel Wagner and Lindsey Gerrity is a corner lot located south of Interlachen Boulevard and west of Schaefer Road. It consists of a one story home with an attached two car garage built in 1954.

The property owners are hoping to add a garage stall and mud room onto the west side of the existing garage. The existing garage is nonconforming regarding

setback from Interlachen Boulevard . The property is subjected to two front yard setbacks. The property must match the front yard setback of the home to the west fronting Interlachen Boulevard at 6405 Interlachen Boulevard that was built one year later than the subject home and the front yard setback of the home to the south fronting Schaefer Road at 5004 Schaefer Road.

Aaker explained the adjacent home to the west is setback 122.6 feet from Interlachen establishing the setback from Interlachen for the subject property. The garage of the existing home on the subject property is located 76.2 feet from Interlachen and is therefore nonconforming regarding the required 122.6 foot setback. The proposed garage and mudroom addition will be located approximately 84 feet from Interlachen or 7.8 feet farther back from Interlachen than the existing garage. Setback of the garage will remain the same with the addition farther from Interlachen than the front wall of the garage.

Planner Aaker concluded that staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve the variance based on the following findings:

- 1) With the exception of the variance requested, the proposal would meet the required standards and ordinances for the R-1, Single Dwelling Unit District.
- 2) The proposal would meet the required standards for a variance, because:
 - a. The proposed use of the property is reasonable; as it is consistent with surrounding properties is deeper than the nonconforming setback that has historically been provided by the existing garage.
- 3) The imposed setback limits design opportunity. The intent of the ordinance is to provide adequate spacing between structures and the street. Spacing will not change from Interlachen. The unique circumstance is the original placement of the home relative to the neighbor's home construction that occurred at a later date than the subject home.

Approval of the variance is also subject to the following conditions:

- 1) Subject to staff approval, the site must be developed and maintained in substantial conformance with the following plans. Survey date stamped March 30, 2012/revised July 27, 2012. Building plans and elevations date stamped August 3, 2012

Appearing for the Applicant

Daniel Wagner

Discussion/Comments

Commissioner Staunton asked for clarification on the reason a variance is required. Planner Aaker explained that the Ordinance was recently amended to require that front yard setbacks are determined by the front yard setbacks of the homes on either side. Aaker

explained in this instance because this is a corner lot the house must meet the setback of the adjacent home on Schaefer Road and Interlachen Boulevard respectively. Continuing, Planner Aaker explained that previous to this amendment an applicant could either average the front yard setbacks of all the houses on the same side of the street between intersections or match the adjoining.

Chair Grabiell asked what the required setback would be from Interlachen Boulevard if there wasn't a house facing Interlachen. Planner Aaker responded either a 15-foot side street setback or a 20-foot side street setback (depending on garage door placement) would be required. Grabiell noted that this house is being penalized because it was built prior to construction of the adjoining house fronting Interlachen Boulevard. Aaker acknowledged that point; however, explained the City established a 25-foot rear yard setback and minimum front yard setback but is silent on how far back one could build on a deep lot.

Applicant Presentation

Mr. Wagner addressed the Commission informing them their desire was to retain and add minimal space to the existing house; not tear it down. Wagner said because of the placement of the adjoining house fronting Interlachen Boulevard a variance is needed for his renovations. Continuing, Wagner noted that his home was actually built prior to the neighboring house and the additions he proposes are minimal and in keeping with the character of the house and neighborhood. Concluding Wagner thanked staff for their help with this request.

Comments/Discussion

Commissioner Staunton noted the recent materials placed in front of them, adding receiving materials this "late in the game" has been common practice; however, the amount of information received regarding the Wagner/Gerrity request from their adjoining neighbor is substantial and difficult to read during the hearing. Staunton said in his opinion it may be best to table this item until the next meeting. That will give everyone more time to read through everything provided by both applicant and neighbor. Staunton asked Mr. Wagner his feelings on tabling his request.

Mr. Wagner responded during the construction phase he and his wife and daughter are living in a one bedroom apartment, adding this hearing fits into the October time line to complete the projects. Continuing, Wagner explained that he did share his plans with Ms. Fruchtmann, adding he was very surprised to receive her objections yesterday.

Commissioner Scherer acknowledged the magnitude of the materials received; however pointed out there is no guarantee the neighbor would be available to attend the next Planning Commission meeting. Chair Grabiell agreed, adding in his opinion it's not good practice to delay hearings. There is a process; notice was given and the applicant spoke with the neighbor.

Commissioner Staunton said his concern is that he hasn't had enough time to read through the materials received this evening, adding he doesn't want to make a decision until he has read all the materials. Continuing, Staunton said it's not that he doesn't think this variance is reasonable; it is, reiterating he just hasn't had enough time to digest the materials before him.

Motion

Commissioner Staunton moved to table the variance request for 5000 Schaefer Road to the next meeting of the Planning Commission on September 12, 2012. Commissioner Schroeder seconded the motion.

Commissioner Schroeder pointed out that even if the neighbor at 6405 Interlachen Boulevard were present at the next meeting the Commission closed the public hearing; pointing out he's not sure if she or the applicant could speak to the issue.

Chair Grabiell called for the vote; Ayes; Staunton, Schroeder. Nays; Scherer, Forrest, Platteter, Carpenter, Grabiell. Motion failed. 2-5

Commissioner Platteter moved variance approval based on staff findings and subject to staff conditions. Commissioner Scherer seconded the motion. Ayes; Scherer, Forrest, Schroeder, Platteter, Carpenter, Grabiell. Nay; Staunton. Motion to approve carried 6-1.

Chair Grabiell reminded everyone of the 10-day appeal process; adding Ms. Fruchtmann can appeal their decision to the City Council.

B. Lot Area Variance for Mike and Matt Knodt, 3928 49th Street West, Edina, MN

Planner Presentation

Planner Aaker informed the Commission the subject property is a 12,468 square foot lot developed with a double dwelling unit located north of 49th Street and is zoned R-2, Double Dwelling Unit District. The property owner is hoping to demolish the existing double for the construction of a new double dwelling home.

Planner Aaker explained that the ordinance requires a double dwelling unit lot consist of no less than 15,000 square feet. The lot consists of 12,468 square feet, so is therefore 2,532 square feet short of the minimum 15, 000 square foot requirement. The existing double dwelling unit was built in 1954 and pre-dates the current lot area requirements.

Planner Aaker concluded that staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve the variance based on the following findings:

- With the exception of the variance requested, the proposal would meet the required standards and ordinances for the R-2, Double Dwelling Unit District.
- The proposal would meet the required standards for a variance, because:
- The proposed use of the property is reasonable; as it is consistent with existing conditions.
- The imposed lot area does not allow redevelopment of the property without the benefit of a variance or a zone change.

Approval of the variance is also subject to the following conditions:

- 1) Subject to staff approval, the site must be developed and maintained in substantial conformance with the following plans, unless modified by the following conditions; Survey date stamped: August 9, 2012. Building plans and elevations date stamped: August 9, 2012.

Appearing for the Applicant

Mike and Matt Knodt

Discussion/Comments

Commissioners asked Planner Aaker to clarify for them the reason a variance was needed. Planner Aaker responded that the zoning classification for this property is R-2. The R-2 zoning ordinance language requires an R-2 lot to be 15,000 square feet regardless of when it was platted. The variance requested is to allow the property owner to raze the current double and build a new double dwelling unit building in its place. The subject lot is 12,468 square feet so it's 2,532 square feet short of the required 15,000. Aaker pointed out the existing double dwelling unit building was built in 1954 and pre-dates the current lot area requirement.

Public Comment

David Nyvall, 3932-34 49th Street West, adjacent property owner to the west commented that he would like to know how close the new double would be to his property. Planner Aaker reported no further variances are needed for building placement; all setbacks are met. Aaker shared the plans with Mr. Nyvall. Nyvall thanked Commissioners for their time.

Commissioner Staunton moved to close the public hearing. Commissioner Carpenter seconded the motion. All voted aye; public hearing closed.

Commissioner Scherer said in reviewing the staff report and plans she can support the request as submitted.

Motion

Commissioner Staunton moved variance approval based on staff findings and subject to staff conditions noting the subject property is zoned R-2 and a single dwelling unit building cannot be constructed on this lot. Commissioner Platteter seconded the motion. All voted aye; motion carried.

C. Conditional Use Permit, Paul and Kristen Commers, 4710 Golf Terrace, Edina, MN

Planner Presentation

Planner Aaker informed the Commission the property owners Paul and Kristin Commers are requesting a Conditional Use Permit to construct a new home at 4710 Golf Terrace. The Conditional Use Permit is being requested to allow the first floor elevation of the new home to exceed the first floor elevation of the previous home by more than one foot. Specifically the applicant would like to raise the first floor elevation 3.2 feet above the first floor elevation of the previous home that had occupied the site. The first floor of the previous home was at 902.6 feet. The new first floor is proposed to be at 905.8 feet. The maximum allowed increase without a Conditional Use Permit is 903.6 feet, The new first floor is proposed to be 2.2 feet over the one foot allowed by city code in order to reasonably protect the lower level of the new dwelling from ground water intrusion. The attached Report of Geotechnical Exploration dated July 24, 2012, from Geo Engineering Consultants, Inc., regarding ground water levels indicates ground water at a level of 897.7 feet with a recommended lowest floor elevation of at least 894.0 to 895.0 feet,

Planner Aaker concluded that staff recommends that the City Council approve the Conditional Use Permit for a new home at 4710 Golf Terrace. The Conditional Use Permit allows the new home to have a first floor elevation of 905.8 feet which is 3.2 feet above the first floor elevation of the existing home and 2.2 feet above first floor height allowed by ordinance based on the following findings:

1. The proposal meets the Conditional Use Permit conditions of the Zoning Ordinance.
2. The proposal meets all applicable Zoning Ordinance requirements.
3. The proposed new home is in character with this neighborhood.

and subject to the following conditions:

1. The site must be developed and maintained in conformance with the following plans:
 - Survey date stamped July 25, 2012
 - Building plans and elevations date stamped July 25, 2012.

2. Submit a copy of the Minnehaha Creek District permit. The City may require revisions to the approved plans to meet the district's requirements.
3. Final grading and drainage plans are subject to review and approval of the city engineer prior to issuance of a building permit. Drainage patterns may not be directed to adjacent properties.

Appearing for the Applicant

Scott Busyn, Great Neighborhood Homes, and Paul Commers, property owner.

Discussion/Comments

Commissioner Staunton asked Planner Aaker for clarification on what the actual building height of the proposed house would be when completed if the Conditional Use Permit were approved. Aaker explained that the plans indicate that the building height is 31-feet; however, one has to take into account what that final height would be after the elevation is raised. Aaker said the final height would probably be 33 -34 plus feet range.

Applicant Presentation

Scott Busyn introduced Mr. Commers property owner.

Scott Busyn addressed the Commission and told them a neighborhood meeting was held with neighbors indicating their support for the project. Busyn pointed out the Commers worked carefully on the design of their house paying close attention to details. Busyn reported that the proposed house will be attractive on all sides; not only the front façade and also preserves the neighbors view of the golf course. Concluding, Busyn said every effort was made to minimize the height of the proposed house, adding the height of the house is highest in the center and levels out.

Commissioner Platteter questioned why the elevation at 895 was chosen and not 894. Mr. Busyn responded that as a builder there is a liability concern so one wants to make sure the home is out of the water table as much as possible. Continuing, Busyn pointed out FHA requires the lowest floor elevation to be 4-feet above the water table. Busyn reported in the present home the sump pump runs continually, pointing out a pond is directly behind the subject property and of course, Lake Harvey is across the street. Water is an issue on this lot. Busyn also noted that when doing the soil testing it was found that the lot is peat and new construction will require pilings.

Commissioner Platteter said he has a concern with drainage; especially to the west. Mr. Busyn responded that the drainage in the rear will drain to the existing pond to the south and the west water run-off will be directed into a swale. Busyn pointed out the size of the lot is adequate, adding it is hoped that the majority of the water run off would percolate on the lot depositing additional run-off into the swale. Concluding, Busyn said typically drainage issues are handled through the building permit review process and if any issues are brought up they are resolved during this process prior to the issuance of a

building permit.

The discussion ensued on the proposed basement ceiling height at 9-feet and how that relates to the water table and the higher first floor elevation.

Commissioners asked Mr. Busyn to clarify the reasoning behind the proposed 9-foot basement ceiling height.

Mr. Busyn responded that previously he lived in a home with a ceiling height of 7-feet, adding in the current market that ceiling height is too low, pointing out some people can actually touch the ceiling with their hands at that height. Continuing, Busyn said 9-feet is now the standard basement ceiling height for a house of this price and size. Busyn said Ordinance allows exceptions for a new home rebuilt after a tear down of more than one-foot above the first floor elevation of the home that was torn down through a Conditional Use Permit if certain conditions are met. Busyn added he doesn't believe he or anyone else should be the "style police" telling a property owner the type, style, or ceiling height of house they want to build. Concluding, Busyn said the bottom line is that this is an issue of water; if we could go deeper we would.

Commissioner Forrest commented that Building Code has a minimum basement ceiling height of 7-feet; not 9-feet, adding as previously mentioned the requested 9-foot ceiling could be the issue.

Commissioner Staunton noted if there wasn't a water table issue present this request wouldn't be before us. Commissioners agreed with that statement. Continuing, Staunton said at this time the property owner is requesting relief from the City's Ordinance through the Conditional Use Permit process. Staunton pointed out the Ordinance regarding limiting the first floor building elevation is fairly new; however, the Commission is starting to see more requests of this nature. Concluding, Staunton said he believes the request is reasonable and not different from the previously requested and approved Conditional Use Permits.

Commissioner Schroeder asked if the Commission feels #2 of Ordinance 850.11 Subd. 2 was met.

Commissioner Scherer said in her opinion she's isn't sure if a 9-foot ceiling is actually necessary or "to the extent necessary" to meet #2. Scherer said she believes the house will fit in; however, as mentioned by Commissioner Schroeder she isn't sure #2 is met (at least with what we have been provided). Scherer concluded that it may be beneficial for the Commission as a group to further discuss condition #2 and better "spell out" what's required and what comes into play.

Chair Grabiell noted the engineer retained by Mr. Busyn indicated an elevation of between 894-895, adding the Commission can use that elevation to make their determination on what is a reasonable first floor building elevation. Commissioners agreed.

Commissioner Schroeder commented that he feels uncomfortable accepting the materials provided by Mr. Busyn. He noted the “report” is only a one page e-mail from an engineer. Schroeder said in his opinion this isn’t a “report” it’s a one-time elevation reading. Schroeder said he feels what the Commission received in their packet to support the Conditional Use Permit is inadequate. Schroeder stated he wants more information.

Chair Grabiell said he agrees with the comments from Commissioner Schroeder, adding what bothers him is the one e-mail written by an engineer and that the Commission is basing their decision on that one e-mail which is minimal at best. Grabiell reiterated he agrees with Schroeder that the “report” provided isn’t adequate enough for him to make an educated decision.

Commissioner Carpenter wondered if the data received from the engineer via e-mail was consistent with the data received on similar requests to relieve the first floor building height elevation requirement. Carpenter said he would have no problem asking the applicant for a more detailed report; however, he doesn’t want this property owner held to a higher standard.

Commissioner Schroeder said at the very least he would like to see a letter from a certified engineer or hydrologist on letter head; not an e-mail. Schroeder stressed in his opinion the information the Commission received from Busyn doesn’t have the level of detail the City requires. Concluding, Schroeder said if one reads Condition 2 of the Ordinance it specifies what’s required; it’s clear, adding what was received isn’t it.

The discussion ensued on the inadequacy of the materials provided by Mr. Busyn. It was suggested that the applicant return to the Commission with a more complete engineering report.

A brief discussion ensued between Commissioners and Mr. Busyn with the Commission acknowledging their action is a recommendation to the City Council and they agreed to act on the request immediately and move it forward to the City Council for their review and action.

Motion

Commissioner Schroeder moved to deny the Conditional Use Permit based on the applicant’s failure to justify #2 and #4 of the required ordinance conditions found in 850.11 Subd. 3. Commissioner Forrest seconded the motion. Ayes; Scherer, Forrest, Platteter, Grabiell. Nays; Staunton, Carpenter. Motion to deny carried.

D. Site Plan – Bruce Carlson, 7501 France Avenue, Edina, MN

Planner Presentation

Planner Teague informed the Commission Bruce Carlson, on behalf of the Centennial Lakes Plaza is requesting a Site Plan review to build a 1,750 square foot Starbucks Coffee shop with a drive-through window, within the parking lot of Centennial Lakes Plaza at 7501 France Avenue. Outdoor dining tables are proposed on the west side of the building. The proposed Starbucks would experience its most activity during the morning hours, when the shopping center is not at its busiest time.

Concluding, Teague said staff recommends that the City Council approve the Site Plan for Starbucks located at 7501 France Avenue based on the following findings:

1. The proposal would meet the required standards and ordinances for a Site Plan.
2. WSB conducted a traffic impact study, and concluded that the existing roadway system could support the proposed project.

Approval of the Site Plan is also subject to the following conditions:

1. Subject to staff approval, the site must be developed and maintained in substantial conformance with the following plans, unless modified by the conditions below:
 - Site plan date stamped July 25, 2012.
 - Grading plan date stamped July 25, 2012.
 - Landscaping plan date stamped July 25, 2012.
 - Building elevations date stamped July 25, 2012
 - Building materials board as presented at the Planning Commission and City Council meeting.
2. Prior the issuance of a building permit, a final landscape plan must be submitted, subject to staff approval. Additionally, a performance bond, letter-of-credit, or cash deposit must be submitted for one and one-half times the cost amount for completing the required landscaping, screening, or erosion control measures.
3. The property owner is responsible for replacing any required landscaping that dies.
4. Submit a copy of the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District permit. The City may require revisions to the approved plans to meet the district's requirements.
5. Compliance with the conditions required by the city engineer in his memo dated August 16, 2012.

Teague further clarified if the Planning Commission believes that the stacking space for the drive-through is inadequate; the Commission could recommend to the City Council that a moratorium be placed on new drive-through's, until a zoning ordinance amendment is in place to specifically address stacking space for coffee shops. As a result of the moratorium, recommend denial of the request, unless the applicant is willing to waive the 60/120 day rule.

Appearing for the Applicant

Bruce Carlson, representing Centennial Lakes Shopping Center. Chris Van Waning, Starbucks Corporate

Discussion

Chair Grabiell noted the proposal before the Commission this evening is for site plan approval and as previously mentioned by staff all ordinance requirements are met. Grabiell noted the Commission has three options before them. 1) Approve the proposal as submitted; 2) Deny the request and recommend to the Council that a Moratorium on drive-through windows be implemented, and; 3) Approve with an alternative stacking option as provided by transportation consultant Chuck Rickart.

Commissioner Platteter asked if the intersection to “get into” Whole Foods will be restudied. Platteter said there is a constant flow of cars that need to be better addressed. Planner Teague responded that at this time there are no proposed changes to any intersections.

Commissioner Scherer asked if the only other Starbucks in the City with a drive-through facility was the one on Vernon Avenue. Planner Teague responded to the best of his knowledge that is the only other Starbucks drive-through in Edina.

Chair Grabiell asked Mr. Rickart to address his findings.

Chuck Rickart explained to the Commission the traffic analysis indicated that the existing roadway systems can support the Starbucks Coffee Shop with drive-through. Rickart said the analysis found that the majority of “coffee shop” traffic occurs before 10:00 AM, noting the majority of the stores in the plaza open later in the AM. Continuing, Rickart said that with regard to queuing that the existing site plan provides stacking for 7 vehicles; however, based on a study “Drive-Through Queue Generation” it was found that the site should provide stacking for a minimum of 11 vehicles and ideally 13 vehicles should be provided.

A brief discussion ensued on Mr. Rickart's alternative Options A and B; to the proposed stacking on the site. It was acknowledged that a drive-through window did work for the previous McDonald's restaurant.

Applicant Presentation

Bruce Carlson addressed the Commission and told them he was very happy to be before them again; this time with a formal request. Carlson said that the proposed building will be a 1,750 square foot coffee shop located in the northwest former of the southern parking lot of Centennial Lakes Plaza. Continuing, Carlson said the coffee shop will front France Avenue with an outdoor patio connected to the west elevation. The proposed building will architecturally complement the new Whole Foods building by incorporating matching brick, stone and metal work. Additional landscaping will also be provided to complement

the newly completed landscaping. Concluding, Carlson said construction would include underground water treatment and the building will be LEED certified.

Chris Van Waning, reported that 40% of the coffee business is done before 10 AM. Van Waning said that a “typical” shop with drive-through will serve between 70 and 90 customers during the peak hours and 60% of those customers would use the drive-through. The average “wait” time is 45 seconds.

Chair Grabiell referred to the two stacking alternatives presented by Mr. Rickart and asked Mr. Van Waning his opinion. Mr. Van Waning said Starbucks would be concerned with any option that would jeopardize safety; however, would be willing to work with the Commission on any modifications to the stacking element of the project.

Commissioner Schroeder commented that based on the presented site plan it appears to him that only a 4 vehicle stack could be provided. Schroeder acknowledged that the plan meets City Code but questioned if Starbucks was meeting its criteria, questioning if 6 vehicles was really acceptable.

Mr. Van Waning responded that in his opinion the presented stacking is acceptable. Van Waning pointed out that this shop will be the second store in the “trade area”; the other one is at the Galleria.

Commissioner Staunton asked if any other building configuration and placement was ever considered, adding a long time goal of the Commission has been to encourage buildings to “address” the street. Staunton said in his opinion rotating the building so the length of it addresses France is more pedestrian friendly. Mr. Carlson responded that the proposed location of the building and its east/west configuration is at the request of the other tenants of the Plaza. Continuing, Carlson explained that the proposed configuration provides better visibility from France Avenue.

With regard to questions about stacking Carlson said that much thought was put into this plan, adding that management is careful with tenant mix pointing out there had always been a drive-through in this area to service McDonalds. Continuing, Carlson said that in reality this is an internal circulation issue and it is very important that the circulation works.

Chair Grabiell stated it’s a great project; however, he has a concern with stacking onto Plaza Drive. He added the options presented by Chuck Rickart are worth considering.

A discussion ensued on the stacking options A & B provided by Chuck Rickart. Commissioners felt Option B was best. It was also suggested that eliminating one lane in this area creates more space.

Commissioner Schroeder asked if there are plans to screen the transformer and trash enclosure. Mr. Carlson responded both would be screened and they would work on redesigning the building around Option B as recommended by the Commission.

Commissioner Platteter also recommended that the utilities attached to the building be screened; maybe painted the same color as the building, but masked.

Commissioner Forrest said she does have some concern with the internal seating of the coffee shop. She also said in her opinion the outdoor seating doesn't appear that appealing. Forrest pointed out the summer can be hot and with seating off France Avenue it could get very warm without much shade from deciduous trees. Forrest concluded that she is happy the proponents are willing to move the trash enclosure away from the building. Carlson pointed out that a major landscaping plan was implemented along France Avenue and worked very hard and long adding new plantings and trees, adding they believe the patio will be beautiful. Carlson pointed out some people will really enjoy this patio, they like the business and if anyone wants a more serene setting they could move farther into the park.

Bruce Carlson presented the materials board to the Commission. Kathy Anderson, architect explained that the proposed Starbucks exterior materials will match the Whole Foods store and other elements within the Plaza. The exterior materials are field brick, banding, limestone, to include green accents for Starbucks; nothing used would be different from what exists in the Plaza.

Chair Grabiell asked if anyone in the audience would like to speak to this issue; being none Commissioner Platteter moved to close the public hearing. Commission Carpenter seconded the motion. All voted aye; motion.

Motion

Commissioner Scherer moved to recommend Site Plan approval based on staff findings and subject to staff conditions including stacking Option B as provided by Chuck Rickart of WSB. Commissioner Forrest seconded the motion.

Commissioner Schroeder suggested an amendment to the motion to include the screening of the transformer, ensuring all roof top mechanicals are screened, along with the relocation of the trash enclosure and that all conduits are masked. Commissioners Scherer and Forrest accepted that amendment.

Ayes; Scherer, Forrest, Potts, Platteter, Carpenter, Grabiell. Nay; Staunton. Motion carried.

Kathy Alexander told the Commission with regard to the transformer State Code requires an opening on one side of the transformer for access and that all electrical boxes, conduits are positioned on the wall; however, they will be painted to match the building.

Commissioner Platteter requested that the transformer be screened from the lot and not the building. Alexander agreed.

VII. REPORTS

A. Sketch Plan, Mount Properties, 6500 France Avenue

Planner Presentation

Planner Teague reported that the Planning Commission was asked to consider a new sketch plan proposal to redevelop the property at 6500 France Avenue. Teague noted the Planning Commission recommended approval of a previous proposal for a total build out of six stories; however, the applicant withdrew the request, prior to the City Council taking final action. Teague explained that the revised plan proposes a one phase 5-story building with the mechanical equipment to be located inside the building. The overall height would not exceed the height of the mechanical equipment on the roof of the previously proposed four-story building.

Teague said the specific proposal is to tear down the existing office building and build a new five-story medical office building with retail use on the first level. The parking ramp would be attached to the building. The site plan and building are generally similar to the previous plan; access to the site would remain from 65th Street, with a secondary right out on France.

Teague explained that some of the differences in the proposed plans from the previous plans include the following:

- Five (5)-story building with no roof top mechanical equipment, 62 feet tall. (Previous building was six (6) stories and measured 88 feet to the top of the mechanical equipment.)
 - Attached parking ramp.
 - 5-level parking ramp. (Previous ramp was 4-levels.)
- Proposed building has a rounded grand building entry appearance at 65th & France. (Previous building had a traditional sharp building corner at 65th and France.)
 - Green roof on top of the building. (Previous plan had a green roof only on the two building podiums.)

Planner Teague concluded that the applicant would again like to request a rezoning of this site from Planned Office District -1, (POD-1) to Planned Unit Development (PUD).

Appearing for the Applicant

Stephen Michals, Mount Development Co. and Ed Farr, Edward Farr Architects, and Mr. Bernardi, property owner.

Applicant Presentation

Stephen Michals addressed the Commission and said he was very enthusiastic about the architectural changes that occurred to the building as the result of this revision. With graphics Michals highlighted the changes:

- Reduced building height down from 89 feet to 62 feet
- Elimination of the basement level of the parking garage to allow for basement mechanical room
- Upgrade in building façade
- Inclusion of a green roof on the roof top vs. the green on the podium roof
- Extensive landscaping and screening.
- Redesign of the parking ramp that will better complement the office façade.
- The corner and front of the building has been enhanced to better serve pedestrians and address France Avenue.

Concluding, Michals said one change that they are proud of is the rounded corner of the building. Michals explained that the building corner was rounded and “pushed back” to create an upgraded corner design that enhances the pedestrian experience. The corner plaza seating area will also include decorative surfacing treatment and protective bollards behind the curb to protect pedestrians.

Discussion

Commissioners expressed their support for the project as presented; noting with each revision the project gets better. Commissioners expressed pleasure with the redesign of the loading zones, handicap access, ramp and building alignment, green roof, better presence on France Avenue, better outdoor space and improved interior vehicle circulation including the one way out (south bound) entrance onto France Avenue.

Some concern was expressed that the project maybe too aggressive market wise, noting the first phase of the previous plan was for a 4-story building with the potential for a “build out” of two (2) more stories if the market was strong. In response, Mr. Bernardi acknowledged there is risk in the build out at 5-stories; however, the team will work hard to fill the additional square footage.

Chair Grabiell commented that in his opinion this is a very important corner and project for the City.

Commissioners thanked the development team for their revisions; reiterating it’s an improved project.

2013 Work Plan

Planner Teague reminded the Commission they will be having a joint meeting with the City Council on September 4th. Teague said at this time he would like to formalize the draft of the 2013 Work Plan.

Commissioner Staunton noted that he was absent when the Work Plan was discussed, adding he reviewed the Work Plan and believes the Comprehensive Plan should also be considered especially in light of the challenges and trends that face development and redevelopment projects in Edina. Continuing, Staunton said he continues to be interested in identifying “areas of change” as mentioned in the Comprehensive Plan pointing out the recent Grandview Development Plan process worked well. Staunton noted that “areas of change” include the Valley View & Wooddale area and the 70th and Cahill area. Other “areas of change” is the France Avenue corridor, 50th & France and of course where the Council directs with Grandview. Staunton said another topic of interest to him is how does the Commission help these smaller lot neighborhoods co-exist, noting redevelopment is happening in these neighborhoods at a fast pace. Concluding, Staunton said the Commission should continue to be forward thinking and may need to meet in smaller groups to tackle some of these issues.

Chair Grabiell asked Commissioner Staunton if he sees any topic that would rise to the level of Grandview. Staunton responded that it’s possible, adding much would depend on the project. Staunton said it’s important not to have pre-set ideas. It also may be difficult to balance resources and time for these issues.

Commissioner Schroeder said he’s interested in putting in more time on developing a “Living Streets” policy. He said he believes there is an important relationship between land use and transportation, adding it is the responsibility of the Planning Commission to weigh in.

The discussion ensued with Commissioners agreeing that they should prioritize their goals. It was also mentioned that at the joint work session it may be a good idea to ask the City Council on where they feel the Planning Commission should focus their attention.

The Commission directed staff to develop an agenda that includes the following topics; subdivision, grading, building height, drainage and Grandview. It was also suggested that the Commission attend a “refresher” course from City Attorney, Roger Knutson. Planner Teague agreed.

Commissioners also agreed that they should be more forward thinking and proactive.

VIII. CORRESPONDENCE AND PETITIONS

Chair Grabiell acknowledged receipt of the Council Connection, Attendance and CC Meeting minutes.

IX. CHAIR AND COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENTS

None.

X. STAFF COMMENTS

Planner Teague reported that the City of Edina hired Bill Neuendorf as the City's Economic Development Director.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Scherer moved adjournment at 10:50 PM. Commissioner Platteter seconded the motion. All voted aye; motion carried.

Jackie Hoogenakker

Respectfully submitted