

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
EDINA PLANNING COMMISSION, HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 27, 1997, AT 7:30 P.M.
EDINA CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

Members Present: Lonsbury, Swenson, Byron, Runyan, McClelland, Ingwalson, Workinger, Johnson

Members Absent: Bergman

Staff Present: Kris Aaker, Jackie Hoogenakker

I. NEW BUSINESS:

P-97-3 Final Development Plan. Superior Storage

Z-97-2 POD-2, Planned Office District to PID, Planned Industrial District. Part of Lot 2, Block 1, Edina Center

S-97-6 Preliminary Plat Approval Edina Office Center 3rd Addn

Ms. Aaker informed members of the commission a total lot area of 142,849 square feet is vacant. A portion of the site (parcel C) is zoned POD-2, with the balance of the site zoned PID. The office zoned parcel was originally part of the National Car site, but was separated from the main site by construction of the road linking West 77th Street with Minnesota Drive. Ms. Aaker pointed out there is a pond area running the entire length of the southerly boundary.

Ms. Aaker explained a request has been submitted which would rezone the office parcel to Industrial, replat the various parcels, and develop the combined site with a mini-storage warehouse building. Mini-storage is an allowed principal use in the PID District.

Ms. Aaker reported the proposed development, with one exception, complies with all zoning ordinance requirements for developments in the PID District. This includes building and parking setbacks, site coverage and floor area, building materials and landscaping. The Zoning Ordinance does not contain a specific requirement for the required number of spaces for the proposed use. Ms. Aaker said the plan does request one variance; that being to allow the outdoor storage of vehicles south and southeast of the proposed building. The parking would be used for RV storage. Outdoor storage in the PID district is not permitted.

Ms. Aaker concluded staff recommends approval of the proposed development. Staff believes this to be an excellent use for this location. Traffic generation should be low, especially during the peak hours.

The proposed outdoor storage is a policy question. If we discourage the outdoor storage of RV's in residential area, maybe we should provide residents an alternative. Approval should be conditioned on:

1. Final Rezoning
2. Final Plat Approval

The proponents, Mr. Todd Jones, and other representatives for Superior Storage were present to respond to concerns.

Chairman Johnson questioned Ms. Aaker if the proposal has been reviewed by the public safety committee because of the curve in the roads' proximity to the access point.

Commissioner Swenson interjected the plans depict signalization, which would aid in traffic flow, and safety into, and out of the site. Ms. Aaker responded the traffic circulation plan has been reviewed, and approved by the Engineering Department.

Commissioner Runyan questioned the security of the site, focusing on the access, and operation.

Mr. Todd Jones introduced himself, and explained the project is an upscale two level mini-storage facility constructed with an elevator, with 70% of the facility climate and humidity controlled. Continuing, Mr. Jones explained the site is secured, with cameras, controlled entrances and exits, and on-duty staff. Continuing, Mr. Jones submitted to members photo's of other storage facilities in the area, and reported he is a very experienced mini-storage operator, and his facilities are very secure, and have been well received. Mr. Jones asked the Commission to note no doors face the right-of-way. Continuing, Mr. Jones stated the market supports the statement that "80% of mini-storage users live within a three mile radius from the facility". Mr. Jones added the majority of rental space is short term, although most facilities have long term tenants which usually are commercial/office companies who require space to store their records, etc. Continuing, Mr. Jones told the Commission during site inspection, and after conducting soil tests it was found that a majority of the property is peat which is the reason the building has become more consolidated. Mr. Jones pointed out the location of the outdoor RV storage will be heavily screened, with a three foot berm planted with arborvitae. Mr. Jones stated if members of the commission desire a privacy fence to be located in this area, a privacy fence will be constructed. Concluding Mr. Jones reported a project of this type generates little traffic with 250 trips expected per week, averaging 26 per day, seven days a week.

Commissioner Swenson questioned if occupancy square footage includes the outdoor RV storage. Mr. Jones said it does not. Commissioner Swenson questioned the material, and type of gate at the entrance. Mr. Jones said the gate is wrought iron with computerized key controlled access.

Commissioner Ingwalson questioned if a tenant has gained access to the facility through the drive-through door can they gain access to all other units. Mr. Jones said that is not possible, all units have individual locks. Commissioner Ingwalson asked Mr. Jones if the facility keeps a record of who enters the facility. Mr. Jones said records are maintained. The facility has a one way keyed gate and door entrance, so records are kept by computer. Commissioner Ingwalson questioned the hours the facility will be manned. Mr. Jones said at this time it is believed manned office hours will be 7:30 a.m. until 8:30 pm. There will not be a live-in security person on site. Concluding, Mr. Jones noted this facility will not have 24 hour access.

Chairman Johnson asked if the Engineering Department has reviewed the plan in relation to the curve in the road. Mr. Jones said the City Engineering Department reviewed access and exit from the facility, and the proposal before you this evening depicts what is felt is the best scenario. Continuing, Mr. Jones stated Mr. Hoffman said he prefers a 90° criss/cross alignment with signalization at the main entrance.

Chairman Johnson commented if there is signalization the problem will be solved, adding he only wants to make sure users understand the compromised site lines of the site. Continuing, Mr. Jones interjected this facility is at the low end of the traffic spectrum, and the proposed signalization should eliminate most concerns.

Commissioner McClelland interjected that she agrees trip generations from a facility such as this, are very low.

Commissioner McClelland asked Mr. Jones if he has any concern that the outdoor storage of recreational vehicles may create vandalism opportunities. With graphics Mr. Jones explained the access to the site is controlled, either by the control doors, or keyed gate access to the RV area. Mr. Jones reiterated access into and out of the site is completely controlled by a key card. Mr. Jones reiterated he has been in the mini-storage business for a number of years, and it is prudent for all facility operators to ensure that users of the facility (either indoor or outdoor storage users) feel their property is completely safe. Without that feeling the project would not “sell”, or be successful. Concluding, Mr. Jones reiterated in his opinion the facility is secure.

Commissioner McClelland asked Mr. Jones if he has assigned any monthly costs to the units. Mr. Jones said he believes this facility will operate, and have the same rental fees as the Eden Prairie facility. Commissioner McClelland acknowledged Edina does have an Ordinance that may make it difficult for an individual to store an RV on their property, and asked Mr. Jones if he has placed a monthly price on RV storage. Mr. Jones said at this time that monthly fee has not been “set in stone”, adding he believes the monthly cost will be between \$50.00 and \$80.00 per vehicle.

Commissioner McClelland asked if the RV would be required to be covered. Mr. Jones said that has not been determined. He noted purchasing a cover for an RV can be very expensive.

Commissioner Workinger said he is not sure he can support the outdoor storage or recreational vehicles. He agreed with Commissioner McClelland's comment that there is a need in Edina to provide RV storage, but he is not sure this is the right way to do so. Continuing, Commissioner Workinger asked Mr. Jones if prohibiting the storage of RV's on the site would create a financial loss that would result in the project not "flying". Mr. Jones responded that financially it would "hurt us" not to be allowed to have the outdoor storage element on this proposal. Mr. Jones reiterated the soil is very poor, and to support a building it has become very expensive to prepare the site, noting the need for pilings to support the proposed building.

Commissioner Runyan asked if the drive aisle is wide enough at 15 feet to accommodate RV's. Mr. Jones said a typical drive aisle in a storage facility such as this is 15 feet, but the main drive aisle is 20 feet wide.

Commissioner Ingwalson said he can support the outdoor storage of vehicles, noting it has been the goal of the City to try to get these vehicles off the driveways and frontyard setback areas. Continuing, Commissioner Ingwalson suggested advertising in the "About Town", or the possibility of staff doing an article explaining a facility has been located in the City that can accommodate monthly storage of recreational vehicles. Commissioner Ingwalson said it would be nice if the "word" would get out to recreational vehicles owners that this type of facility is offered within our City.

Commissioner Lonsbury suggested that the proponent contact the State and purchase by zip code a list of registered RV owners in the area.

Commissioner Byron asked Mr. Jones the number of RV spaces contained on the site. Mr. Jones said there are 42 RV spaces.

Chairman Johnson interjected, and questioned Mr. Jones on how much screening will remain in the RV location towards Bloomington. Mr. Jones said all trees will be left along the pond. Mr. Jones also explained to the Commission the property actually extends farther out.

A discussion ensued between Commission Members if the outdoor storage of recreational vehicles should be handled as a Conditional Use or through the variance process, as recommended by staff. After further discussion the Commission recognized allowing the outdoor storage of recreational vehicles as a policy issue that is best addressed by the Council. After final consideration the Commission indicated they support that outdoor storage of vehicles be handled as a variance of the Final Development Plan, and pass along to the Council the Commission did give consideration to outdoor storage as an Conditional Use.

Commissioner Lonsbury moved final development plan approval subject to the plans presented, noting in his opinion this type of facility is needed in Edina. Commissioner Ingwalson seconded the motion, adding his concern regarding security has been satisfied. Commissioner Ingwalson stated he also wants assurance the screening for the RV storage is adequate, and as many trees as possible are preserved along the west, south and east property lines.

Chairman Johnson interjected stating in his opinion it would be “cleaner” if the Commission acted on each request individually, with individual motions for Final Development Plan, Rezoning, Plat, and Variance.

Commissioner Lonsbury said he did not have a problem withdrawing his motion, so separate motions could be moved.

Commissioner Byron moved to recommend preliminary rezoning approval subject to staff conditions. Commissioner Lonsbury seconded the motion. All vote aye; motion carried.

Commissioner Byron moved to recommend preliminary plat approval subject to staff conditions. Commissioner Lonsbury seconded the motion. All voted aye; motion carried.

Commissioner Byron moved to recommend approval in granting a variance to permit the outdoor storage of recreational vehicles in an Industrial District. Commissioner Swenson seconded the motion. Ayes; Swenson, Byron, Runyan, Ingwalson, Lonsbury, Johnson. Nays, Workinger, McClelland. Motion carried.

Commissioner Byron moved to recommend Final Development Plan Approval subject to staff conditions. Commissioner Lonsbury seconded the motion. All voted aye; motion carried.

Ms. Aaker explained the owners of Edina Towers are proposing to sell a 3,355 square foot portion of land to the Colony Condominium Association. The parcels are located adjacent to a parking ramp serving the apartment building and immediately south of the Colony office. The parcels are improved for use as parking for the Colony. Ms. Aaker said there is no access from the Edina Towers site to these parcels. However, a recent survey found the parcels to be part of the Edina Towers site. The parcels are part of the original Colony development. The proposed land transfer would cure the existing encroachment.

Ms. Aaker concluded staff recommends approval of the lot division.

Manager for the Colony property, Mr. John Rocheford was present.

Commissioner Ingwalson asked if as a result of this division the Tower site is compromised in any way, such as under parked, etc. Ms. Aaker responded after the division the Edina Tower site remains in compliance with all zoning requirements.

After a brief discussion Commissioner McClelland moved to recommend lot division approval. Commissioner Ingwalson seconded the motion. All voted aye; motion carried.

III. OTHER BUSINESS:

Amendment to Zoning Ordinance Providing Zoning Board of Appeals the Power to hear Modifications from the Antenna Ordinance

Ms. Aaker informed the Commission staff recommends adoption of the Ordinance which allows the Zoning Board of Appeals the power to hear “modifications” from the recently adopted Antenna Ordinance. Ms. Aaker explained volunteers are needed from the commission and zoning board to establish the “new” board.

Chairman Johnson asked Ms. Aaker what volunteer ratio they want from the Commission.

Ms. Aaker acknowledged staff is seeking “volunteers” to fill the new board. She added she believes it will be a five person board, and the number of Planning Commissioners to volunteer is really up to the Commission and the individual.

Commissioner Swenson, Commissioner McClelland and Commissioner Workinger volunteered to serve on the board. Commissioner Byron volunteered to serve as an alternate.

Commissioner Byron moved to adopt the proposed Ordinance establishing a board to hear modifications to the Antenna Ordinance. Commissioner Swenson seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

III. ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Lonsbury moved adjournment at 8:40 p.m. Commissioner Swenson seconded the motion. All voted aye; motion carried.

Jackie Hoogenakker