



**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
EDINA PLANNING COMMISSION
THURSDAY, MARCH 31, 2004, 7:30 PM
EDINA CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
4801 WEST 50TH STREET**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chair David Byron, Ann Swenson, Helen McClelland, Michael Fischer and Stephen Brown

MEMBERS ABSENT:

David Runyan, John Lonsbury, Geof Workinger and Bill Skallerud

STAFF PRESENT:

Craig Larsen and Jackie Hoogenakker

I. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

The minutes of the January 27, 2004, meeting were filed as submitted.

II. NEW BUSINESS:

**C-04-1 Conditional Use Permit
 Edina Independent School District 273**

Tax Referendum Project

Mr. Larsen informed the Commission the Edina School District is seeking a Conditional Use Permit to allow construction of various additions and site improvements to Valley View/Edina High School and South View/Edina Community Center campuses. In November 2003, the voters in the Edina School District approved an \$85.6 million dollar capital referendum for the proposed improvements.

Mr. Larsen concluded staff recommends approval of the Conditional Use Permit. Granting the permit allows construction of improvements approved by the referendum.

Mr. Chase Anderson, Edina School District, Ted Rozeboom, RMA Architects and Jay Pomeroy, Anderson Johnson, were present to respond to questions from the Commission.

Commissioner McClelland asked if this proposal is required to go before the Watershed Districts. Mr. Larsen responded watershed district permits are required. Mr. Larsen noted for the Commission paving and parking is permitted in flood areas - with both sites containing flood plain.

Mr. Rozeboom addressed the commission and explained the referendum projects will be constructed in phases. He stated Phase 1 is mostly devoted to site work. Mr. Rozeboom explained when members of the development team tackled the issues facing the school district five principle points appeared to address both campuses: 1. Safety -enhance safety. The mix of cars, delivery vehicles and pedestrians need clarity. 2. Maximize parking. 3. Increase capacity and manage storm water run-off. 4. Increase use of practice fields and; 5. Preserve as much green space as possible on both campuses.

With the aid of graphics Mr. Rozeboom reviewed for the Commission the proposed changes to the South View Middle School, ECC and athletic field(s). Mr. Rozeboom explained at this campus a new pool; gymnasium and theatre will be constructed and grouped together to accommodate both internal and external traffic flow. The internal flow (students, teachers) will occur from the east side and the public will gain access from the west through a new lobby. New music, science, and art classrooms will tap into the existing circulation pattern of the building. Continuing, Mr. Rozeboom said with regard to parking the site presently contains 601 parking stalls and after the renovations are completed parking is increased to 686 long term parking spaces and 22 short term spaces equaling a net increase of 107 spaces. The parent pickup area will also change to prevent parents from lining up on the public street to drop off/pick up their children. All buses will be kept on the west side of the Community Center. Concluding Mr. Rozeboom explained the athletic field will be renovated to include an artificial turf field.

Commissioner Brown questioned if an artificial turf field is really needed, the reasoning behind the orientation of the baseball field and if the development team ever considered vertical expansion. Commissioner Brown also questioned if certain sports would continue to be able to use the newly renovated field.

Mr. Anderson told the commission in response to Commissioner Brown's question the number of fields and sport teams remain the same, adding it was

felt an artificial field creates a surface area that can be used for a number of sports. Mr. Pomeroy added the orientation of the baseball field is a result of the flood plain. Mr. Rozeboom explained the development team looked at vertical expansion but it was felt it wouldn't work well because of the existing conditions of both campuses.

Commissioner Swenson questioned where Lacrosse would be played. Mr. Rozeboom said all athletic fields could accommodate dual use, adding he is unsure where Lacrosse is planned. It is also possible that certain sporting teams will be relocated to a different field.

Commissioner Fischer asked if in the future it is found more classroom space is needed on the east campus where would the increase come from. Mr. Rozeboom said both campuses are able to accommodate growth with the east campus being able to expand toward the east and also into the community center.

Chair Byron asked for further clarification on storm water retention on the east campus. Mr. Pomeroy explained dry ponding is expanded and with the recent redevelopment of the Pamela Park regional ponding area storm water run-off will be efficiently managed.

Mr. Rozeboom directed the attention of the Commission to the west campus and explained the west campus was more difficult to address. He pointed out 104,000 square feet is being added to this site. Entrances will be clarified and traffic circulation is addressed and rerouted. Mr. Rozeboom explained the main road way is moved west allowing the new athletic fields to service as the "front yard" to the new building expansion while at the same time providing safer access to the fields for students. Continuing, Mr. Rozeboom added the bus area is relocated to the east side also providing safer access and traffic flow. Mr. Rozeboom explained at the High School there will be a new expansion and the creation of a two-story lobby main entryway. This new lobby area is easily identified as the entrance and will also serve as a pre-function space for the gym and athletic events. He pointed out a new music suite is located near the existing Fick Auditorium and a new 700-seat theatre will be constructed. The new theatre is located in a new fine arts area designed at the tie between the High School and the Middle School providing use by both schools. Mr. Rozeboom reported a new main lobby is also created on the west side to service the middle school. Mr. Rozeboom explained with regard to parking the west campus presently contains 692 parking spaces with a new long term parking increase to 728 spaces and short term parking increased by 33. The net increase at the west campus is 69 parking spaces. Concluding Mr. Rozeboom reiterated this is a difficult campus because only one street serves this large complex adding he believes the goals of the district have been answered with the proposed new construction and renovation at both sites.

Commissioner McClelland asked if the roadway at the west campus would be two-way. Mr. Rozeboom responded at this time that final point has not yet been decided but we believe it will be two-way.

Commissioner McClelland commented that a certain amount of grading would need to occur on the west campus. Mr. Pomeroy responded that is correct and with graphics explained to the Commission the topography changes at the west campus.

Commissioner Brown questioned if a number of trees would be lost at the west campus as a result of moving the road to the west edge of the site. Mr. Pomeroy responded everything was done to ensure that minimal tree loss would occur. Mr. Pomeroy added in fact he believes the landscaping plan addresses that issue and in the end there will be more vegetation and trees on the west campus site.

Commissioner Fischer told the development team he believes all in all a very good job was accomplished on both sites. He added it is obvious that vehicle traffic especially at the west campus would continue to be a problem. Mr. Anderson said in the past traffic has been an issue at the High School especially since many students drive. He added over the last couple years a student vehicle permitting process has been implemented and car-pooling has been encouraged, and with the proposed changes he hopes traffic congestion would be reduced albeit it is a very busy area during certain times of the day.

Commissioner Brown complimented the team adding he hopes all renovations and additions were designed with keeping an eye forward to the next generation of students.

Chair Byron clarified at this stage if he understands correctly Conditional Use Permit approval is required before Phase 1 can begin and acknowledged the Commission realizes that some "tweaking" of the plan may occur between now and final construction. Continuing, Chair Byron asked that the school district make the time to come back before the Commission once the plans have been finalized, adding the Commission realizes the project will be done in phases.

A brief discussion ensued with Commission Members agreeing a great job, benefiting the school district and the city was accomplished on this large referendum project.

Commissioner McClelland moved to recommend Conditional Use Permit approval subject to permits from the watershed districts and that as a courtesy the school district returns to the Commission with final plans to include building elevations, layout, and exterior materials. Commissioner Fischer seconded the motion. All voted aye; motion carried.

LD-04-1

**Maren Sanderson and Bridget Mitchellette
5528 West 70th Street and 6920 Hillside Lane**

Mr. Larsen informed the Commission the proponents desire to transfer a strip of land measuring approximately 5 feet by 110 feet from the lot on Hillside Lane to the rear of the lot on West 70th Street. Mr. Larsen explained the proposed lot division would cure the encroachment of the concrete patio of the 70th Street house on the property of the house on Hillside Lane.

Mr. Larsen concluded staff recommends approval.

Commissioner McClelland moved to recommend lot division approval. Commissioner Swenson seconded the motion. All voted aye; motion carried.

LD-04-2

**Edwin and Dorothy Sisam
6310-12 Xerxes Avenue
Lot Division**

Mr. Larsen informed the Commission the proponents are requesting a party wall lot division of an existing double bungalow. Separate utility connections are provided. Mr. Larsen concluded staff recommends approval.

Commissioner McClelland moved to recommend lot division approval. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion. All voted aye; motion carried.

III. OTHER BUSINESS:

Discussion on Fences in the R-1 and R-2 Zoning Districts

Mr. Larsen told the commission this item is before them as a result of a complaint registered to the city council by a resident who was unhappy with a fence constructed by his immediate neighbor. Mr. Larsen explained the focus is on fence height especially as it relates to the smaller lot neighborhoods. Mr. Larsen said staff believes this issue has merit and is requesting input from the Commission on their feelings with regard to fence height on lots less than 75 feet in width

Commissioner McClelland stated she agrees with the complainant with regard to fence height. She said in her opinion an 8 foot fence on a small lot would look more like a wall, not a fence.

Chairman Byron commented it is possible fences in excess of 6 feet would not solve the issues intended by the property owner, and on the smaller lots, one would think a fence six feet in height would be adequate.

Commissioner Fischer agreed with Chairman Byron's comments. He added in his opinion even on large residential lots an eight-foot fence isn't needed.

Mr. Larsen said he would agree with those comments.

After a brief discussion Chairman Byron stated there seems to be a consensus that a fence over six feet in height would in most instances be adequate for privacy, etc throughout Edina. Chairman Byron asked Mr. Larsen if he believes the Council would be receptive to the Commission amending the ordinance limiting fence height to six feet citywide. Mr. Larsen responded he believes the City Council would support that.

Commissioner McClelland commented she supports everything said so far, but added in certain circumstances a residential property that abuts a busy street, commercial areas, etc. should be able to go through the variance process to build a fence taller than six feet but no taller than eight feet. Commission Members agreed with that observation adding there are areas in Edina where residential properties do abut commercial areas, highways, rail road tracks etc. and a fence over six feet in height in those instances would have merit.

Commissioner Swenson moved to recommend that the City Council limit fence height to six feet city wide with the option of property owners being able to apply for a fence height variance if certain circumstances warrant it, but limited to

an eight foot maximum. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion. All voted aye; motion carried.

IV. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM

Jackie Hoogenakker