



MEETING SUMMARY

**Re-Scheduled Meeting of the Edina Planning Commission
Wednesday, December 19, 2007, 7:00 PM
Edina City Hall Council Chambers
4801 West 50th Street
Edina, MN**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chair John Lonsbury, Julie Risser, Nancy Scherer, Kevin Staunton, Michael Schroeder, Mike Fischer, Steve Brown, Floyd Grabiell, Arlene Forrest and Katie Sierks

STAFF PRESENT:

Cary Teague and Jackie Hoogenakker, Planning, Heather Worthington, Assistant City Manager, Dan Cornejo, Consultant

I. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTE SUMMARY:

The minutes of the November 26, 2007, meeting were filed as submitted.

II. NEW BUSINESS:

**LD-07-13 Lot Division
Richard Miller
5340 Hollywood Road
5400 Interlachen Boulevard**

Mr. Teague informed the Commission the applicant is proposing to shift an existing lot line through these two properties for the purpose of providing additional land in the rear yard of 5340 Hollywood Road.

Mr. Teague concluded staff recommends lot division approval subject to the plan submitted.

Mr. Miller proponent, and Mr. Brian Alton, attorney were present.

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

Presentation and Update of the 2008 Edina Comprehensive Plan

Staff Presentation:

Mr. Teague addressed the Commission reminding them at this time the City of Edina is in the process of updating its Comprehensive Plan, a process that began roughly one year ago, adding the last time the plan was updated was in 1998. Mr. Teague told the Commission state law requires Comprehensive Plans to be updated every 10 years, adding Edina's "updated plan" is due in October of 2008. Mr. Teague also told the Commission state law requires the Planning Commission to conduct the public hearing(s) on adoption of the plan, which the Commission will do this evening and again on January 30, 2008. Continuing, Mr. Teague explained that the Comprehensive Plan is a plan that guides the City's land use development and policies as well as general guidance of City infrastructure including maintenance, parks, etc.

Mr. Teague gave a brief description of the past years work on the process of updating the Comprehensive Plan.

Commission Presentation:

Chair Lonsbury told the Commission and audience that this evening he will be presenting highlights from four chapters of the updated 2008 Comprehensive Plan. Chair Lonsbury added after his presentation the public will be invited to speak to the Plan; not only on what is addressed this evening, but the entire plan.

Chair Lonsbury said the Task Force and Commission have attended numerous meetings on updating the Comprehensive Plan. They are as follows:

- (12) Community Meetings/Public Hearings:
 - (1) Kick-off Meeting on 12-04-06
 - (1) Community Public Meeting on 03-21-07
 - (4) Quadrant Community Public Mtgs: Aug 23-27-28-30
 - (5) "Elementary School Area" Meetings: Nov 1-7-8-13-15
 - (1) PC Public Hearing on 12-19-07
- (18) Comp Plan Planning Commission Task Force Workshops:
 - 01-24, 02-21, 04-18, 05-16, 05-30, 06-13, 06-27, 07-11, 08-01, 08-08, 08-15, 08-29, 09-12, 09-26, 10-10, 10-24, 11-14, 11-28
- Mayor's State of the City Address: 02-28-07

- (3) Meetings with City Commissions and Task Forces:
Edina Bike Task Force on 06-06-07; Park Board on 06-12-07; Edina Transportation Commission on 08-01-07;
- (4) City Council Work Sessions:
(09-05-06, 04-24-07, 08-07-07, 10-23-07)
- (8) Listening Sessions:
Morningside Women's Club (01-08-07)
Edina Housing Initiative (01-25-07)
Morningside Rotary (03-06-07)
Chris Rofidal and Neighbors (04-26-07)
70th Street Homeowners (05-23-07)
Morningside/Weber Park neighborhood (06-04-07)
Edina Chamber of Commerce (01-04-07)
Housing Coalition (10-10-07)
- (2) Focus Groups
Developers Focus Group (04-30-07)
Inter-Generational Dialogue (04-18-07)

Chair Lonsbury began the presentation:

Vision Goals:

- Maintain strong residential neighborhoods and housing options
- Provide a level of City services that sets Edina apart from other communities
- Develop and maintain a coordinated and balanced transportation system
- Take an active role in commercial and residential redevelopment
- Evaluate and efficiently employ technological advancements to provide City services
- Continually update and refine Vision 20/20
- Maintain a quality, sustainable environment

Housing:

- Encourage creation of lifecycle housing
- Meet City Affordability Goals: 212 units for families who earn up to 60% of area median income (AMI), 175 units for families who earn up to 80% of AMI and 113 units for families who earn up to 115% of AMI

Land Use/Community Design:

- Use of Design Guidelines as part of development review process
- Use of small area plans to identify and study potential "Areas of Change" as identified in the Comp Plan
- "Step down" height of buildings near residential areas and allow some additional height as a "bonus" for meeting environmental, affordability, and amenity goals.

Transportation:

- Implement a fully multi-modal system that supports the land-use vision and goals
- Minimize impact of the system on Edina’s environment and neighborhoods
- Provide multiple travel options for transit users, pedestrians, bicyclists and rideshare users

Chair Lonsbury thanked the Commission for their comments adding notes are being taken on their comments and suggestions. Those comments and suggestions will be discussed, reviewed and implemented where appropriate.

Chair Lonsbury opened the hearing for public comment.

Public Comment:

Edina High School Students, Jake and Nina Brownell and Molly Forbes, commented it is important to preserve existing “urban” forest/trees, and wherever possible, plant new trees. Legislative action – develop tree ordinance.

Cassandra McCluskey, member of the Lewis Ridge Homeowners Association (70th/Cahill area) told the Commission she supports redevelopment, adding she also welcomes “mixed” use in the Cahill retail area. Ms. McCluskey said she would like to see building height limited to four stories in the Cahill area, and the small retail areas in Edina, noting in her opinion buildings with height belong along highways and interstates. Ms. McCluskey also expressed concern over traffic.

Scott Thiss, (Edina Chamber of Commerce) 4518 Drexel Avenue, thanked the Commission for also inviting the business community to be part of the continuing dialogue on the Comprehensive Plan.

Glenn Lindberg, 7401 Coventry Way, told the Commission he read with interest an article(Star & Tribune) on “Cahill Gardens” adding he is in favor of that project (if it ever gets started). Continuing, Mr. Lindberg stated density isn’t necessarily a bad thing if developed correctly. Mr. Lindberg added Edina also needs a vision that takes advantage of the existing potential for commuter rail. Concluding, Mr. Lindberg said the City should consider “sculpting land” looking forward into the future, pointing out the last time a development occurred with “vision” was with Edinborough/Centennial Lakes.

Arri Larson, 7701 Normandale Road/Chamber of Commerce, thanked the Commission and Task Force for all their hard work. Ms. Larson pointed out Edina is also comprised of large tax-based businesses that should also be considered.

Gene Persha, 6917 Cornelia Drive, asked the Commission to remember “community” is “the people”, adding the Comp Plan should reflect the results of citizen involvement. Continuing, Mr. Persha stressed “the people” don’t want buildings of height, adding a scientific poll would bare that out. Mr. Persha referred to a graphic he displayed indicating building height in the greater Southdale area. Concluding, Mr. Persha stressed residents don’t want height, adding Edina is already too congested.

Kathy Zuspan, 6513 Navaho Trail, said she feels that residents are not being heard, adding she is concerned that many residents aren’t even aware the City is updating the Comprehensive Plan. Continuing, Ms. Zuspan said she enjoys living in a suburb; she loves the suburban experience, adding if she wanted to live in an “urban” City she would be living in Minneapolis. Concluding, Ms. Zuspan said if the “Cahill area” is redeveloped with height resulting in higher density that would be problematic for the Cahill area, not only visually, but with traffic congestion. Ms. Zuspan told the Commission to preserve what makes Edina special.

Jan Farrell, 4704 West 70th Street, told the Commission she appreciates the listening sessions with a special thanks to Commissioner Brown for attending SAC meetings. Ms. Farrell added she has continuing concerns about what will happen with West 70th Street.

Lynn Hechanova, 5649 Interlachen Circle, told the Commission she found at least in her experience, that meetings have been very open, with residents given every opportunity to speak. Ms. Hechanova informed the Commission she supports mixed use projects on a smaller scale: (Excelsior/Grand in SLP) however, she is not a proponent of height. Concluding, Ms. Hechanova said if possible all new developments should be developed with walking paths, and bike trails, adding the City should also look at light rail/commuter rail.

Alice Hulbert, 7221 Tara Road, told the Commission in her opinion the “Cahill area” is too large of an area to leave building height unidentified. Ms. Hulbert said she is not comfortable with “podium” height “bonus” height etc., reiterating in her opinion height should be established in this area. Continuing, Ms. Hulbert said if this area is redeveloped she would like to see it developed with a low density residential mixed use project. Concluding, Ms. Hulbert said traffic in the Cahill area is already intense and any redevelopment should keep this in mind. Ms. Hulbert suggested that Edina look at what our neighbors are doing.

Ms. Talghader, 7504 Hyde Park Drive, told the Commission this is the first time she heard about the Comp Plan and that’s only because she read about it in the Star & Tribune. Ms. Talghader said in her opinion residents haven’t been adequately informed about the Comp Plan, adding not everyone has a computer. Ms. Talghader suggested that the City send out “flyers” to all residents with

information about the Comp Plan and how to participate in the process. Concluding, Ms. Talghader stated she doesn't support high-rises.

John Bohan, 800 Coventry Place, thanked the Task Force for their hard work, adding that in his opinion the "Plan" in its current form doesn't represent "the People's Plan". Mr. Bohan suggested that the Commission look to developments such as the "Grand Avenue" project as a project that succeeded. That project has no high-rises, adding small area plans are what is needed in Edina. Concluding, Mr. Bohan suggested when development/redevelopment occurs residents who live within a 1-mile radius of the proposed development/redevelopment should be notified.

Michele Debrey, 7112 Gloucester, told the Commission she agrees with past speaker comments that these meetings aren't communicated to the public very well. Ms. Debrey stated she is against tall buildings.

Mrs. Moore, 6768 Valley View Road, thanked the Task Force and Commission for their hard work on the Plan and informed them she previously served on the Affordable Housing Task Force. Ms. Moore said the response from residents to the Affordable Housing Task Force has indicated their support. Ms. Moore added residents want economic diversity and Edina's elderly are looking for "affordable" homes to live in after they sell their single family homes. Concluding, Ms. Moore encouraged the Council and Commission to implement mandatory inclusionary zoning.

Mr. Rob Miller, 3101 and 3201 69th Street West encouraged the City to retain the existing FAR along with density bonuses allowing buildings to exceed the existing FAR with bonuses. Mr. Miller added in his opinion height is appropriate in certain areas. Mr. Miller pointed out "down-zoning" a property isn't fair to property owners, adding the City needs to allow owners to redevelop their property. Concluding, Mr. Miller suggested that the City look into adopting a PUD element to the Comp Plan and City Code.

JoEllen Dever, 7405 Oaklawn Avenue, told the Commission to continue their work on keeping the City a great place to live, and keeping things in balance. Ms. Dever also commented that in her opinion the City also needs a better notification process.

Ruth Kunze, 6212 Ewing Avenue, told the Commission there's a lot of misinformation out there, especially in her neighborhood. Ms. Kunze said Edina is special, concluding she doesn't want her neighborhood turned into downtown Minneapolis.

Mark Chamberlin, 7004 Bristol, thanked the Commission for listening, adding in his opinion every high-rise built diminishes property values. Mr. Chamberlin said at present when he looks out his window he sees the Westin,

reiterating height diminishes property values. Mr. Chamberlin noted height increases density, pointing out there already is too much traffic on France Avenue, and in the greater Southdale area. Increased density will only increase traffic. Continuing, Mr. Chamberlin said from his discussions with residents none are clamoring for high-rises. Concluding, Mr. Chamberlin said the “notice” process for Comp Plan meetings is not adequate.

Chair Lonsbury thanked the residents for their input informing them that the public hearing on the Comprehensive Plan will be continued to the regularly scheduled January 30, 2008, Commission meeting. Continuing, Chair Lonsbury also told the audience the Commission will take the time it needs to update the Plan, adding public comment is very important and will continue to be taken until the process is complete. Chair Lonsbury said he will also look into placing more ads in the Edina Sun Current notifying residents the Comp Plan process is occurring and the dates and time of future public hearings.

Commissioner Grabiell moved to suspend the public hearing. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion. Public testimony suspended.

Comments from the Commission:

Commissioners expressed the following:

- with regard to traffic/West 70th Street - the City is dealing with very sophisticated modeling that takes into account not only the Comprehensive Plan but what is occurring in neighboring municipalities -
- importance of maintaining local business areas – explore Grand Avenue, Excelsior/Grand redevelopment scenarios -
- traffic is a constant that will always be with the City – it is a real issue, but the City shouldn’t stop development or redevelopment because of traffic. Consider requesting that the State, etc. look at getting something accomplished on our major highway/freeway systems to reduce the burden on local streets and when reviewing redevelopment proposals consider traffic and ways to calm it -
- balance height and density with traffic -
- keep in balance the rights and needs of all property owners, single family, multi-family, commercial, etc. -
- note that the current draft of the Comprehensive Plan does address building height concerns that were raised and will continue to do so -
- keep in mind during redevelopment phases that Edina is an inner ring suburb and is impacted by what is happening in neighboring communities -
- with regard to “Cahill Gardens” the article in the Star & Tribune was premature, the City doesn’t own that property and has no intention of re-developing it, it is private property; however what the City can do is create

a vision, a concept, not only for the Cahill area but the City's other small neighborhood retail areas -

- Reiterate the City does not initiate development and that point will be clarified in the Comp Plan as it relates to small area plans. –

Chair Lonsbury again thanked everyone in attendance for their input reminding them the Comp Plan public hearing is continued to the January 30, 2008, Planning Commission meeting. Chair Lonsbury reiterated the Commission and Task Force will continue to take all comments, written, verbal, e-mail, until the Plan is formally adopted.

III. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 PM

Submitted by