



**MEETING MINUTES**  
**Regular Meeting of the Edina Planning Commission**  
**Wednesday, December 1, 2010**  
**Edina City Hall Council Chambers**  
**4801 50<sup>th</sup> Street West**

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**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Fischer, Risser, Scherer, Staunton, Schroeder, Grabel, Forrest, Rock, Stefanik

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Carpenter, Brown

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Cary Teague and Jackie Hoogenakker

**I. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:**

The minutes of the October 27, 2010, meeting were filed with an addition from Commissioner Grabel.

**II. WELCOME NEW CITY MANAGER; SCOTT NEAL:**

Chair Fischer welcomed Edina's new City Manager; Scott Neal.

Mr. Neal addressed the Commission and said he was very happy and pleased to be Edina's new City Manager. Mr. Neal gave a brief history of his career as a City Manager, adding he has worked with a number of Planning Commissions and would do his best to help the Planning Commission and Planner Teague when he could. Chair Fischer thanked Mr. Neal and said the Commission looks forward to working with him and is pleased to have him aboard.

**III. NEW BUSINESS:**

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**2008.0012.10      Final Development Plan & Final Rezoning**  
**YMCA**  
**7355 York Avenue, Edina**

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**Planner Presentation**

Planner Teague informed the Commission the YMCA is requesting a rezoning for the purpose of building an addition to the existing YMCA at 7355 York Avenue. The

proposed facility expansion would add 15,300 square feet. A new 5,300 square foot leisure pool, and a 9,000 square foot fitness center and studio would be added. Total size of the new YMCA would be 82,100 square feet. The applicant has already received the following approvals from the City:

1. A Preliminary Rezoning from R-1, Single-Dwelling Unit District to POD-1, Planned Office District-1.
2. A Preliminary Development Plan.

The applicant is now requesting the following:

1. Final Development Plan.
2. Final Rezoning.

The applicant has revised the approved preliminary plans in an attempt to address concerns raised by the Planning Commission and City Council during the preliminary approval process. The plan revisions include the following:

- Pedestrian connection provided through the parking lot from York Avenue to the front entrance.
- Drive circulation in the east parking lot has been reversed.
- Parking lot redesigned and meets minimum parking requirements.
- Landscape islands added in the parking lot.
- Redesign of the north driveway entrance/exit.
- A pick-up/drop-off area has been added to the front of the building for cars and buses.
- Bike rack area has been added.
- Handicap parking stalls added.

Planner Teague concluded that staff recommends that the City Council approve the Final Rezoning from R-1, Single-Dwelling Unit District to POD, Planned Office Development District -1 (POD-1), and Final Development Plan based on the following findings:

1. The rezoning is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan which designates the site for Mixed Use.
2. The City would benefit from a new and improved YMCA facility. The site would continue with a use that has been there since the early 1970's.
3. The existing roadways would support the proposed project.
4. The proposed plans meet all minimum Zoning Ordinance requirements.
5. The Final Development Plan is consistent with approved Preliminary Development Plan.

Approval 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 October 29, 2010.
  - Grading plan date stamped October 29, 2010.
  - Landscaping plan date stamped October 29, 2010.
  - Building elevations date stamped October 29, 2010.
  - Building materials board as presented at the Planning Commission and City Council meetings.
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 Transportation Commission.
6. Compliance with the conditions required by the city engineer in his memo dated November 19, 2010.

**Appearing for the Applicant:**

Steve Dorgan, Cresa Partners, Craig Fenton

**Applicant Presentation:**

Mr. Dorgan addressed the Commission and introduced the development team. Continuing, Dorgan said the YMCA is very excited about this project and if all approvals are received the project will "go to bid" sometime in January with construction commencing in the spring of 2011. Dorgan said the development team worked closely with City staff to implement the changes suggested by both staff the Commission and City Council. With graphics Dorgan pointed out the revisions from the previous plan that include; pedestrian connection provided through the parking lot from York Avenue to the front entrance, drive circulation in the east parking lot has been reversed, parking lot was redesigned and meets minimum parking requirements, landscape islands added in the parking lot, redesign of the north driveway entrance/exit, a pickup/drop-off area has been added to the front of the building for cars and buses, a bike rack area was added and handicapped parking stalls were added.

Concluding, Mr. Dorgan said the building materials will complement the existing facility and will consist of brick, precast wall panels, champagne trim accent panels and clear glass. The extended YMCA logo was not included because it did not meet the sign code.

### **Discussion/Questions**

Commissioner Forrest asked if any change was made to the east entrance. Mr. Dorgan responded that the east entrance remains the same; the main entrance continues to be on the west side of the building.

Commissioner Risser commented an earlier concern that was expressed was with the bus stop/sidewalk adding in her opinion the revision looks much better.

The discussion ensued focusing on the circulation of the site and the pedestrian connection from York Avenue to the building. Focus was on the pedestrian walkway and its adjacent parking stalls. The issue was raised if a one inch curb is adequate protection along the walkway. Commissioners felt that the proposed pedestrian walkway needs to be more clearly defined and there was concern that if the proposed walkway was permitted as submitted a negative precedent for pedestrian connections would be established. Commissioners felt that all pedestrian connections should be clearly defined and demarked and that a one inch curb may not be the proper way to do it. It was acknowledged by the Commission that the applicant responded to their suggestion of a pedestrian connection to York Avenue; however, the result wasn't exactly what they envisioned. Continuing, it was reiterated that more than a one inch curb is needed to completely stop a vehicle and to demark a pedestrian walkway. A walkway needs to be safe and allow an overhang.

Commissioner Schroeder suggested that the parking stalls along one side of the pedestrian walkway could be eliminated. He acknowledged that 11 parking stalls would be lost; but the pedestrian walkway would not be compromised. It was also pointed out if compact parking stalls are proposed as accessible that may become an issue because compact spaces may not be allowed as accessible. It was noted that the handicap stalls could be relocated.

It was suggested that a compromise could be made by actually flip flopping only the parking stalls one aisle north. The parking stalls to the north are standard and if they are flip flopped with the compact spaces along the proposed pedestrian walkway with full curb any issue would be resolved.

### **Motion:**

**Commissioner Staunton moved to recommend Final Development Plan and Final Rezoning approval based on staff findings and subject to staff conditions to include the further recommendation that proposed pedestrian walkway include a**

**curb and that the depth/width of the parking stalls along the walkway be moved one aisle to the north and the north stalls be moved one aisle south (flip-flopped). Commissioner Forrest seconded the motion.**

**Commissioner Forrest said she would withdraw her motion if the motion included rezoning. Commissioner Grabiell seconded the motion.**

Commissioner Forrest states she feels strongly that if the Commission proceeds with the rezoning the Comprehensive Plan needs to be amended, pointing out in the MDD zoning districts (MDD-5 specifically) certain uses are permitted, need a Conditional Use or not permitted. Chair Fischer said he understands the issue; however, he thought it was resolved at preliminary. Forrest agreed it was discussed at preliminary; however, the proposed use must be compliant with the Comprehensive Plan and in her opinion the use doesn't comply. Commissioner Staunton clarified that the Comprehensive Plan was amended to guide this area as mixed use, adding it isn't specific to MDD-5, etc. He pointed out a POD zoning is permitted in Mixed Use and MDD-5 is one type of mixed use. Forrest said she just wants to make sure that all bases are covered and that this use wouldn't be required to have a Conditional Use permit. Continuing, Forrest said she is not against the project, or the POD zoning, but wants the minutes to reflect that the Council should review the language in the Comprehensive Plan and zoning ordinance and if a revision to the Comprehensive Plan is required for this project that the City Council takes the necessary steps.

The discussion ensued noting that the Comprehensive Plans "Mixed Use" designation for this area is a guide that permits a number of different uses and designations and that the Commission and Council need to ensure that a balance of uses continues within this area.

**It was noted that Commissioner Staunton's motion included the rezoning. Ayes; Risser, Scherer, Staunton, Schroeder, Grabiell, Forrest, Fischer. Motion carried.**

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2010.0007.10a

**Final Development Plan  
Bruce Carlson/Centennial Lakes/Whole Foods  
7401 France Avenue, Edina**

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**Planner Presentation**

Planner Teague informed the Commission that Bruce Carlson, on behalf of Centennial Lakes Plaza is requesting to tear down 35,331 square feet of retail space currently occupied by Storables and Thomasville Furniture to build a new 36,346 square foot Whole Foods grocery store. The property is located at 7401 France Avenue. The request requires a Final Development Plan.

Planner Teague concluded that staff recommends that the City Council approve the Final Development Plan at 7401 France for a new Whole Foods Store. Approval is based on the following findings:

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

Approval of the Final Development 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 October 29, 2010.
  - Grading plan date stamped October 29, 2010.
  - Landscaping plan date stamped October 29, 2010.
  - Building elevations date stamped October 29, 2010.
  - 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 Transportation Commission.
6. Compliance with the conditions required by the city engineer in his memo dated November 19, 2010.

### **Appearing for the Applicant**

Bruce Carlson, Dan Backstrom, Kathy Anderson, Dan Park and Dick Wolberding

### **Discussion/Questions**

Commissioner Forrest asked Planner Teague if extending the sidewalk is a condition of approval. Planner Teague responded in the affirmative.

Commissioner Risser noted that on this project there appears to be no comments on the proposed use. Planner Teague agreed, adding that a grocery store is a permitted use in the Mixed Development District.

## **Applicant Presentation**

Mr. Carlson introduced the development team for Whole Foods and informed the Commission the Centennial Lakes Plaza retail buildings were constructed in the late 1980's. He explained that the lease for Storables expires soon and Thomasville Furniture is currently on a month to month lease. Continuing, Carlson said the development team began working on this project in July of 2011, appeared before the Transportation Commission on November 18<sup>th</sup>. (approval received) and held a neighborhood meeting on November 23<sup>rd</sup>. Carlson said if the approval and the process proceeds as scheduled construction would commence in March of 2011 with completion sometime in November 2011.

Mr. Carlson stated that Whole Foods is not seeking any variances or special considerations; the new building, as proposed, meets all zoning requirements. With graphics Carlson gave an overview of the project. Carlson noted that one change to the site is the relocation of the loading dock to the east side of the building along Parklawn Avenue. Concluding, Carlson said with regard to the condition of extending the sidewalk Whole Foods would be agreeable to extend the sidewalk; however, believes the best time to do this would be when the sidewalk connection is made along the entire stretch of France.

With graphics Ms. Anderson pointed out the grade differential along Parklawn Avenue, and the landscaping features along the north boundary of the site, noting the entire site is heavily landscaped and additional landscaping would be added. She explained that the sidewalk on the east would extend around the new building and continue to the front door of the store. Anderson said the building materials will consist of brick, stone, precast stone, lime stone, glass, decorative trim to match brick, banding, and a trellis element on the front building wall. Cart storage is in the interior of the building.

## **Public Comment**

Kim Montgomery, 5300 Evanswood Lane, said as a person who travels from the north that she gains access to the Centennial shops by making a left turn at Parklawn Avenue, adding if she wants to "visit" the south shops from the north she gains access to those shops by proceeding across/through the north lot. Ms. Montgomery said this movement works well because the majority of the parking spaces in the north lot are empty.

## **Motion to close public hearing**

**Commissioner Grabiell moved to close the public hearing. Commissioner Scherer seconded the motion. All voted aye; public hearing closed.**

## **Discussion**

Chair Fischer acknowledged that he also cuts through the north lot as previously mentioned by Ms. Montgomery and asked how this movement would be addressed.

Ms. Anderson said they don't want to encourage anyone to zigzag across the north parking lot to gain access to the south. She added traffic calming measures would be introduced to encourage a new habit. Commissioner Grabel stated he agrees that it would be a good idea to discourage crisscross traffic in this area, acknowledging that he had done the same thing.

Commissioner Grabel asked Planner Teague why the Planning Commission is hearing this proposal if the building as proposed meets code and the use is permitted. Planner Teague responded that the Zoning Ordinance requires a public hearing in the form of a Final Development Plan for development and/or redevelopment of all commercial properties. R-1 and R-2 properties are the only zoning classifications exempt.

Commissioner Staunton questioned the hesitation on the part of Whole Foods on continuing the sidewalk from the existing sidewalk along France to the main entrance of Centennial Lakes Plaza. Mr. Carlson explained that Whole Foods does not object to extending the sidewalk along the property boundary to the entrance; however, until the sidewalk along France Avenue is contiguous extending the sidewalk only along this section would be creating "sidewalk to nowhere". He pointed out contiguous sidewalks are limited along the east side of France Avenue, reiterating their thought was to continue the sidewalk south and the north of the main entrance when sidewalks are extended east of France and along the entire west boundary of the Centennial Lakes Shops. Commissioners agreed that this makes sense, adding knowing where the bus stop was in this area would be important in making a decision on extending the sidewalk. Planner Teague noted that when the City is presented an opportunity (allowed by code) to gain a sidewalk it does.

The discussion continued with Commissioners raising a question on a condition of approval from the City Engineer on page A 21 "providing landscape islands at the ends of the two outer parking trees". Commissioners said they need clarification on this point. Planner Teague said he would have this point clarified before the Council meeting.

The discussion ensued and focused on the Parklawn entrance/exit to the site and the City Engineers recommendation that the entrance into the site be increased to two lanes. Mr. Parks with graphics explained the movements in and out of the site and noted that in his opinion keeping the entrance similar to what exists with the smaller entrance and island and adding a 3 inch curb designed to accommodate vehicle tire roll-over creates a safer expanse and less confusion on entering the site. Parks said the larger trucks deliver their merchandise before 6:00 am eliminating any congestion or crossover traffic. Commissioners expressed agreement with Mr. Park's comments, adding widening the entrance to two lanes to accommodate delivery trucks doesn't

make sense.

In conclusion Commissioners stated they support the project as presented with clarifications before the City Council meeting.

## **MOTION**

**Commissioner Grabiell moved to recommend Final Development Plan approval in accordance with staff findings and subject to staff conditions. Commissioner Scherer seconded the motion.**

Chair Fischer said from the discussion thus far that he believes three points need to be clarified before the City Council hears the Final Development request. First, further discussion and resolution needs to occur on the sidewalk, acknowledging that it is important to know where the bus stop is located for northbound travelers; second, the turning movement into the site, two lanes or one; the City Engineer is recommending double lanes in and out; and Commissioners are hesitant to agree; and third, clarify the landscape island(s) as previously mentioned.

**Commissioner's Gabriel and Scherer agreed that the comments from Chair Fischer should be included in the motion. All voted aye; motion carried.**

### **IV. COMMUNITY COMMENT:**

None

### **V. OTHER BUSINESS:**

#### **Grandview District**

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Chair Fischer informed the Commission that Commissioner Staunton would brief them on the Small Area Guide Plan Process/Grandview District ("area") Report. The Report was authorized by the City Council and developed by members of the Planning Commission and Edina residents and business communities.

Commissioner Staunton addressed the Commission and explained that two teams were established to facilitate the report; the Community Advisory Team and the Design Team. Staunton explained that he was the chair of the Community Advisory Team, adding that tonight he would be seeking input from the Commission on the Report before it is presented to the City Council at a later date.

Continuing, Commissioner Staunton gave the background and history of the area called the "Grandview District" that includes the old public works building/site. Staunton noted that the Comprehensive Plan identifies the Grandview District as an area of potential change where future development should be guided by a small area plan.

Geographically the Grandview District includes the area between Eden and Vernon Avenues, crossing Highway 100 on each street. Staunton reported that at the suggestion of Chair Fischer and the Planning Commission the City Council authorized the Planning Commission to proceed with a “small area guide plan process”. Staunton stated the process was not intended to be a “small area plan” for the Grandview District but a guide plan that would deliver principles that would further guide the planning and demonstrate development of the area(s). The process was led by Commission Members and included Edina residents, business and property owners, school district representatives and city board and commission members. Staunton pointed out what was unique about this process was that it tapped into the incredible talents of the community by forming Community and Design Advisory teams. At this time Staunton introduced members of the “teams”; Kim Montgomery, Lisa Diehl, Peter Sussman and Sue Davidson that were present. Staunton reiterated he led the Community Advisory Team and Commissioner Schroeder led the Community Design Team.

Staunton delivered his presentation outlining the time line of the process which began on April 8, 2010. He said the process from start to finish was incredibly fast; roughly three weeks whereby the Citizen Advisory Team developed seven “guiding” principles of a small area plan and presented those principles to the Design Team.

Staunton highlighted the seven principles:

- Leverage publicly-owned parcels and civic presence to create a vibrant and connected district that serves as a catalyst for high quality, integrated public and private development.
- Enhance the Districts economic viability as a neighborhood center with regional connections, recognizing that meeting the needs of both businesses and residents will make the district a good place to do business.
- Turn perceived barriers into opportunities. Consider layering development over supporting infrastructure and taking advantage of the natural topography of the area.
- Design for the present and the future by pursuing logical increments of change using key parcels as stepping-stones to a more vibrant, walkable, functional, attractive, and life-filled place.
- Organize parking as an effective resource for the district by linking community parking to public and private destinations while also providing parking that is convenient for businesses and customers.
- Improve movement within and access to the district for people of all ages by facilitating multiple modes of transportation, and preserve future transit opportunities provided by the rail corridor.
- Create an identity and unique sense of place that incorporates natural spaces into high quality sustainable development reflecting Edina’s innovative development heritage.

After receiving the seven principles the Design Team gathered in a Design Charette to illustrate what a small area plan could look like. Staunton reiterated the outcome was an illustration of what this area could evolve into, adding, it's not a blueprint.

In conclusion Commissioner Staunton stated that in his opinion the final Report delivers what the Council had asked; resulting in four recommendations to the City Council:

- The City Council accept and approve the "Report" as a guide
- The City Council adopts the Guiding Principles in the Report as the foundation for development of a small area plan for the Grand View District.
- The process of developing a small area plan for the Grandview District be led by a community based advisory team that includes members of the current CAT and Design Team; as a caveat Staunton informed the Commission that the City Council gave staff the authority to apply for a grant from the Metropolitan Council to assist with work on moving to the next phase of a full blown small area plan for the Grandview District.
- The City retains ownership of all City-owned public property in the Grandview District while the planning process continues.

Chair Fischer thanked all those who were involved with the small area guide plan process; especially thanking Kevin Staunton and Michael Schroeder. Fischer said at this time no further action needs to be taken by the Commission.

Commissioner Grabiell asked Commissioner Staunton what the difference was between regional and neighborhood centers. Commissioner Staunton responded that a regional center was an area similar to the Southdale area that draws in the public from all areas; Richfield, Bloomington, Eden Prairie, etc. A neighborhood center draws from the neighborhood, and in the case of the Grandview District it could also draw people from St. Louis Park.

Planner Teague informed the Commission in late July staff applied for a \$100,000 grant from the Metropolitan Council, adding that Edina has made it through the initial "cuts" and are now waiting for the decision by the Met Council on if the City receives the grant to initiate a small area guide plan for the Grandview District.

Chair Fischer again thanked Commissioner Staunton and asked Staff to forward the final Report to the City Council.

**VI. INTERGOVERNMENTAL BUSINESS:**

Chair Fischer acknowledged back of packet materials.

**VII. NEXT MEETING DATE:**

**December 29, 2010**

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM.

**Respectfully submitted:**

***Jackie Hoogenakker***