

**MINUTES  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
CITY OF WHITE BEAR LAKE  
MAY 24, 2021**

The regular monthly meeting of the White Bear Lake Planning Commission was called to order on Monday, May 24, 2021, beginning at 7:00 p.m. via WebEx, pursuant to a statement issued by the Mayor under Minnesota Statutes, section 13D.021 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, by Chair Ken Baltzer.

**1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL:**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Michael Amundsen, Ken Baltzer, Jim Berry, Pamela Enz (7:07 p.m.), Mark Lynch, Erich Reinhardt, and Peter Reis.

MEMBERS EXCUSED: None.

MEMBERS UNEXCUSED: None.

STAFF PRESENT: Anne Kane, Community Development Director, Samantha Crosby, Planning & Zoning Coordinator, and Ashton Miller, Planning Technician.

OTHERS PRESENT: Charles Beckmann, Len Schreier, Susan Welles, and Molly Theno.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MAY 24, 2021 AGENDA:**

Member Lynch moved for approval of the agenda. Member Reis seconded the motion, and the agenda was approved (6-0).

**3. APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 26, 2021 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES:**

Member Berry moved for approval of the minutes. Member Reis seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved (6-0).

**4. CASE ITEMS:**

A. **Case No. 20-1-SHOPa:** A request by Teri Faison for a three year extension to an existing Special Home Occupation Permit, per Code Section 1302.120, in order to operate a massage therapy business out of the front/main level unit of a triplex at the property located at 4445 Lincoln Avenue.

Miller discussed the case. Staff recommended approval.

Member Baltzer opened the public hearing. As no one spoke to the matter, Member Baltzer closed the public hearing.

Member Reis moved to recommend approval of Case No. 20-1-SHOPa. Member Berry seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 6-0. Member Enz abstained due to connectivity difficulties during the presentation.

- B. **Case No. 21-7-V:** A request by **Beckmann Custom Homes, LLC** for a minor subdivision to split one lot into two, per Code Section 1407.030, and two 20 foot variances from the 100 foot minimum lot width, per Code Section 1303.040, Subd.5.b, in order to create two 80 foot wide lots at the property located at 4783 Otter Lake Road.

Miller discussed the case. Staff recommended approval subject to the conditions listed in the report.

Member Amundsen pointed out that at least one of the concept plans exhibited a house that is 54 feet wide, larger than the buildable space presented by staff. He wondered if that would cause the applicants to seek variances in the future. Miller explained that attached garages with no livable space have lesser setbacks, so would be able to encroach into the buildable space demonstrated on the graphic.

Member Baltzer opened the public hearing. As no one spoke to the matter, Member Baltzer closed the public hearing.

Member Reinhardt moved to recommend approval of Case No. 21-2-LS & 21-10-V. Member Reis seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0.

- C. **Case No. 21-12-V:** A request by **Len Schreier** for a two foot variance from the 20 foot setback from a side yard for a pool, per Code Section 1302.030, Subd.20.b.2.b.1, and a ten foot variance from the 30 foot front yard setback for a fence, per Code Section 1302.030, Subd.6.h.4, in order to install an in-ground pool 18 feet from the west property line and a six foot fence 20 feet from the front property line at the property located at 4775 Brooke Court.

Crosby discussed the case. Staff recommended approval subject to the conditions listed in the report.

Member Reis questioned where the water would go when the pool is drained since runoff is a concern in the area. Crosby replied that residents are allowed to drain pool water into the street, so it would most likely go down the storm drain. She did not think it wise to drain the water into the rain gardens due to the chemicals and inability of the rain garden to soak up that much water in a timely manner.

Member Enz explained that the pool is not fully drained at the end of the season. Some of the water is retained over the winter.

Member Baltzer opened the public hearing.

Len Schreier, 4775 Brooke Court, applicant, confirmed that the pool will not be fully drained every year. He stated that they are considering a salt-water pool to reduce the amount of chemicals used.

Member Baltzer closed the public hearing.

Member Enz moved to recommend approval of Case No. 21-12-V. Member Reis seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0.

- D. **Case No. 21-13-V:** A request by **Susan Welles on behalf of Molly Theno** for a nine foot variance from the 30 foot setback required along a side abutting a public right-of-way, per Code Section 1303.230, Subd.5.a.4; a 7.1 foot variance from the 10 foot side yard setback required, per Code Section 1303.060, Subd.5.c.2; and a 17.5 foot variance from the 30 foot rear yard setback required, per Code Section 1302.030, Subd.4.e, in order to construct a new two car attached garage at the property located at 4870 Johnson Avenue.

Crosby discussed the case. Staff recommended approval as requested.

Member Reis commented that when he visited the site, he noticed some mold or mildew on the stucco along the north side of the home. He wondered if this was a concern throughout the rest of the house.

Member Baltzer opened the public hearing.

Susan Welles, Husnik Homes, applicant, explained that the north end has experienced water damage. The flat roof is essentially caving in, which is why they will be replacing it in conjunction with the addition of the two-car garage. They are unaware of further issues, but there are plans for major renovations to the home, so any damage that is uncovered will be addressed.

Member Baltzer closed the public hearing.

Member Berry expressed appreciation that the homeowner is opting to remodel the existing framework rather than tear down and rebuild the home. The eclectic group of housing styles in downtown adds to the uniqueness of the area.

Member Berry moved to recommend approval of Case No. 21-13-V. Member Enz seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0.

- E. **Case No. 17-1-CP:** Final review and adoption of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan

Kane provided an update on the revisions made to the 2040 Comprehensive Plan based on the collaborative efforts between the City and the Met Council. Staff recommended approval of the adoption of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

Member Reis asked about the status of the Rush Line Bus Rapid Transit project and whether the Met Council would have the final sign-off once all the details are determined.

Kane explained that the project is primarily led by Ramsey County. The project relies heavily on federal grants, which are competitive, so it is not necessarily a done deal, however the County has identified a local funding source to match should federal funds be secured. She acknowledged that a lot can change in the five years before the projected opening in 2026.

Kane noted that the Rush Line has been included in the City's Comprehensive Plan since at least 2000. Over time, it has become a lot more defined in terms of mode of transport and route. The environmental analysis just wrapped up last week and is now open for public comment. She does not believe there will be significant changes to the configuration going forward. It is up to Ramsey County to choose to proceed and secure funding.

Member Baltzer praised staff for all the work done on the Comp Plan.

Member Lynch moved to recommend approval of Case No. 17-1-CP. Member Reis seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0.

**5. DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

**A. City Council Meeting Summary of May 11, 2021.**

Crosby provided an update on the variance request for an increased amount of office space in the B-5 zoning district (Case Number 21-7-V). She explained that the City Council directed staff to amend the zoning code to allow for Interim Use Permits for properties zoned B-5. This would allow the current tenants of the building two years to find a new location.

Member Berry asked if the change in code has the possibility of changing the landscape of the downtown area. Crosby replied that as an interim use, a sunset date is required. She reiterated that the fire suppression requirements would make the change from retail to office cost prohibitive for some. Kane added that similar concerns were raised at the City Council meeting. The tenant can ask for an extension, but the Council has made it clear they want the clock started, so May 1<sup>st</sup> in two year time has been indicated as the tenant's completion date. She hoped that by then the City will be in a more knowledgeable post-covid retail environment.

In response to a question from Member Lynch, staff confirmed that either the tenant moves or they obtain the Interim Use Permit for two years.

Member Amundsen asked if there was any discussion on re-evaluating the retail to office ratios. Kane answered that while there was no discussion at the City Council meeting, the interim would be a good time to complete such an assessment.

Member Enz questioned if that sort of analysis would come from a Planning Commission recommendation. Kane confirmed that it could.

**B. Park Advisory Commission Meeting Minutes of March 18, 2021.**

Member Enz shared excitement about the work being done on the gazebo to bring it into working order.

Member Berry wondered if the whole Parks budget was being used on the retaining wall at Memorial Beach. Member Reis stated that during his time on the Parks Commission, they were given a certain amount from the City for park improvements, but still had other funds available.

**6. ADJOURNMENT:**

Member Berry moved to adjourn, seconded by Member Enz. The motion passed unanimously (7-0), and the May 24, 2021 Planning Commission meeting was adjourned at 8:04 p.m.