

**MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
CITY OF WHITE BEAR LAKE
APRIL 30, 2018**

The regular monthly meeting of the White Bear Lake Planning Commission was called to order on Monday, April 30, 2018, beginning at 7:00 p.m. in the White Bear Lake City Hall Council Chambers, 4701 Highway 61, White Bear Lake, Minnesota by Chair Jim Berry.

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Jim Berry, Mary Alice Divine, Marvin Reed, Peter Reis, Ken Baltzer, Mark Lynch, and Erich Reinhardt (arrived at 7:03 p.m.).

MEMBERS EXCUSED: None.

MEMBERS UNEXCUSED: None.

STAFF PRESENT: Anne Kane, Community Development Director; Samantha Crosby, Planning & Zoning Coordinator, Jesse Farrell, Assistant City Engineer, and Jacquell Nissen, Housing and Economic Development Coordinator.

OTHERS PRESENT: Suzi Hudson, Peter Kramer, Dave Cebula, Candice Christensen, Steven Wolgamot, Judith Benham, H. Alan Kantrud, Lori Swanson, Karen Kepple, Roberta Johnson, and Mary Gove.

2. **APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 30, 2018 AGENDA:**

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

3. **APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 26, 2018 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES:**

Berry questioned if there were any comments or corrections to the March meeting minutes. Seeing none, he requested a motion. Member Baltzer moved for approval of the minutes. Member Divine seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved unanimously (6-0).

4. **CASE ITEMS:**

A. **Case No. 18-2-CUP:** A request by **White Bear Center for the Arts** for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a community center in a residential zoning district, per Code Section 1303.030, Subd.4.a, in order to construct a parking lot expansion onto the property located at 4962 Division Avenue.

Reinhardt arrived at the meeting.

Crosby discussed the case. Staff recommended approval subject to final engineering and other standards conditions.

Divine requested further information on the lighting plan. Crosby reviewed the lighting plan with the Commission, clarifying that there would be four poles and 8 fixtures, as each pole had two arms.

Divine asked if the zoning on the property would change. Crosby commented the zoning for this parcel would remain residential.

Reis questioned if the R-3 zoning would allow duplexes. Crosby explained duplexes were not allowed but noted mother-in-law units were allowed by CUP.

Reis inquired if additional parking could be placed on Division. Kane stated that parking is not allowed on Division Avenue and the City would not want to encourage it as a result of the arts center or community theater.

Lynch asked if the proposed lights would be similar to the new lights being used in the City. Crosby was unsure of the exact make and model, but reported a modern, LED style fixture would be used.

Lynch stated he liked the “funk” of the design with the angled stalls frequently separated by landscaping. He questioned how many of the trees would be lost. Crosby explained the intent is to maintain as many of the trees as possible, but that the layout may need to be tweaked to do so.

Berry opened the public hearing.

Suzi Hudson, 2290 Fifth Street, Executive Director for the White Bear Center for the Arts. She thanked the Commission for their consideration and noted the White Bear Center for the Arts was celebrating its 50th year in the community, and the new facility opened on Long Avenue in 2013.

Ms. Hudson reported over 33,000 people are served on a yearly basis, over 5,000 of these being children. She discussed the positive economic impact the Center for the Arts has on the community. She reviewed the Center’s hours of operation noting they were currently open three evenings per week and had no weekend evening hours. She noted the Center offers over 900 classes a year and participation was on the rise. Registration has doubled since 2013.

Ms. Hudson provided further comment on how the parking lot expansion would assist with the partnership the gallery has with the schools. She explained the parking lot expansion would not degrade the neighborhood or adjacent properties. She noted she has been working with Tom Barth on this project and was greatly honored Mr. Barth was willing to share his property for the betterment of the community.

Ms. Hudson provided feedback on the neighborhood meeting noting she had worked to address the concerns raised at this meeting. She described how the new parking lot would improve pedestrian safety. She discussed the positive impacts museums have on neighboring property values and encouraged the Commission to offer their support to the requested Conditional Use Permit.

Berry asked how the pathway would work. Ms. Hudson discussed her vision for the pathway and hoped that students from the school would frequently use this pathway between the school and the art center.

Lynch questioned if motion sensor lighting would be used. Ms. Hudson stated she has not yet conducted any research on this, but would investigate this further this type of lighting if required by the City.

David Cebula, 4952 Division, stated he had questions regarding the property value statistics. He did not believe his property value would be increased after a very valuable home was removed and turned into a parking lot. Berry encouraged Mr. Cebula to contact Ms. Hudson to obtain the study information.

Mr. Cebula asked how stormwater would flow from the new parking lot. Ms. Crosby explained that water would drain from the drive aisles to the porous paver parking stalls which have a subgrade design to absorb water from the site. Then, if necessary, rain gardens would surround the lot. It was noted that properly constructed rain gardens dry up after a day and do not have standing water for several days after a rain event.

Mr. Cebula expressed concern with people walking through the pathway at night. He reported he does foster care and wanted this area to be safe and secure for his family. Ms. Hudson offered to install a chain across the driveway between the two lots to keep cars from this area at night. She commented that motion sensor lights were being considered to discourage pedestrian traffic.

Mr. Cebula encouraged the installation of the gate. Further discussion ensued regarding the areas where fence would be removed and fence would remain.

Mr. Cebula requested the lighting within the parking lot not be similar to the Lakeshore Players. Crosby reported the proposed lot would have shorter lighting than Lakeshore Players.

Candice Christensen, 2149 Eighth Street, expressed concerns with the lighting, along with the promise that the parking would be shared with the Lakeshore Players. She asked if the parking area would be irrigated. Ms. Hudson reported the parking area would be irrigated.

Ms. Christensen stated she was frustrated by the noise that would be coming from the parking lot, particularly plowing and sprinklering. Lastly, she indicated she was concerned about the safety of the children that would be crossing Division Avenue in order to reach the path, as the sidewalk is on the west side of Division and there is no crosswalk.

As no one else came forward, Berry closed the public hearing.

Reinhardt asked if the six-foot fence was a residential standard. Crosby reported this was the maximum fence height that would be allowed in a residential area without a variance.

Divine supported access between the two parking areas being chained off to deter children from gathering in this area and suggested a condition requiring such be added to the approval.

Lynch suggested the City consider adding a crosswalk to move pedestrians safely from one side of the street to the other. He stated he was of the opinion that the neighborhood would benefit by the expansion of the arts center in the long run.

Member Reis moved to recommend approval of Case No. 18-2-CUP. Member Lynch seconded the motion as amended by Divine with all of staff's conditions. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0.

Berry thanked those in attendance and explained that this matter would be addressed by the City Council on May 8, 2018.

B. Case No. 18-4-V: A request by the **City of White Bear Lake** for a 6.5-foot variance from the 10-foot setback requirement, per Code Section 1202.040, Subd.2.B, in order to install a freestanding sign 3.5 feet from the property line at the White Bear Lake Sports Center located at 1329 Highway 96.

Kane discussed the case. The sign would include a dynamic display and would meet all other requirements of the code. Staff recommended approval of the variance subject to standard conditions and an increased expiration date to two years to allow for the creation of a city wide branding and design standard.

Berry questioned what kind of precedent would be set with the requested 6.5-foot variance. Kane explained all variance requests are reviewed based on their own merit. She commented most passers-by would not know where the property lines were located. The subject site is a flag lot with a very narrow frontage and the building is 600 feet south of the road. If a similar condition existing for a commercial property a similar variance would likely be reasonable; we are not affording ourselves anything we would deny others under similar circumstances.

Divine asked if the shopping center sign would be coming down. Kane indicated the sign would remain but noted the Sports Center panel would be removed. She does not know if it will be replaced by another tenant in the center.

Berry opened the public hearing. As no one came forward, Berry closed the public hearing.

Member Baltzer moved to recommend approval of Case No. 18-4-V. Member Reed seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0.

5. **DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

A. Comprehensive Plan: Transportation Element

Farrell provided the Commission with an overview on the Transportation Element within the Comprehensive Plan. He discussed the City's existing transportation system and how this aligns with the region. He was pleased to report that based on public input and staff observation, the existing transportation system was in good condition. He commented on how the City has been completing street improvement projects on an annual basis and uses each project to improve infrastructure

Farrell noted the City had completed approximately 90% of its streets and had brought these roadways up to current engineering standards. Therefore, this chapter will primarily focus on strengthening accessibility, especially in the vicinity of schools and parks, addressing barriers, such as Highway 61, and as well anticipating long term projects such as the Rush Line Bus Rapid Transit and the Bruce Vento Trail. He touched upon various future projects that require coordination with the County (such as Long Avenue, South Shore Boulevard, Otter Lake Road, and the State (pedestrian access along Century Avenue, across 694, and across Highway 61 at various locations).

Divine asked how Ramsey County prioritizes their projects. Farrell described in general terms how agencies including Ramsey County historically prioritized projects based strictly on pavement condition and motorized traffic levels. Most agencies are now beginning to look beyond those factors to considerations like pedestrian and bike accessibility, economic development, and more. The Commission thanked Farrell for his thorough report and for his assistance on the Comprehensive Plan.

B. Comprehensive Plan: Economic Competitiveness Element

Nissen reviewed the Economic Competitiveness Element within the Comprehensive Plan with the Commission. She discussed how this item relates to the region and commented on the City's goals. She highlighted the City's key industries for employment along with the spectrum of jobs and wages offered in the community. She also explained the areas with the highest jobs counts in the community, and the importance of the employment centers to the entire economy.

Nissen explained the importance of understanding what jobs residents have and how that pertains to the housing. She explained that having a diverse housing stock and jobs helps maintain a stable economy and community. She described how community stakeholders have been addressing the workforce gap. She described how Century College was working with local businesses to train the workforce to meet their needs. Staff commented on the lawsuit regarding the lake water and noted this matter had not been included in this section. Further discussion ensued regarding the City's goals and strategies going forward.

Reinhardt requested a recap on the commercial space adjacent to Boatworks Commons. Kane reminded the Commission that the original intent was to have a two-story restaurant. She discussed how the developer wanted to change that to office space. The City work through this matter with the developer and ended up with the compromise of a restaurant on the ground floor and a yoga

studio above it. The real lesson learned was that developers may have to underwrite the commercial components of vertically mixed use projects.

Kane described how revitalization and street projects within the City were improving the vitality of the community. She noted the City was slightly behind on the Comprehensive Plan deadline and that a six-month extension would be requested from the Met Council.

Lynch commended staff on their efforts on the Comprehensive Plan and stated he appreciated the fact this document was being completed in house. The Commission was in agreement.

Kane introduced a redevelopment proposal for a multi-family apartment complex at the intersection of County Road E and Bellaire within the City. She reported the concept includes 4 separate building three stories in height, 20% affordable units integrated throughout and with commercial components at the street level corner units. A Neighborhood Meeting is scheduled for May 7th to introduce the concept to interested neighbors.

C. Elections (current chair and vice both eligible for one more year)

Member Divine nominated Jim Berry to serve as Planning Commission Chair for the coming year. Member Baltzer seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 6-0.

Member Baltzer nominated Mark Lynch serve as Planning Commission Vice Chair for the coming year. Member Reis seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 6-0.

D. City Council Meeting Minutes of April 10, 2018.

No discussion.

E. Park Advisory Commission Meeting Minutes of April 19, 2018.

No discussion.

6. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Member Baltzer moved to adjourn, seconded by Member Lynch. The motion passed unanimously (7-0), and the April 30, 2018 Planning Commission meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m.