

**MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
CITY OF WHITE BEAR LAKE
November 26, 2018**

The regular monthly meeting of the White Bear Lake Planning Commission was called to order on Monday, November 26, 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: Jim Berry, Ken Baltzer, Marvin Reed, Peter Reis, Mary Alice Divine, Mark Lynch, and Erich Reinhardt.

MEMBERS EXCUSED: None.

MEMBERS UNEXCUSED: None.

STAFF PRESENT: Anne Kane, Community Development Director, Samantha Crosby, Planning & Zoning Coordinator, Tracy Shimek, Housing & Economic Development Coordinator & Ashton Miller, Planning Technician.

OTHERS PRESENT: Tom Wilson, Kathy Dixon, Anne Lindgren, Laura Kunde, Deb Steele, Susan Schleusner, Joyce Hall, Timothy Orf, and Steve Engstran.

2. APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 26, 2018 AGENDA:

Member Reed moved for approval of the agenda. Member Reis seconded the motion, and the agenda was approved (7-0).

3. APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 29, 2018 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES:

Member Reis moved for approval of the minutes. Member Baltzer seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved (7-0).

4. CASE ITEMS:

- A. **Case No. 18-18-V:** A request by **Tom Wilson** for a variance for a third accessory structure, per Code Section 1302.030 Subd.4.i, in order to allow a roofed pergola at 2103 East County Road F.

Miller discussed the case. Staff recommended approval of the case.

Member Reis asked if the structure is attached. Miller responded that no, it is detached; it is located six inches from the house. Member Reis then inquired if the pergola would be allowed were it attached to the house. Kane replied that it would be permitted if it were an

extension of the garage. However, the building code probably precludes merely connecting the pergola to the garage with long screws.

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

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

- B. Case No. 18-1-CPA:** A **City-initiated** request for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to reguide five parcels of land located in the northwest quadrant of County Road E and Linden Avenue from “Commercial” to “High Density Residential”. The request is being made in order to allow for the future possibility of redevelopment of 17XX, 1709, 1713, 1715 County Road E and the land-locked parcel adjacent thereto: PID 3273022440199.

Crosby discussed the case.

Member Divine inquired about the new “Mixed Use Transit Oriented” land use category and how staff envisioned mixed use. Kane explained that initially the mix was to include commercial and housing. What we have learned is that commercial on the bottom floor with housing on top is very challenging in the suburbs. Presently, higher density residential without the commercial component is most important. More rooftops in the area will help the existing commercial properties along this corridor.

Member Divine asked if more areas in the City will be given this designation. Kane said yes, to supplement existing commercial, to support businesses and if constructed the Rush Line along Highway 61.

Member Divine commented that even though staff anticipates the property to provide market rate housing, without a proposal, that may not necessarily occur. It could mean that senior or low-income housing is developed instead. She asked if the zoning code made specifications for senior or low-income housing. Kane replied that special provisions are given for senior housing projects. Crosby added that the code is lenient, but the market is fairly saturated with high density senior, so not likely.

Member Reed questioned the increase in units per acre allowed in transit-oriented areas, noting that the height implications for such a density was a bit of a concern. Crosby informed that for multiple reasons higher density residential makes transit-oriented development work better.

Member Reis asked what the offset would be if greater density was allowed under a Planned Unit Development (PUD). Crosby replied that we cannot be sure, but the process will be guided by the question, “how will the project go above and beyond what the zoning code requires?” and will result in a little give and take on all sides.

Member Reis asked about the Homeowners Association’s continued maintenance of the strip of land along the west side of Linden Avenue. Crosby replied that all homeowners maintain their boulevard.

Member Lynch commented that he likes the opportunity this land-use regarding presents. He believes that a new multi-family building will provide young people the opportunity to

move to White Bear Lake without having to buy property. He mentioned that he visited Linden Avenue and cited the calming effects of driving on the curved road and low speeds. He believes that traffic will divert to other, faster roads should the corner be developed.

Based on limited research, Member Lynch found that property values in the area have returned to where they were in 2008. If we do this right, it will further help to improve property values and complement Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) going in. He remarked how we have the opportunity to make this intersection great and truly appreciates all the feedback from the public.

Member Lynch concluded by asking what rent would be based on median income. Unsure of rates, Crosby provided numbers on the household income needed to afford market rate, noting it is relatively high. Member Berry commented that market rate does not mean cheap.

Member Reinhardt clarified that there is not a proposed development right now. We are debating turning a closed door into a cracked door by providing new opportunity for development. Crosby affirmed that is the intent of the request.

Berry opened the public hearing.

Susan Schleusner, 3824 Linden Avenue. She expressed concern with the amount of traffic a development in the area would produce. She informed the Commission that when The Waters senior housing was proposed, the neighbors were told traffic would only increase by five cars a day. The neighborhood has a lot more than five cars a day; it has five buses an hour. Further, Linden Avenue is not good to drive in the winter. Parking is only on one side and cars do not move for the plows. It is dangerous. She is interested in what the traffic study will say, because Linden Avenue cannot handle an increase in traffic.

She mentioned that she did not receive notice for the Planning Commission meeting, only a notice from the developer. It is not good that only a few residents on Linden received notification. She urged the Commission to consider current Linden residents when making decisions on this project.

Member Lynch responded that it is great that the developers contacted the residents before the Planning Commission hears the proposal. This is the opportunity for neighbors to give input and shape the concept plan.

Laura Kunde, 3692 Linden Place, president of the Linden Townhome Association. She asked about the stipulations of who was notified of the meeting and then read the neighborhood meeting invite she had received from the developers. She also brought up concerns with Linden Avenue traffic. Guests to the townhomes have to park along Linden Avenue and cross the street because there is not enough guest parking. During rush hour traffic, it can be very busy and dangerous to cross. She worries a new apartment will exacerbate these problems. She echoed concerns regarding the height of the potential building. She questioned how many higher income people will use the future bus line.

Anne Lindgren, 3616 Linden Avenue. Her greatest concerns are vehicle traffic, foot traffic, vandalism, and the visual impact of the structure. She resides in the first unit on Linden Avenue and has noticed that traffic has tripled in recent years. She described how two

turnarounds were built only for the residents of the townhomes and more traffic means there will be more use of these turnarounds, which are private property. She wanted information on where the parking entrances and exits would be.

Regarding her second concern, she stated that there is now more foot traffic after a new apartment was built in the area. This has resulted in an increase in the number of people walking through private property, dumping garbage, and creating evening disturbances.

Finally, she explained how the developer indicated he will build an apartment. His proposal will put the building directly across from her unit. She does not want to wake up every morning looking at an apartment. She moved away from Saint Paul for that very reason.

Debra Steele, 3641 Willow Lane, HOA secretary. She commented on how the people who live in the apartments are not going to want to experience the lights and sounds of the Stadium. She does not think the apartment will be filled with people at the income level the City is suggesting. Rent will continue to be lowered until we end up with something we did not want, or did not plan for. She is not against low-income housing, but it is not the best option for this property. She reiterated concerns with the use of the private driveway turnarounds and the vehicles that are parked along Linden Avenue in the winter.

Member Reed responded that many of these same concerns regarding vacancies and low-income housing were raised when the Boatworks project was proposed which did not come to fruition. Developers will look at these things and ensure the project is profitable and works long-term. Tonight we are just looking at putting down the framework for people to come in to the area. We need a place for multi-family housing. We want people to move in, love the area, and then move into single-family homes.

Tim Orf, 3737 Little Linden Curve. He shares the concerns of his neighbors. He stated that he appreciates how the City is looking at the grand scheme of things and that the developers have reached out to the community. However, it seems we are giving a lot of latitude to the developers. He estimated that at the density the City is describing, between 41 and 184 units would be allowed on the 4.61 acre property. This is a lot of leeway to grant a developer at the concept phase.

Member Lynch replied that the City is not giving developers anything at this time. Everything needs approval.

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

Member Berry asked if the City has more say over residential projects and PUDs than we do commercial. Kane responded that yes, through the PUD process the City has much more say in how the property is developed. Currently zoned B-4, a commercial use could be proposed for this property and no public hearing would be needed. Regarding to high density residential provides the City more opportunity to regulate how it develops.

Member Baltzer asked if another bar could be built in the area. Kane affirmed that a bar could go in by right. She added that street access to whatever is developed there will be greatly determined by the County because County Road E is under its jurisdiction.

Member Reed confirmed that up to this point, the high density residential definition in the

Comprehensive Plan did not include the language regarding PUDs. The Waters and Boatworks Commons were the exception and not the rule when they were built. He wondered if the additional verbiage is needed. Crosby agreed it is not required, but is proposed in order to be as transparent as possible.

Member Berry pointed out that the text change is not just for this section of property, but for all future high density residential projects.

Kane explained how the Metropolitan Council has guided 1,200 new residential units to White Bear Lake by 2040. In order to achieve this growth, we have identified this area as an opportunity to intensify and provide future multi-family units.

Member Lynch stated the case tonight is exclusively about the commercial to residential switch and the text addition. The development of this property has been talked about a lot, but it is not being decided right now. He urged the public to go to the neighborhood meeting with the developer to influence the decision-making, so that the project addresses the neighbors' concerns and fits in with the community.

Member Berry indicated that anything that gives the City more influence over development is beneficial.

Member Divine stated there is no rezoning proposal tonight, just the reguiding. It will have to be rezoned in the future.

Member Reis opined that an apartment is a fairly benign project in terms of some of the options available in a commercial area. He also noted that the City should not underestimate the import of neighbor input. Member Reis moved to recommend approval of Case No. 18-1-CPA, Member Lynch seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS:

A. City Council Meeting Minutes of November 13, 2018.

No discussion

B. Park Advisory Commission Meeting Minutes of November 15, 2018.

No discussion

6. ADJOURNMENT:

Member Baltzer moved to adjourn, seconded by Member Reed. The motion passed unanimously (7-0), and the November 26, 2018 Planning Commission meeting was adjourned at 8:22 p.m.