

**MINUTES  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
CITY OF WHITE BEAR LAKE  
FEBRUARY 25, 2019**

The regular monthly meeting of the White Bear Lake Planning Commission was called to order on Monday, February 25, 2019, 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, and Mark Lynch.

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Mary Alice Divine, Peter Reis, and Erich Reinhardt.

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: Sandra Werling, Roxanna Johnson, Kathy Dixon, Anne Lindgren, Lee Branwall, Jack Grotkin, Mark Kronbeck, Elizabeth Balko, Sam Ma, Dave Schuster, Wendie Schuster, Deb Curtis-Brown, Patrick Collins, Steve Eiter, Al Rivard, Douglas Finch, Matt Bunsu, John Grotkin, Ron Bartosch, Ledung Quach, Marvis Peter, and Valerie Hanson.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 25, 2019 AGENDA:**

Member Reed moved for approval of the agenda. Member Baltzer seconded the motion, and the agenda was approved (4-0).

**3. APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 4, 2019 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES:**

Member Baltzer moved for approval of the minutes. Member Reed seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved (4-0).

**4. CASE ITEMS:**

A. **Case No. 19-1-CUP & 19-1-V:** A request by **Walser Polar Chevrolet** for a Conditional Use Permit for vehicular sales and showroom in the B-3 district, per Code Section 1303.140, Subd.4.h; A Conditional Use Permit for site plan approval in the Shoreland Overlay District, per Code Section 1303.230, Subd.6; and 12 variances related to minimum building size, impervious area, setbacks, building materials, signage, and landscape requirements, in order to demolish and rebuild the dealership at 1801 County Road F East.

Crosby discussed the case. Staff recommended approval of the conditional use permits and 11 of the 12 variances, subject to a number of conditions outlined in the staff report. Crosby reported that a compromise was reached on the bear sign location, deeming one variance request moot.

Member Reed asked how long the negotiations between staff and the applicants lasted before a compromise was made on the location of the bear sign. Crosby replied that, overall, this has been a fairly quick process and the bear sign has not received as much attention as the issues relating to storm water management and site review.

Member Lynch sought clarification on whether the foundation plantings are required to be in the ground or in planter boxes. Crosby stated that either would be sufficient. In response to his inquiries regarding the underprovided number of shrubs, Crosby confirmed that either contributions to the Arbor Day fund and/or the extra-large trees on site would offset the deficiency. He wondered about the 20 percent minimum, as it seems to push developers to build bigger structures. Crosby explained the intent of the code is to ensure buildings are scaled appropriately for the parcel size. Lastly, Member Lynch mentioned that the sidewalk extension was a good addition to the project.

Member Berry spoke of the proposed filtration system, noting that the iron will need to be replaced or maintained. Crosby explained how the iron-enhanced sand filtration system works to pull phosphorus from the storm water before it drains into Goose Lake. She reiterated that a condition of approval is that maintenance be done by a restoration company for the first three years to establish the system. Member Berry commented that it is good they are reusing the bear sign.

Berry opened the public hearing.

Jack Grotkin, R.J. Ryan Construction, Applicant. He informed the Commissioners that they would prefer to use planter boxes at the front entrance, and that if they choose to reduce the building size, they would like to rotate the new car intake garage to face away from Highway 61 towards the north, reducing the amount of green space on the property.

Member Reed asked if the applicants are okay with the conditions. Mr. Grotkin replied that they have been working closely with staff and find the conditions agreeable.

Member Lynch thought it would be a neat experience if the applicants could somehow advertise taking down the bear. Mr. Grotkin affirmed that they could notify staff of the event.

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

Member Reed moved to recommend approval of Case No. 19-1-CUP & 19-1-V with conditions laid out by Staff and excluding the twelfth variance relating to the bear sign. Member Baltzer seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 4-0.

- B. **Case No. 17-1-CP:** Review of final draft of comprehensive plan and recommendation of final approval.

Kane reminded the Planning Commission that the City is in the process of updating the City's current Comprehensive Plan, which was last updated in 2008. The White Bear Lake 2040 Comprehensive Plan is a long-range planning document that will help define and guide future growth and redevelopment in the community. The Comprehensive Plan includes guiding principles and calculations of land use needs for the City based upon growth projections for population, households, and employment. She noted the City is expected to add 1,500 residents, 500 jobs, and 1,200 additional households between 2020 and 2040.

Kane summarized that the current update kicked off in early 2017 with a concerted effort to solicit input from community stakeholders through a variety of venues. City planning staff held open houses, business outreach meetings, prepared an online survey, and conducted pop-up meetings at Marketfest, YMCA, library, and area businesses to connect with residents as they went about their daily activities.

Kane indicated that following the extensive community outreach phase, the preparation of the draft document itself got underway in late 2017 and early 2018. Staff presented detailed outlines of the various elements: Land Use, Housing, Economic Competitiveness, Transportation, Parks & Recreation, Natural Resources & Sustainability, Public Facilities & Services, and Implementation before the Planning, Parks, and Environmental Advisory commissions, as well as the WBL Economic Development Corporation for feedback and direction from these advisory boards and commissions.

Kane noted that tonight's Public Hearing kicks off the third and final Comp Plan preparation process. It opens the public review and comments period and asked that the Public Hearing be continued to the March 25th meeting to allow property owners, residents and interested parties adequate time to review the draft plan. Notices for tonight's Public Hearing were sent to over 400 properties – include the owners of the 20-25 parcels proposed to be re-guided, as well as all neighboring property owners within 350 feet of such parcels.

Kane pointed out that each time the City has updated the Comprehensive Plan, it is the Land Use element that typically generates the greatest interest and inquiries, so she intended to provide an overview of the Land Use chapter this evening to provide the framework for the community to understand what it means to be re-guided; noting that she will focus on sites and parcels identified for re-guiding to a land use different than what it was guided for in the 2030 Plan or is likely or suitable to develop or re-develop over the next 20 years. Kane explained when a property is re-guided it may remain in its current state for as long as the current or future owners wish; however, when an owner chooses to sell or change the use of their property, the new land use designation will guide how the property will develop in the future.

She then provided a high-level over view of the parcels. In regards to the mixed-use categories, she explained that the split between commercial and residential uses would be district wide, not on a site by site basis.

Member Lynch thanked staff for all the work done on the comprehensive plan update.

Berry opened the public hearing.

Sandy Werling, 2516 Sumac Ridge, asked what would be allowed at 3220 Bellaire Avenue at high density residential as opposed to medium density, and if the current building would come down for something new. Kane explained that the building could potentially be removed, but there are no current plans and that, although the map shows the parcel to be guided for high density, she suggested to the Planning Commission that the parcel be medium density residential to mirror the surrounding neighborhood. This designation could include senior cottages or similarly styled homes.

Pat Collins, 5172 Wild Marsh Drive, applauded the City's effort to be pedestrian and bike friendly. In reference to the Arts and Culture Mixed Use District, he asked if there would be vehicle access to Division Street. Kane replied no, only emergency access. Mr. Collins described how there are no sidewalks along Division, which, with transit coming to the area, may become problematic. There is going to be more traffic, so the City should consider a sidewalk going north of the high school.

Elizabeth Balko, 2451 Lake Avenue, wants the property owner of the Kyle parcel to decide the re-guiding rather than the government. Objectively, it is not compatible with medium density housing. It is in a flood plain and a wetland that is connected to the lake. She does not believe that type of development to be feasible on this site.

Val Hanson, 5118 Wild Marsh Drive, is interested in connecting the 39 townhomes to the rest of the neighborhood by sidewalk. As a bike rider, she questioned how the Bruce Vento trail could be connected to Hugo. Member Berry mentioned they have run into some difficulty, but the City is looking into it. Kane added that the community wants it to stay along Highway 61, so there are plans to extend the trail along the railroad, but it is tight.

Wendie Schuster, 1903 Whitaker Street, described how in maybe 2005 a sewer system was put in around the old public works site. There is a lot of water that runs off Highway 96 into the area. She does not think anybody could afford to build on the site and wondered what would happen to the food shelf. She thinks a nature center here would be great. Kane replied that the food shelf would stay or be relocated, but not lost. She noted the potential for a three way stop at Whitaker and the addition of a crosswalk and sidewalks in the area to accommodate increased foot traffic.

Al Rivard, 3590 Glen Oaks, reported that when the development of County Road E and Bellaire was proposed, there was great opposition to it. He believes the proposed density is too high, and will create too many parking and safety issues. This is a bus route, so townhomes would be a good choice. He would rather see the parcels be designated for no more than townhomes, because once more is allowed, developers take advantage of that. Kane stated that townhomes would be allowed, and that there is no proposal to develop right now. This designation is to allow flexibility.

Steve Eiter, 5103 Wild Marsh Drive, echoed the need for a sidewalk north of the high school. The road is very narrow and dangerous. Member Berry asked if it would be best on the east side going north or along the soccer fields. Mr. Eiter replied that he envisioned it continuing along the west. Kane mentioned that there are drainage issues in the area that make adding a sidewalk difficult.

Member Lynch asked what the City can do to address the calls for sidewalks, especially since there is talk that work on the road will occur in 2021. Kane replied that staff will work with the engineering department to figure out the details of the project and will have more information for next month's meeting.

Marvis Peter, Real Estate Agent for 3577 Bellaire Avenue and 2490 East County Road E, asked what would be allowed to move in to those two properties in the neighborhood mixed-use. Kane replied that car lots would not be allowed, but offices, hair salons, and the like would.

Ledung Quach, 2608 Rolling View Drive, wondered if more detail could be provided on the proposed change in her neighborhood. Kane explained that right now, the two Rolling View Drive properties are guided for commercial use, which the City does not find appropriate. The parcel with the parking lot will be guided public, while the other will be guided low density residential to match the surrounding area.

As no one else came forward, Berry continued the public hearing to March 25, 2019.

## **5. DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

**A.** City Council Meeting Minutes of February 12, 2019.

No discussion

**B.** Park Advisory Commission Meeting Minutes of January 17, 2019.

No discussion

## **6. ADJOURNMENT:**

Member Reed moved to adjourn, seconded by Member Lynch. The motion passed unanimously (4-0), and the February 25, 2019 Planning Commission meeting was adjourned at 8:23 p.m.