

**MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
CITY OF WHITE BEAR LAKE
MARCH 25, 2018**

The regular monthly meeting of the White Bear Lake Planning Commission was called to order on Monday, March 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, Mary Alice Divine, Marvin Reed, Peter Reis, Ken Baltzer, Mark Lynch, and Erich Reinhardt (arrived at 7:13 p.m.).

MEMBERS EXCUSED: None.

MEMBERS UNEXCUSED: None.

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Terry Honsa, Kevin Rooney, Karen Sisterman, John Sisterman, Mary Wiley, William Rust, Jackie Ek-Pangel, Dale Ek-Pangel, Jim Engen, Laura Engen, Patrick Collins, Kaysa Xiong

2. APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 25, 2019 AGENDA:

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

3. APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 25, 2019 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES:

Member Baltzer moved for approval of the minutes. Member Reed seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved unanimously (6-0).

4. CASE ITEMS:

A. Case No. 93-15-Sa: A request by **Honsa Family Funeral Home** for an amendment to an existing Conditional Use Permit to allow for a 1,020 square foot expansion of a funeral home adjacent to residential, and to reduce the landscaping requirement along the south property line at 2460 County Road E East.

Crosby discussed the case. Staff recommended approval of the amendment to an existing Conditional Use Permit subject to conditions.

Baltzer asked how many trees would be removed and replaced. Crosby explained the lot had 24 trees, 17 of which were located along the parking lot. Every other tree would mean that approximately 8 of these trees would be removed. She reported the applicant was asking to remove the trees because they provided too much shade in the winter months.

Reis requested further information on the berm and landscaping plan. Crosby stated the berm was approximately three feet high. She reviewed the landscaping plan in further detail with the Commission.

Reis stated he was a master gardener for 15 years. He reported the proposed evergreen trees would grow one foot per year and with three-foot replacement trees on top of a three-foot berm, these trees would reach nine feet above grade within three years. For this reason, he did not believe that removing eight of the trees would really accomplish anything for the applicant.

Lynch explained the sun in December and January would cast a different angle on the parking lot. He discussed the berm and landscaping that was agreed upon in 1993 between the City and the applicant. He commented on how the proposed tree replacement would create the same problem in three to five years. He indicated he did not have a better solution and for this reason, he supports the trees remaining in their current state.

Divine stated the older trees have lost some of their bottom branches, which led her to believe replacing some of the older trees may be beneficial. However, she also believed that removing every other tree seemed excessive. She commented that there were many parking lots in the City that were shaded in the winter and the owners just had to deal with it.

Berry opened the public hearing at 7:15 p.m.

William Rust, with Rust Architects at 4579 Lake Avenue, is representing the applicant. He stated he understood many of the Commission's concerns centered around the trees. He commented on how the sun moves from east to west throughout the year, noting the parking lot was quite shadowed during the winter months. He indicated the bottom branches were dying off on the evergreen trees. He commented the new trees would fill in the lower level of the screen.

Terry Honsa, owner of the Honsa Family Funeral Home, reported three-fourths of her parking lot was completely shaded in the winter months. She indicated ice was a concern for her. She requested from a safety standpoint that she be allowed to remove some of the trees. She explained she reached out to all of the neighbors living adjacent to the parking lot and no concerns were raised regarding her proposal to remove and replace the evergreen trees. She stated the trees were currently 12 feet apart and noted she was planning to replace the existing trees with three-foot trees. She explained she would be planting the trees herself and anything larger would be difficult to lift and plant.

Jackie Ek-Pangel, 2465 Jansen Avenue, indicated she sent a letter to the City. She noted she had worked with Mr. Robinson in 1993 to find an agreeable screening solution. She stated

she objected to the applicant being able to replace the trees with three-foot trees when six foot was minimum per code. She feared a precedent would be set if the Commission were to allow this to pass. She recommended that the trees be replaced with six-foot trees and not seedlings in order to provide adequate screening for the neighbors.

Dale Ek-Pangel, 2465 Jansen Avenue, stated he had no issues with the building addition. He explained he was concerned with the landscaping and recommended no changes be made to the trees. He reported the neighbors would be impacted by additional road noise if the trees were removed. For this reason, he recommended the lot not be de-forested.

As no one else came forward, Berry closed the public hearing at 7:25 p.m.

Reis asked if City Code required six-foot replacement trees. Crosby confirmed this was the case for evergreen trees.

Divine questioned if staff could hold further discussions with the applicant regarding the trees. She would like to see a middle ground reached without having every other tree replaced.

Berry commented there was no hardship which would cause the need to remove the trees along the south lot line. He recommended the applicant be required to meet City Code and that any trees that are removed be replaced with six-foot trees.

Lynch indicated there were two separate issues being addressed. The first was the building addition and the second was the tree removal/replacement. He stated he supported the building addition. He encouraged staff to work with the applicant to find a creative solution for the parking lot situation without needing to remove and replace the trees.

Reis stated he supported the request but recommended Condition 7 be deleted and that Condition 8 be amended to require the applicant to plant six-foot trees per City Code. Member Reis moved to recommend approval of Case No. 93-15-Sa with these modifications. Member Reed seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0.

Berry explained that this matter would be addressed by the City Council on April 9, 2019.

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

Kane discussed the case. Staff recommended final approval of the comprehensive plan noting the plan would be reviewed by the City Council on April 23, 2019.

Lynch requested further information regarding the uses that would be allowed within the Arts District. Kane reviewed the process that would be followed for future uses within the Arts District noting some would be allowed by right and others would require a Conditional Use Permit.

Reis commented on a non-profit called Art Space and encouraged staff to contact this company noting they would be a good resource for staff in creating an artist in resident program.

Reis questioned if wetlands have a designated water level. Kane explained there was a designated setback required from the edge of a wetland and noted the water levels within a wetland related to flooding concerns. She noted wetlands were challenging to develop.

Lynch asked if other suburbs in the metro area have Arts Districts. Kane commented she was not familiar with other Arts Districts but anticipated Minneapolis may have one. She reported this may be a good model for the City to review when drafting code for its own Arts District. She commented Bloomington has a great art space, but noted this was located on City Hall property.

Lynch requested information from staff regarding the former Public Works site. Kane commented the Council both past and present have provided direction for the redevelopment of this site. She anticipated in the future this site would have transit-oriented housing. She provided further comment on the marina and auto dealer redevelopment potential. She reported the Council has purchased the land between the new Public Works building and Saputo, noting the land was designated half Public/half Industrial.

Kane commented on the plans for the Wildwood Shopping Center, noting the City was proposing to reguide the property from Commercial to Neighborhood Mixed Use. It was noted the Rolling View Drive lots have been reguided from Commercial to Public/Low Density Residential.

Divine asked what the zoning was for the blocks at 4th Street and Bald Eagle. Kane reviewed the zoning map and noted the zoning for these lots had changed. She noted the zoning would be DCB to accommodate intensification along 4th Street similar to Grand Avenue.

Reis questioned how the City was planning to address future parking concerns as the downtown area continues to develop. Kane commented that any loss of parking would be concerning. She reviewed the location of the City's current parking lots and explained surrounding uses could be intensified downtown so long as there was no net loss of parking. She indicated another option would be to construct underground parking.

Lynch discussed the transportation section of the Comprehensive Plan and noted parking was not addressed. He encouraged staff to mention parking in this section of the document describing how parking would be addressed providing both midterm and long-term solutions. Poor employee parking practices is a significant contributor to the problem. Kane agreed and noted midterm solutions were a concern for the City. She reported parking was addressed more thoroughly in the Economic Development portion of the Comprehensive Plan.

Reis asked if there were any discussions about monitoring parking times and inquired how the Rush Line would impact the community. Kane anticipated that the majority of commuters with access to a vehicle would use an express bus on 35E, rather than the Rush Line BRT. She understood the Police Department may need to enforce parking time limits by

ticketing violators. She indicated the local business owners could also communicate better with their customers to ensure the parking spaces were turning over in a timely manner.

Reis echoed how important it was to keep those front and center parking stalls open for customers, rather than being used all day by employees.

Lynch stated in Chapter 1 where population was discussed he noted the numbers do not add up. Kane indicated this could be due to the various data resources included in the Comprehensive Plan.

Lynch requested the Comprehensive Plan include a reference to Generation X given the fact Millennials and Baby Boomers were discussed. In reference to the Solar Resources Map, he commented that it seemed weird to add solar panels all over the school grounds and suggested staff name other potential solar locations in the City. He explained he supported housing preservation efforts. He commented there were some areas in the City that did not need sidewalks.

Lynch asked for clarification about 4D Tax Incentives. Shimek explained it is a reduced rate tax classification granted to low income multi-family rental properties that have an affordability restriction recorded against the property under terms of financing from a unit of government. Typically the restriction is in exchange for receiving federal or state subsidy, but can be secured through local units of government as well.

Lynch pointed out that the Healthy Food Access map was misleading. It implies we have a problem, but we're food rich.

Lynch requested the RBTN (Regional Bicycle Transportation Network) map be better explained. He asked if Highway 61 was a State or Federal roadway. Kane stated she would investigate this and report back to the Commission.

Berry opened the public hearing.

Mary Wiley, 2525 Sumac Circle, asked about the former Entira "Bellaire" Clinic, stating she understood this property was to be reguided to Medium Density. She questioned if a four-story building could locate on this property noting this would be extremely intrusive. She also expressed concern about sufficient parking.

Kane reported a four-story building could locate on this property but noted surrounding uses would have to be taken into consideration and surrounding homeowners would be notified if a request were brought to the City.

Pat Collins, 5172 Wild Marsh Drive, thanked the City Council, Planning Commission and its staff for drafting a great document. He stated he appreciated the consideration that was taken regarding pedestrian safety. He expressed a desire for a sidewalk on Division Avenue.

Laura Engen, 324 Shamrock Way, explained she has lived in her home for the past 27 years. She stated she appreciated the fact she could walk from her home to nearby amenities. She

noted the senior residents from the Lodge were also walking to and from their units to the nearby amenities. She believed that having commercial on all four corners was a real advantage for the community and therefore has reservations about regarding the Wildwood Shopping Center to Neighborhood Mixed Use.

Karen Sisterman, 2557 Manitou Lane, stated she believed BRT was not worth doing. She encouraged the City to work to fill up its vacant store fronts. She expressed concern with the future E & Bellaire apartment complex parking on City streets instead of within their development.

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

Reis thanked staff for all of their hard work on the Comprehensive Plan.

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

Berry explained that this matter would be addressed by the City Council on April 23, 2019.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS:

A. Chair and Vice-Chair Election.

Member Divine moved to appoint Marvin Reed Chair of the Planning Commission for 2019. Member Reis seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0.

Member Divine moved to appoint Ken Baltzer Vice-Chair of the Planning Commission for 2019. Member Reed seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 6-1.

B. City Council Meeting Minutes of March 12, 2019. No Comments.

C. Park Advisory Commission Meeting Minutes of January 17, 2019. No Comments.

6. ADJOURNMENT:

Member Baltzer moved to adjourn, seconded by Member Reed. The motion passed unanimously (7-0), and the March 25, 2019 Planning Commission meeting was adjourned at 8:52 p.m.