

CITY OF MEDINA
PLANNING COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 13, 2014

1. **Call to Order:** Commissioner Nolan called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Planning Commissioners Charles Nolan, Robin Reid, Randy Foote, Kent Williams, Robert Mitchell, Victoria Reid, and Janet White.

Absent: None

Also Present: Council Member Kathleen Martin, City Planner Dusty Finke, and Planning Consultant Nate Sparks.

2. **Public Comments on items not on the agenda**

No public comments.

3. **Update from City Council proceedings**

Martin updated the Commission on recent activities and decisions by the City Council.

4. **Planning Department Report**

Finke provided an update of upcoming Planning projects for July.

5. **Approval of the June 10, 2014 Draft Planning Commission minutes.**

R. Reid asked for a correction to page six, line 262, of the June 10th minutes. She had expressed agreement and support for V. Reid's comments and wanted it on the record.

Motion by R. Reid, seconded by Williams, to approve the June 10, 2014, Planning Commission minutes with correction. Motion carries unanimously.

6. ~~Rachel Contracting PUD General Plan and Preliminary Plat to develop 48 single family residential lots along the north and west portions of Medina Golf and Country Club.~~

7. **Public Hearing - Wakefield Family Trust – 3385 Co. Rd. 24 – Preliminary Plat to subdivide one parcel into 3 Rural Residential lots.**

Sparks presented the staff report. He noted that the minimum lot size in the RR district is 5 acres of contiguous suitable soils. He stated that the applicant is contesting the Hennepin County soils map, and provided surveyed topography and soil boring information.

Mitchell inquired about the septic sites on Lot 1. Sparks showed the location of the existing septic system.

Mitchell inquired if the driveway for Lot 3 could be moved as far west as Hennepin County is requesting. Sparks noted that the lot is wide enough to accommodate that request.

V. Reid inquired if the shared driveway was a City requirement or the applicant's wish. Sparks responded that the applicant showed it in this way because of County comments.

Public Hearing opened at 7:25 p.m.

Finke noted that a property owner to the east who shares the driveway in Outlot A called the City and stated they were not concerned with the subdivision, but agreed that the driveway for Lot 3 should be pushed as far west as possible.

R. Reid stated that she had an interest in protecting the views on Homestead Trail. The large wetland will accommodate this protection so that she has no concerns.

Mitchell inquired where the building locations would be. Spark showed on the plan where they would be located.

Public Hearing closed at 7:27 p.m.

Motion by V. Reid, seconded by Williams, to recommend approval of the Preliminary Plat request to subdivide one parcel into three rural residential lots with conditions noted in staff report. Motion carries unanimously.

8. **Public Hearing - Princeton Capital – 1575 Hamel Road – Preliminary Plat to subdivide one lot into three Rural Residential lots.**

Sparks presented the staff report. He noted that two lots were proposed to share an access off Hamel Road and the third lot accessed off of Blackfoot Trail.

Mitchell asked staff to confirm that the math was correct for the additional right-of-way. Sparks said it will be clarified going forward.

Foote inquired if Blackfoot Trail would need to be updated since it is substandard. Sparks noted that the existing property could already have one home off of Blackfoot, so staff is not recommending improvements since no more lots are proposed on this side of the property.

Public Hearing opened at 7:37 p.m.

John Riley of 1405 Blackfoot Trail stated that all the neighbors that live on the road at this time enjoy the gravel road, as they feel it keeps traffic down. They believe the road should be left as it is.

Finke said the City has an adopted policy for roadway updates – 50/50 split with tax levy dollars if initiated by City. He also went into some of the history concerning Blackfoot Trail. Finke also mentioned that there is nothing in the 5-year CIP for upgrades to Blackfoot Trail.

Paul Ohnsorg of 1475 Blackfoot Trail asked about the trail along Blackfoot, and where it would go.

Finke mentioned there would be a north connection to the County trail in the future, but for now there is not an immediate plan.

Ohnsorg also asked where the driveway on Lot 3 would be located.

Sparks stated that their plans were not known and they don't have a set location on the plan at this time. They would have to meet the City's driveway location criteria.

Finke stated that one matter staff had discussed was that these are rural lots and there may be an expectation for animals and animal structures on the property. He said there is a 150' setback animal structure requirement and this plan only has a very narrow strip that would be eligible for animal structures. There was a consensus that the applicant should be put on notice concerning the existence of this requirement. Finke said staff will work on adding recommendations and language concerning the animal structure requirements.

Motion by R. Reid, seconded by White, to recommend to the City Council approval of the Preliminary Plat request to subdivide one parcel into three rural residential lots with conditions recommended by staff and adding an additional condition related to setbacks for animal structures. Motion carries unanimously.

Mitchell asked to add a friendly amendment to the motion for number 9 clarifying the right-of-way numbers. Motion to accept the amendment by R. Reid, seconded by Williams. Motion carries unanimously. (Absent: none)

9. **Go2 Print – 62 Hamel Road – Site Plan Review to construct a 1500 square foot free-standing Accessory Building.**

Finke showed the proposed site plan – accessory use to office use. Property is zoned Uptown Hamel II. Location of storage building is partially a result of the easement, which is why they are requesting a stand-alone building as opposed to adding on to the principal structure. He stated where the building would be set and the flexibility that is there – zero lot line setbacks on sides and rear to accommodate utilities. Set 2' from western line and 2' from northern line as shown in plans. Eugene Street, western lot line, is privately maintained and is being used mainly for parking for the area. City installed stormwater improvements. He went on to state what building materials were allowed to keep to the historical nature of the area.

Ordinance requires generous window coverage and, as proposed, the building would not meet the 30% facade standard on the street level, which he felt the Commission should discuss. Eugene Drive may at some time in the future be developed into a public street and is used at this time as a road to get into some of the sites. Parking sites would be taken up by the new building proposal, but there could be flexibility since there are opportunities for on-street parking and public parking in the future off Mill Drive. He also discussed the trees that would need to be removed (six large) and that according to standard ordinance 30" of replacement trees would be required and the applicant is asking for a waiver to that code item as the trees are not particularly high quality. Planning Commission will be asked to make a

determination on the requirement and if in favor of the tree waiver, would have to adjust the recommendation to the Council.

V. Reid asked about Eugene Drive and what it may become in the future. Finke said he doesn't see that changing, but could possibly terminate at a parking lot to the west. There was also a clarification to the fire department using the west side of Eugene Drive for parking of vehicles. V. Reid also asked if there was a possibility of each building having two different uses in the future. Finke said it would have to meet code and they could not have two principal uses on the lot, the storage building is accessory. Nolan and V. Reid raised concern about the storage building not having very many windows or enough parking. V. Reid said the goal in that area is to have an urban environment. Finke stated that the City has flexibility towards parking in that area. Nolan summarized the discussion by stating that the Commission is reviewing what the applicant is requesting today, but if for some reason in the future a more intensive use were to be requested, then it would have to be relooked at for approval and would have to comply with City code requirements such as parking.

Nolan asked for elevations of the building. Finke provided exterior elevations and the Commission discussed. Mitchell asked if the storage building met the window requirements. Finke said it didn't if it's determined to be the street level/fronting a street. Williams said he visited the site and he thinks it would be a vast improvement to construct a building there as opposed to the way it looks now.

Williams asked about paving and also for clarification of where they are proposing it. Finke said the paved area would be right in front of the storage building. Williams said he was concerned with paving, since it would increase the impervious surface. Finke clarified by stating that it wouldn't be increasing since everything would be within existing gravel.

Foote raised concern with vehicles being parked within the private easement at the rear of the lot that is to be utilized for emergency access only. Finke explained that if the whole site were being developed new, it would be laid out differently.

Tom Therrien, applicant and owner of Go2 Print, stated he could answer any questions from the Commission. Nolan asked how long he's been in the space and Therrien said he purchased it in 2010. Therrien said he's a sales print company. He said some of the finished goods he does store, even though they send out for printing. He said he rents the property next door for storing. He said he'd like to own his own storage area rather than rent. He stated that he prefers to have his own storage on site and said how much easier it will be for their business. William asked how many parking stalls behind his building get taken up at a time each day. Therrien said there are four in the back and two parking spaces on the side. A total of six people are in the office at any given time and there isn't the need for parking for retail customers, since most of his clients are on the east coast. He said the building doesn't show windows in the door, but he could put window panels in it.

Nolan asked if the design was intended to be more of a barn-like structure with the high windows. Therrien said yes. Therrien said he would do whatever the Commission wants for the landscaping and discussed some of the ideas he had for landscaping. He said he would like to stay clear from planting trees since within 10 years they typically need to be removed. V. Reid asked about the cottonwood tree being removed and what would remain. Therrien said there would be an ample amount of trees remaining. The windows were also discussed and he said that he could lower them if that is what the Commission wants, but would be concerned with how it would look if he were to have scaffolding or shelving in front of the

windows. The Commission consensus was that it was OK to have the high windows, but that maybe a different style door would add to the appeal of the building without adding a lot of expense since it is facing the street. The Commission generally liked the idea of a barn style or carriage style door that had the appearance of being wood, but was still metal and insulated. There was also a consensus noted by the majority of the Commissioners concerning the tree waiver.

Nolan said the addition to the storage building does trigger additional parking.

Motion by Mitchell, seconded by R. Reid, to recommend to the City Council approval of the construction of a 1500 square foot Accessory building, with the following conditions #1-3 remain as recommended by staff, strike #4, #5 commission recommends a tree waiver, # 6 is acceptable, #7 additional parking not required at this time for the storage building, but if a change in use occurs in the future, the parking would have to be addressed at that time, #8 & #9 remains as written, and #10 to be added to require a new garage door style with wood cladding or equivalent. Motion carries unanimously. (Absent: none)

10. **Farhad Hakim – 22 Hamel Road – Site Plan Review to construct an Apartment Building and Accessory Parking Garages.**

Sparks presented the application and reviewed the overall project. He said density and hardcover for the lot met requirements. He also explained that an easement vacation was also necessary as part of the project and that they were asking for an eight foot easement rather than ten feet. The side yard setback would then be eight feet. The drive aisle is proposed to be two feet from the side property line in portions of the side yard, not all. The minimum setback to the side yard is 2.5 feet and so a waiver would be necessary for the reduced .5 of a foot.

Sparks explained the parking for the building was not underground, but rather enclosed parking via a detached parking garage. Sparks said the ordinance requires the garage have exterior materials that match the principal structure. He said they are proposing the accent material of the principal structure as the primary exterior material for the parking garage. Sparks wanted to make sure the Commission was satisfied with the proposed exterior material and recommended it be a condition of approval.

Sparks explained the site has a lot of trees. He said the applicant is proposing to remove all of the trees except for one ten inch elm tree. After calculating the significant trees to be removed and adjusting the formula from what's explained in the staff report after consulting with City Planner Finke, the applicant would be allowed to remove two trees at no penalty and so the final tree removal would be 98 trees. Sparks said the applicant doesn't have a tree replacement plan and staff recommended a tree replacement plan be provided either for on-site or off-site. He said the applicant was not requesting a tree waiver.

Sparks explained the drive aisle width meets the 24 foot in width requirement. He said in order to maintain the drive aisle width it impacts the setback of the parking garage and two foot bump outs were necessary for sufficient maneuvering out of the garage on the end spaces. Staff feels the applicant has made sure the drive aisle width is wide enough for safe maneuvering.

Sparks said the apartment units have laundry rooms in each unit and have three bedrooms. The applicant is proposing more parking than what is required by code.

Sparks said the applicant has shown landscaping in some areas, but additional areas are shown bare and a revised landscape plan should be submitted to address that all bare areas on the lot be landscaped.

V. Reid asked if the City had any special design standards for Uptown Hamel. Sparks said there are special architectural standards in the code. He said an example of that would be that the ordinance requires porches off the front of the building and the applicant is proposing to bring the building and porches up closer to the front sidewalk to meet the code requirement. He said specificity of a Vintage style look isn't expressly written in the Code. Finke asked V. Reid if her question was more related to scale rather than design. V. Reid said the proportion and the look of the building don't have an old town feel like the other condo building in Hamel. She would like to see some modifications to the exterior appearance.

Finke said even though the applicant did not request a tree waiver, he is sure one will be requested before this goes up for approval to the Council so he requested the Commission address the issue. White asked if staff knew the quality of the trees on site. Sparks said the site does have four black walnuts and two maples on-site. Williams asked if there are any other residences abutting the rail line and if it's even appropriate to have residences along there. Finke said the City has planned for residential in this area and if it makes a difference to them the railroad crossing nearest this project doesn't have the train whistle at the crossing.

The closeness of the railroad was discussed and if it makes sense to put a structure that close to the railroad. The fact that it is a rental property was pointed out and that people will realize before they make a commitment that there is a railroad close by. Foote said the trains go through that location around 50 mph and many trains go through the area daily. R. Reid said she considers a residential apartment building different than someone purchasing a home near a railroad track. She said presumably people would see that the apartment building was located near railroad tracks. V. Reid ask for clarification of Mixed Use zoning and that she thought the property had to have two uses on the site and it also said it's shown for high density residential. Sparks said the Comprehensive Plan guides it Mixed Use and it is zoned Uptown Hamel, so not zoned Mixed Use. Williams asked if this application met the required density and Sparks said yes. R. Reid said that this is the type of residential they were looking for in this area. She did want to express her concern with how the building looks and to add a condition relating to design of the building.

Nolan asked if the applicant was present and Finke said the applicant wasn't at the meeting.

R. Reid asked if there is any way to require a different type of design, and if so, how specific would they have to be to do that. Finke said the applicant was open to changing up the design as long as it's not cost prohibited. Nolan said he is concerned that they didn't have reasonable tools to work with. He said he is used to reading plans all the time and the ones submitted were drawings and not very useful and he felt the City should require some sort of rendering with color. He also commented that the look of the elevations is very different than what is in the packet.

The Commission suggested specific design guidelines be established in the future for Uptown Hamel since the City is starting to see some activity in the area.

Mitchell doesn't like the fact that there are so many incomplete items, concern with the architectural exterior appearance and that the applicant isn't present at the meeting. He suggested the item be tabled and asked if there was enough time to do so. Sparks said the

review deadline is September 30th and there were not enough Council meetings to get it through the process.

R. Reid raised concern that the exterior building as proposed looked like it was out of the 50's-60's era and isn't anything close to what they are looking for in Uptown Hamel. She said it has the potential to be a really ugly building. V. Reid said she thinks it's great to have residential in that area. R. Reid agreed.

Nolan raised concern with the concrete patio that has a sliding glass door which is below the balconies. He said it has potential for a sitting area with a grill that could eventually be a rusting weber kettle and broken plastic chairs and would be close to the sidewalk. He suggested some sort of screening to contain the patios similar to that of the upper balconies.

Nolan said he wanted to see more articulate modulation/detailing to the building.

Finke said the Commission could recommend additional conditions to work forward prior to going to the Commission. Nolan said he'd like to see more landscaping in front of the building and into the parking lot to break up some of the pavement. R. Reid suggested more creative landscaping. Nolan said he's asking for some more specific items.

Tom Therrien of Go2 Print said the rendering doesn't do a lot for it, but he asked the Commission to give modern materials a chance, because sometimes the blending of old and new can be good.

Nolan said the overall issue for him is not being able to really understand what they are looking at on the plans. He also feels he doesn't have enough tools to review the application. If he were to make a recommendation it would be to deny the application based on not having enough information. Williams said the conditions are so open ended that he's not sure how they are ever going to know if the conditions have been met. Nolan asked for guidance from staff.

Nolan said he would recommend denial based on the landscaping being insufficient and that the renderings are not clear as to what they are proposing. Mitchell said they only make a recommendation and the Council acts on it. Finke suggested a conditional tabling, subject to receiving an extension letter. The recommendation would be to table it and go back to the Commission for another review so that when it does go back to the Council it is substantially complete.

Finke clarified the additional concerns of the Commission which were landscaping and architectural modulation. Nolan said conditions 3-5 were still incomplete, and suggested adding another condition that the architectural appearance of the building needs to be more consistent with the Uptown area.

Motion by Mitchell, seconded by Williams, to recommend tabling of the application to resolve all pending issues based on the applicant providing an extension by August 21, 2014. Additionally the applicant shall be present at the next meeting. If an extension is not provided by the applicant, then the application is denied. Motion carried unanimously.
(Absent: none)

11. Council Meeting Schedule

Mitchell agreed to attend and present at the August 19, 2014 Council meeting.

12. **Adjourn**

Motion by Williams, seconded by R. Reid, to adjourn at 9:26 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.