

**PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF RAMSEY
ANOKA COUNTY
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

The Ramsey Planning Commission conducted a regular meeting on Thursday, August 4, 2011, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Chairperson Gary Levine
 Commissioner Andrew Dunaway
 Commissioner Joseph Field
 Commissioner Robert Schiller
 Commissioner Gary Van Scoy

Members Absent: Commissioner Randy Bauer
 Commissioner Ralph Brauer

Also Present: Senior Planner Tim Gladhill
 Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Chris Anderson
 Management/Planning Intern Patrick Brama

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Levine called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

CITIZEN INPUT

None.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Commissioner Van Scoy, seconded by Commissioner Dunaway, to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Levine, Commissioners Van Scoy, Dunaway, Field, and Schiller. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioners Bauer and Brauer.

APPROVE PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Motion by Commissioner Field, seconded by Commissioner Van Scoy, to approve the following minutes as presented:

- 1) Planning Commission public hearing and regular meeting minutes dated July 7, 2011.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Levine, Commissioners Field, Van Scoy, Dunaway, and Schiller. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioners Bauer and Brauer.

PUBLIC HEARINGS/COMMISSION BUSINESS

Case #1: Public Hearing – Proposed Amendment to the 2030 Comprehensive Plan

Public Hearing

Chairperson Levine called the public hearing to order at 7:01 p.m.

Presentation

Senior Planner Gladhill presented the Staff Report describing the proposed amendments to the 2030 Comprehensive Plan.

Citizen Input

The COR Master Plan

Senior Planner Gladhill stated the change will affect 50 acres of the total of 322 of the COR.

Commissioner Van Scoy stated the change makes a nice transition from residential to retail.

Planned Transportation System

Chairperson Levine asked if the Variolite Street reconstruction would have an impact on any existing homes.

Senior Planner Gladhill stated the City is trying it's best to minimize those impacts and unfortunately the City Engineer was unable to attend the meeting tonight, he had an emergency and does apologize that he is not present. There may be impact to one or two housing units to make that connection, however he stated he does not have the answer.

Future Land Use Map

Mike Black, RLK Engineering, representing Hope Fellowship Church and their mortgage company, stated they request that the zoning remain the same and that the land use change back to what it was before the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. Hope Fellowship is no longer going to build a church campus on the site and is marketing the property.

Wellhead Protection Plan

Chairperson Levine asked what the issue of contamination is.

Senior Planner Gladhill stated there are no immediate hazards; this is aimed at preventing those hazards from occurring.

Motion by Commissioner Van Scoy, seconded by Commissioner Dunaway, to close the public hearing.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Levine, Commissioners Van Scoy, Dunaway, Field, and Schiller. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioners Bauer and Brauer.

Chairperson Levine closed the public hearing at 7:33 p.m.

Commission Business

Commissioner Van Scoy stated he prefers the original master plan for the COR; however he has seen a need for some big box anchors, and thinks this change is necessary.

Senior Planner Gladhill stated that even though there is more parking area, the design keeps the street scape and pedestrian connections to the original vision.

Commissioner Schiller asked how the amendment to the Hope Fellowship parcel impacts the existing residential area to the west.

Senior Planner Gladhill stated there will be transitioning from residential and commercial, possibly a natural buffer created between the areas. The official zoning is B-2 Highway Business currently.

Discussion continued regarding the Future Land Use Map section of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment.

Motion by Commissioner Dunaway, seconded by Commissioner Schiller to recommend that the City Council approve the Comprehensive Plan Amendment, contingent upon flexibility in transportation section pertaining to the area west of the Legacy Christian Academy project as well as the desired alignment for the Highway 10 freeway conversion

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Levine, Commissioners Dunaway, Schiller, Field, and Van Scoy. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioners Bauer and Brauer.

Case #2: Public Hearing – Consider Ordinance to Amend Section 117-117 (E1 Employment District) and Section 117-116 (E2 Employment District)

Public Hearing

Chairperson Levine called the public hearing to order at 7:43 p.m.

Presentation

Management Intern Brama presented the Staff Report.

Citizen Input

Commissioner Field stated he thought a better fit would be the Commercial district; this would give permission to go to retail mode at any time.

Senior Planner Gladhill stated that this is set up as a conditional use so there would be additional controls and reasonable conditions can be placed on the conditional use permit. This use is typically in the commercial district, however, he sees benefit for allowing retail activity related to the industrial use in the employment district that would provide some flexibility and allow users to have a fuel source close to their place of business.

Commissioner Van Scoy stated he has a concern allowing the retail use in the Employment District.

Senior Planner Gladhill stated that the Fire and Building Code will address the potential hazards and how to address them.

Chairperson Levine stated that this is a good environmental work in the city and wants to make sure these alternative fuels are available, it is already regulated. The city is trying to be a green city and make accessible the fuels to be used to be better citizens.

Commissioner Schiller stated by offering the retail portion, you can limit how many dispensing stations are created for the business that are using this fuel.

Commissioner Van Scoy asked what type of storage it will be, external or underground.

Senior Planner Gladhill stated most will be above ground, however, there is a potential some will be buried as well. It will be up to the individual users to make sure proper mitigation is in place. This is not opening up a gas station, only compassed natural gas, a very specific specialized fueling station.

Commissioner Field asked how the public would distinguish between the two, does it actually have a different presence.

Senior Planner Gladhill stated proper signage would be in place. He does not envision these being on the corners of the major thoroughfares. There would not be as much passer by traffic; people would be going there for a purpose.

Motion by Commissioner Field, seconded by Commissioner Dunaway, to close the public hearing.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Levine, Commissioners Field, Dunaway, Schiller, and Van Scoy. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioners Bauer and Brauer.

Commission Business

Commissioner Dunaway stated his concern of the language in the ordinance that seems to allow for other alternative fuels that have not been tested as the compressed natural gas has.

Management/Planning Intern Brama stated this is a conditional use in the district, and each case would be brought before the Planning Commission and City Council for approval.

Commissioner Van Scoy stated that the expense invested into dispensing and utilization in the vehicles has got to be relatively expensive. It would probably be for commercial type situation, and the volume would be far less than a gas station.

Motion by Commissioner Dunaway, seconded by Commissioner Schiller to recommend City Council adopt the ordinance related to retail sales of compressed natural gas fuel stations.

Further Discussion

Commissioner Field stated the motion does say compressed natural gas and no other alternative automotive fuels.

Motion amended by Commissioner Dunaway, seconded by Commissioner Schiller to recommend City Council adopt the ordinance related to retail sales of compressed natural gas fuel and other alternative fuel stations.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Levine, Commissioners Dunaway, Schiller, Field, and Van Scoy. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioners Bauer and Brauer.

Case #3: Site Plan Review for Ramsey Commuter Rail Station

Presentation

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson presented the Staff Report.

Commission Business

Chairperson Levine asked if the station is similar to the Coon Rapids station.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated it is similar with the enclosed pedestrian crossing over the tracks to get to the platforms.

Commissioner Dunaway asked with the substantial costs involved if other alternative types of stations were considered. Fridley station has an underground tunnel to the platform, would that type of station save any costs.

Senior Planner Gladhill stated that the water table is too high for an underground tunnel and the same grade crossing as in Anoka is not safe for this site.

Commissioner Van Scoy asked if there was access off of Highway 10.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated south of the BNSF right away there is an emergency egress area for safety concerns. There is not direct access to the platform; all passengers will be entering from the municipal parking ramp.

Commissioner Van Scoy asked if the City anticipates filling up the parking ramp, because there is a development going in that will be utilizing the ramp as well.

Senior Planner Gladhill stated Residence at the COR will utilize approximately 270 spaces. The grant funding of the ramp extension does require dedicated parking spaces reserved for the rail station. Calculations have been done and there will be adequate parking for all of the uses; the Residence at the COR, rail station, shared uses within the immediate area and the municipal center.

Commissioner Field stated he saw a pedestrian walk way over Highway 10, and asked if that would allow access to the platform.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated the pedestrian walkway connects the two staircases along the north and south side of the tracks.

Senior Planner Gladhill added that there are future plans of a pedestrian walkway over Highway 10; however that is not part of this project. There will not be parking on the south side of Highway 10; however it will provide residences south of Highway 10 another mode of transportation to get across Highway 10 to get to this rail station.

Commissioners discussed the irrigation of the landscaping and its importance to the representation of the city.

Motion by Commissioner Van Scoy, seconded by Commissioner Field to recommend that City Council approve the site plan for the Ramsey Northstar Commuter Rail Station contingent upon compliance with the City Staff Review Letter dated July 29, 2011.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Levine, Commissioners Van Scoy, Field, Dunaway, and Schiller. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioners Bauer and Brauer.

Case #4: Discussion of Duties Assigned to the Planning Commission and board of Adjustment

Presentation

Senior Planner Gladhill presented the Staff Report.

Commission Business

Commissioner Field asked what is it in the state statute that allows us to do this and why has it not been done before.

Senior Planner Gladhill replied it has not been done before because of the quasi-judicial versus advisory functions and making a clear delineation of the two and we now have a better mechanism to do that. In State Statute Chapter 462.354 talks about identifying Planning Commission and Board of Adjustment authority, stating that the City Council can act as or delegate to another board or add a separate board.

Commissioner Dunaway stated that Board of Adjustment Chairperson Van Scoy did a very good job at chairing the Board of Adjustment.

Motion by Commissioner Dunaway, seconded by Commissioner Schiller to direct staff to prepare an ordinance to institute the proposed changes to the duties of the Planning Commission and Board of Adjustment.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Levine, Commissioners Dunaway, Schiller, Field, Van Scoy. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioners Bauer and Brauer.

Case #3: Staff Update

The Staff Update was noted.

Case #4: Zoning Bulletins

The Zoning Bulletins were noted.

COMMISSION/STAFF INPUT

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Dunaway, seconded by Commissioner Field, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Levine, Commissioners Dunaway, Field, Schiller, Van Scoy. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioners Bauer and Brauer.

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Gladhill
Senior Planner

ATTEST:

JoAnn Shaw
Planning Division Secretary