

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

The Ramsey Planning Commission conducted a regular meeting on Thursday, November 3, 2016, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Chairperson Gary Levine
 Commissioner Bruce Anderson
 Commissioner Randy Bauer
 Commissioner Ralph Brauer
 Commissioner Cindy Nosan
 Commissioner Patrick Surma
 Commissioner Gary VanScoy

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Community Development Director Timothy Gladhill
 City Planner Chris Anderson

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. CITIZEN INPUT

None.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Commissioner Bauer, seconded by Commissioner VanScoy, to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Levine, Commissioners Bauer, VanScoy, Anderson, Brauer, Nosan, and Surma. Voting No: None. Absent: None.

4. APPROVE PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

4.01: Approve the Following Planning Commission Minutes:

4.01.1: Planning Commission Meeting Minutes Dated October 6, 2016

Motion by Commissioner VanScoy, seconded by Commissioner Nosan, to approve the following minutes as presented: Planning Commission Meeting Minutes dated October 6, 2016.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Levine, Commissioners VanScoy, Nosan, Anderson, Bauer, Brauer, and Surma. Voting No: None. Absent: None.

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS/COMMISSION BUSINESS

5.01: Public Hearing: Consider Request for a Conditional Use Permit for a Ground Sign that Exceeds both Height and Area Standards within the COR District, Case of Northstar Marketplace

Public Hearing

Chairperson Levine called the public hearing to order at 7:03 p.m.

Presentation

Community Development Director Gladhill presented the staff report stating the City has received an application for a Conditional Use Permit from Quality Sign Solutions (the "Applicant"), on behalf of Northstar Marketplace Station LLC (the "Property Owner"), for a new pylon sign that would exceed both the height and area standards for the property located at 7900 Sunwood Drive NW (the "Subject Property"). The proposed pylon sign is seventy-five feet (75') tall and 333.5 square feet in area. Staff reviewed the request in detail and recommended approval of the Conditional Use Permit for a ground sign.

Citizen Input

Jason Meyer, Quality Sign Solutions, explained he had been hired by Northstar Marketplace Station for the sign. He thanked the Commission for their consideration.

Commissioner Bauer questioned how many businesses would be located on the sign.

Mr. Meyer anticipated the sign would accommodate four businesses, which was the same as the existing sign.

Community Development Director Gladhill reported that not every business at this interchange would be able to be located on this sign.

Commissioner Bauer asked if the sign could be expanded.

Mr. Meyer indicated the sign panels could be replaced or swapped out but the sign itself could not be expanded.

Commissioner Bauer inquired if 75 feet in height would be adequate for the sign.

Mr. Meyer anticipated this height would be adequate.

Commissioner Nosan understood the sign would remain in the same location, but would be taller.

Community Development Director Gladhill reported this was the case. He commented the sign location was at the property line and could not be adjusted as signs were not allowed on public right-of-way. He reported notification signs would be posted prior to the exit ramp.

Commissioner Nosan questioned who would be responsible for posting the notification signs prior to the exit ramp.

Community Development Director Gladhill indicated the Department of Transportation was responsible for these signs and entities would have to make a request to the DOT in order to receive a sign.

Motion by Commissioner VanScoy, seconded by Commissioner Brauer, to close the public hearing.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Levine, Commissioners VanScoy, Brauer, Anderson, Bauer, Nosan, and Surma. Voting No: None. Absent: None.

Chairperson Levine closed the public hearing closed at 7:17 p.m.

Commission Business

Motion by Commissioner Bauer, seconded by Commissioner VanScoy, to recommend that City Council adopt Resolution #16-11-210 approving Findings of Fact #0971 favorable to the Applicant.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Levine, Commissioners Bauer, VanScoy, Anderson, Brauer, Nosan, and Surma. Voting No: None. Absent: None.

Discussion ensued regarding the visibility of signs at this interchange. The Commission was interested in reviewing the City's Sign Ordinance to address the height standards.

Motion by Commissioner Bauer, seconded by Commissioner VanScoy, to recommend that City Council adopt Resolution #16-11-211 granting a Conditional Use Permit for a pylon sign that is seventy-five (75) feet in height and 334 square feet in area (per face), contingent upon entering into an Easement Encroachment Agreement with the City and applicable utility providers.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Levine, Commissioners Bauer, VanScoy, Anderson, Brauer, Nosan, and Surma. Voting No: None. Absent: None.

5.02: Review Sketch Plan for proposed Plat “Regency Commons” generally located at 14725 Ramsey Boulevard NW (Project No. 16-108); Case of National Self Storage LLC

Presentation

Community Development Director Gladhill presented the staff report stating the purpose of this file is to review the official Sketch Plan prepared by Landform for the purpose of combining three (3) existing lots into two (2) buildable lots at the northeast corner of Ramsey Boulevard and Bunker Lake Boulevard. The three (3) parcels are identified as PID #27-32-25-22-0006, #27-32-25-22-0003, and #27-32-25-22-0002 (together referred to as the "Subject Property"). The Sketch Plan Review process affords the Planning Commission the opportunity to provide early direction on the layout of the proposed plat, before a developer prepares detailed Preliminary Plat plans. A key decision will occur at Preliminary Plat, in which the layout will be approved, subject to approving final construction plans and Final Plat documents. At that time, the City will review items including, but not limited to, Grading and Drainage Plans, Utility Plan, Landscape Plan, and Street Light Plan. Staff requested feedback from the Commission on the Sketch Plan.

Commission Business

Chairperson Levine requested further information on the location of this project.

Community Development Director Gladhill reviewed the project site with the Commission.

Commissioner VanScoy asked if the cul-de-sac issue had been resolved.

Community Development Director Gladhill reported staff sees a benefit to having a cul-de-sac, however the bank that currently owns the property does not see value in constructing a cul-de-sac. He anticipated some sort of hybrid cul-de-sac would need to be built to access the area. He discussed which plow truck would have to be used to access this area. He explained staff would need additional feedback from the Commission regarding the cul-de-sac.

Commissioner Bauer believed the cul-de-sac benefited the City more than the applicant. The recommended the City be responsible for the construction of the cul-de-sac given the fact the applicant was willing to donate the land.

Karen Albu, 14732 Limonite Street, reported she submitted a two-page letter to staff regarding the Sketch Plan. She hoped that the wildlife would be able to remain moving through this area.

Community Development Director Gladhill reported the next step for this case would be to hold a public hearing in the coming months in order to take comment from residents.

Commissioner Brauer inquired if the City had received a landscaping plan. He recommended conifers be planted on this property to provide additional screening.

Community Development Director Gladhill explained the City would be reviewing a landscaping plan in the next step.

Curtis Foster, 7121 148th Lane NW, asked how property values would be impacted by the proposed project.

Community Development Director Gladhill explained staff does not have any empirical evidence that the project would negatively affect property values. He believed there was enough separation that this would not be a concern. He explained City staff could speak with the Council anecdotally regarding the adjacent property values.

Commissioner Brauer stated he wouldn't mind living next to the proposed facility given the fact there would be little noise or traffic and there would be a good-sized buffer in place.

Chairperson Levine requested comment from the applicant.

Reid Schulz, Landform Professional Services, introduced himself to the Planning Commission. He discussed the success of Troy Halverson and National Self Storage. He thanked staff for their assistance with the Sketch Plan. He explained this plan was not requesting a variance within the buffer yard. He reported he was willing to work with the neighbors and would not be contributing to any of the drainage concerns. He described how a hammerhead turnaround was used and questioned the benefit of the hybrid cul-de-sac that was being proposed by the City. He explained he was more than happy to dedicate land to the City for a cul-de-sac but stated he would be seeking a reduction in the park dedication fees if this were to proceed. It was his recommendation that the cul-de-sac not be required.

Commissioner Bauer asked if the two large garage doors would accommodate semi-trucks.

Mr. Schulz indicated the two larger doors would allow for climate controlled access into the facility for patrons visiting the site during the winter months. He described how access would be controlled by the gates and noted now outdoor storage would be allowed.

Commissioner VanScoy questioned how the pond would be accessed.

Mr. Schulz described how maintenance vehicles would access the pond through the stub street.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated in the past there was openness for the applicant to dedicate property to the City. He explained he would be interested in holding further conversations with the applicant regarding the cul-de-sac. He understood the cul-de-sac would be awkward in shape, but the City saw value in completing this project. He recommended staff speak with the applicant and bring forward a recommendation to the Commission at a future meeting. He suggested the Public Works Superintendent attend the next meeting to review the cul-de-sac concerns in further detail with the Commission.

Commissioner Surma questioned how high the proposed building would be.

Mr. Schulz reported the building would be under 35 feet in height.

Commissioner Surma asked if the City had notified adjacent property owners to make them aware of the proposal.

Community Development Director Gladhill explained the City had notified property owners within 700 feet of the subject property.

Commissioner Surma looked forward to hearing from the Public Works Director but stated he did not oppose to leaving the roadway as is.

Commissioner Nosan questioned how many entrances to the site would have.

Mr. Schulz explained the property would have a full access of off Ramsey Boulevard and a right in right out off of Bunker Lake Boulevard.

Motion by Commissioner Bauer, seconded by Commissioner VanScoy, to approve the Sketch Plan and direct the Applicant to proceed to preparing a Preliminary Plat, with the considerations listed in this staff report and those raised by the Planning Commission, contingent upon review by City staff.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Levine, Commissioners Bauer, VanScoy, Anderson, Brauer, Nosan, and Surma. Voting No: None. Absent: None.

5.03: Review Sketch Plan for Three (3) Lot Subdivisions at 7131 166th Avenue NW (Project No. 16-32); Case of CTW Group Inc.

Presentation

Community Development Director Gladhill presented the staff report stating the purpose of this file is to review the official Sketch Plan prepared by Advance Surveying & Engineering, Co. for the purpose of creating three (3) new lots at 7131 166th Avenue NW (the "Subject Property"). The Sketch Plan Review process affords the Planning Commission the opportunity to provide early direction on the layout of the proposed plat, before a developer prepares detailed Preliminary Plat plans. A key decision will occur at Preliminary Plat, in which the layout will be approved, subject to approving final construction plans and Final Plat documents. At that time, the City will review items including, but not limited to, Grading and Drainage Plans, Utility Plan, Landscape Plan, and Street Light Plan. Staff requested feedback from the Commission on the Sketch Plan.

Commission Business

Commissioner Bauer asked how much of a concern the rear yard of Lot 1 would be.

Community Development Director Gladhill discussed the City's depth standards for residential lots. He reported the lot would have an adequate amount of buildable area.

Commissioner Surma requested to see an expanded aerial view of the property.

Community Development Director Gladhill reviewed an expanded aerial view of the site, along with the location of the wetland. He stated staff was comfortable moving this request forward and would address the wetland delineations during the next phase.

Commissioner Surma asked if another road would be needed to access the new lot.

Community Development Director Gladhill commented a new driveway would be created on the western end of the property to access the public roadway.

Commissioner Brauer questioned if dewatering would be needed to install utilities or the basement.

Community Development Director Gladhill explained the site had utilities stubs in place. He stated temporary dewatering may be needed and would be monitored closely by the City and watershed management organization.

Megan Jacobson, 16702 Limonite Street NW, expressed concern with Lot 3 noting the lot was very poorly maintained. She hoped to see a high-quality building put on this lot.

Carl Jacobson, 16702 Limonite Street NW, discussed how water drains on his property along with the tall grasses and wildlife in his rear yard. He did not want to see additional water brought onto his property through the new construction.

Commissioner Surma asked who would be developing the lot.

Community Development Director Gladhill deferred this question to the applicant.

Gan Ram, CTW Group, explained he was the developer of the property. He addressed the drainage concerns for the lot and explained he had put in a permit with the Lower Rum River Watershed District. He proposed shifting the house to another area in order for the driveway to be relocated.

Further discussion ensued regarding how the home and driveway could be realigned on the lot.

Commissioner Brauer encouraged the developer to work with staff and the adjacent neighbors to resolve the concerns addressed this evening.

Community Development Director Gladhill indicated he would be willing to work with the applicant prior to the Preliminary Plat being presented to the Commission.

Ms. Jacobson questioned if the rear portion of Lot 3 could be split into six divisions to allow for the adjacent property owners to purchase these parcels.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated this would be a more complex issue, but he could discuss this further with the developer.

Mr. Ram did not anticipate the rear portion of Lot 3 would be built on because the majority was wetland.

Community Development Director Gladhill reported staff would reach out to the applicant and explained neighbors would be re-notified when this item would be reconsidered by the Planning Commission.

5.04: Discuss Outcomes of The COR Market Panel

Presentation

Community Development Director Gladhill presented the staff report stating the purpose of this case is to provide initial feedback from The COR Market Panel event that was held for boards and commissions on Thursday, October 27. This case is for discussion only; no policy direction will be provided. Staff will be requesting general direction on process and how to best use this information for future steps. Staff suggests a few talking points:

1. Due to the broad policy level and topics, and limited time available for the event, the moderated event didn't leave as much interactivity as originally planned. This was partially by design, as future steps were anticipated. As discussed during the planning stages of the event, follow up workshops that were topic specific were anticipated. For example, of the next month or two, as the Planning Commission prepares a policy document clarifying what it believes the vision to be for The COR, additional workshop with more interactivity could be planned for retail district and parking district planning.
2. Staff believes good feedback was provided on the following topics:
 1. Vertically mixed use buildings
 2. Large format retail
 3. Parking strategies

Staff requested feedback from the Commission on how to move forward.

Commission Business

Commissioner Bauer stated he was not able to attend the panel meeting. He recommended visibility of The COR be addressed and that additional community feedback be gathered, given the fact the plans were nearly 10 years old.

Chairperson Levine agreed with this suggestion.

Community Development Director Gladhill described how staff has been seeking input from the public at community functions.

Commissioner VanScoy recommended the term “mixed use” be more closely defined by the City.

Commissioner Nosan understood that the City did not have high enough density to support additional retail.

Commissioner Brauer explained that if Ramsey were to create a sense of destination the City may be granted more retail. He discussed the benefits of the City’s high speed internet and encouraged the City to continue to pursue a community center along with hungry and incubator-type businesses.

Commissioner VanScoy approved of staff’s approach on this issue.

Commissioner Brauer believed the panel discussion was well done and commended staff on their efforts at this event.

Commissioner Bauer recommended the City’s Sign Ordinance be reviewed to ensure businesses within The COR had high visibility.

Commissioner Anderson stated he was interested in seeing a hardware store and auto parts shop within The COR.

Motion by Commissioner Bauer, seconded by Commissioner Surma, to direct Staff to prepare a policy document regarding the Planning Commission's recommended vision for The COR. He was interested in learning from other Ramsey residents what would draw them into The COR. He recommended the needs of youth also be considered.

Commissioner Surma stated he was against Ramsey building a community center. He was very interested in the City having more sit-down restaurants.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Levine, Commissioners Bauer, Surma, Anderson, Brauer, Nosan, and VanScoy. Voting No: None. Absent: None.

6. COMMISSION / STAFF INPUT

6.01: Receive Staff Update

The Staff Update was noted.

6.02: Zoning Bulletins

Zoning Bulletins were noted.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Bauer, seconded by Commissioner Nosan, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Levine, Commissioners Bauer, Nosan, Anderson, Brauer, Surma, and VanScoy. Voting No: None. Absent: None.

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission adjourned at 9:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Gladhill
Community Development Director

ATTEST:

JoAnn Shaw
Community Development Assistant

Drafted by Heidi Guenther
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.