

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

The Ramsey Planning Commission conducted a regular meeting on Thursday, March 5, 2020, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Chairperson Randy Bauer
 Commissioner Cheri Gengler
 Commissioner Torrey Johnson
 Commissioner Eric Peters
 Commissioner Gary VanScoy
 Commissioner Matt Woestehoff

Members Absent: Commissioner Bruce Anderson

Also Present: Senior Planner Chloe McGuire Brigl
 City Planner Chris Anderson
 City Councilmember Debra Musgrove

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. CITIZEN INPUT

None.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Bauer, Commissioners VanScoy, Johnson, Gengler, Peters, and Woestehoff. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioner Anderson.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

4.01: Approve the February 6, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes:

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl referenced the motion for the DC Ramsey LLC Gardenview Villas project, it should state, "...include 20-foot-wide driveways and recommend the developer and residents discuss acceptable ~~plantings~~ buffering."

Motion by Commissioner VanScoy, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, to approve the consent agenda as amended.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Bauer, Commissioners VanScoy, Johnson, Gengler, Peters, and Woestehoff. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioner Anderson.

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS/COMMISSION BUSINESS

None.

6. COMMISSION BUSINESS

6.01: Consider Request for Conditional Use Permit for a Ground Sign and Wall Signage at 7800 Sunwood Drive NW (Project No. 20-102); Case of New Horizon Academy

Presentation

City Planner Anderson presented the Staff Report stating that staff recommends approving the request for a Conditional Use Permit for the requested deviations from sign standards.

Commission Business

Chairperson Bauer stated that it is clear that the Commission needs to discuss the overall sign ordinance.

City Planner Anderson stated that staff has begun to work with the planning consultant on that topic and will bring that information forward to the Commission once ready.

Commissioner VanScoy stated that there is an overlay for the Armstrong Interchange District and asked if that impacts this situation.

City Planner Anderson confirmed that district allows administrative approval of ground signs up to 150 square feet in area and 50 feet in height but excludes parcels within The COR and therefore does not apply to this parcel.

Chairperson Bauer invited the applicant to provide any additional comments.

Eric Tauscheck, Spectrum Signs, stated that he is present to address any questions. He stated that stone and masonry work has been added to the base of the sign in attempt to tie into the aesthetics of the building.

Commissioner VanScoy asked the specific reason for requesting a 25-foot sign.

Mr. Tauscheck replied that the sign would be visible from the highway. He stated that when possible, the company would like to maximize the visibility when adjacent a highway.

Commissioner VanScoy stated that if the City continues on this path, Ramsey will face a forest of signs in this area. He asked if the business would be in agreement with a monument sign.

Mr. Tauscheck replied that although that could be a possibility, it would not be visible from the highway.

Commissioner VanScoy stated that this is another reason the City needs to expedite its review of the sign ordinance.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl stated that staff originally believed that this sign would be administratively approved but the City Attorney suggested that the Commission review this request because although allowed in the district, the language is not clear.

Commissioner VanScoy stated that The COR is not intended to be the typical suburban development and he is having difficulty continuing to support these types of requests. He recognized that visibility is important for retail and commercial businesses along Highway 10. He stated that although the master sign plan addresses that intent, it has not yet been accomplished. He stated that he would support a monument sign along the highway that would be visible to support these businesses, similar to the City signs near the rail station and Ramsey Boulevard. He agreed that visibility is critical but did not believe that ending up with multiple signs is the intention.

City Planner Anderson read language from The COR design framework related to allowed signage.

Commissioner VanScoy stated that he finds it difficult to support this situation.

Chairperson Bauer referenced the location of this property and the two vacant lots that have interest from two potential businesses. He asked if there could be shared signage for those three parcels.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl stated that the two vacant parcels are both owned by the City and will come forward for a lot split and therefore the City could ask for shared signage at that time. She stated that the City can still look into shared monument signage but that would be further into the future. She reviewed the type of signage that could be approved administratively, noting that this traditional ground sign would be preferred to what could be allowed under the Code.

Chairperson Bauer asked if the business would be open to building signage at this time and waiting for the future development of the adjacent parcels in attempt for shared signage.

Mr. Tauscheck stated that while he understands the intent he could not speak for the business.

Commissioner Johnson asked why the business does not use one of the open spaces on the Coborn's sign.

Mr. Tauscheck replied that there is another property owner and location for that sign, and it would not be New Horizon's space to take.

City Planner Anderson stated that he cannot speak for the management company for NorthStar Marketplace, but he presumes that they are typically promoting businesses within their own project space and not an adjacent parcel. He stated that potentially opens the discussion of off premise signage that was discussed the previous month.

Commissioner Woestehoff stated that the information shows that the sign would be illuminated and asked if that would be lit 24 hours per day.

Mr. Tauscheck replied that the illumination would be set on a timer and would be lit during set hours.

Councilmember Musgrove asked the height of the monument sign that the City owns on Ramsey Boulevard.

City Planner Anderson replied that sign is between 23 to 25 feet in height.

Councilmember Musgrove asked for the height of the U.S. Bank sign.

City Planner Anderson replied that sign is 75 feet in height.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that she likes this sign proposal as it is on the applicant's property and will be paid for by the applicant. She commented that the City owned sign at Ramsey Boulevard is recommended payment and therefore the City is not always paid for those spaces. She commented that when traveling on Highway 10, she does not see a lot of signage. She stated that signage is key for businesses and attracting businesses to Ramsey. She stated that the Council recognizes that signage is key in attracting more businesses into The COR.

Commissioner Gengler commented that this is a reasonable request and it is important for businesses to be able to promote themselves and be visible.

Motion by Commissioner Peters, seconded by Commissioner Gengler, to recommend that City Council approve Resolution #20-042 granting a Conditional Use Permit to allow a 25-foot-tall ground sign as well as wall signage at 7800 Sunwood Drive NW.

Further discussion

Commissioner VanScoy cautioned that every business will want a sign and if the City does not provide reasonable support for that, it will become a forest of signage. Commissioner Johnson stated that he agrees with that and would prefer to see wall signage for now and delay additional signage until a monument sign is available.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Bauer, Commissioners Peters, Gengler, and Woestehoff. Voting No: Commissioners Johnson and VanScoy. Absent: Commissioner Anderson.

6.02: Consider Request for Conditional Use Permit for Oversized Ground Sign at 7990 Sunwood Drive NW (Project No. 20-101); Case of RGH Ramsey LLC

Presentation

City Planner Anderson presented the Staff Report stating that staff recommends approving the request for a Conditional Use Permit for an oversized ground sign.

Commission Business

Chairperson Bauer commented that it seems the applicant has taken into account the comments from the Commission at the last meeting and adjusted their application as such.

Commissioner VanScoy asked the elevation of the Armstrong sign.

City Planner Anderson stated that he believed that the signs are relatively close in elevation. He stated that this sign is further separated from the overpass.

Commissioner VanScoy stated that it is his impression that this site has a higher elevation than the other sign.

City Planner Anderson stated that based on the contour data, the sites appear to be close in elevation.

Motion by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Gengler, to recommend that City Council approve Resolution #20-027 granting a Conditional Use Permit for an oversized ground sign at 7990 Sunwood Drive NW.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Bauer, Commissioners Johnson, Gengler, Peters, and Woestehoff. Voting No: Commissioner VanScoy. Absent: Commissioner Anderson.

7. COMMISSION / STAFF INPUT

7.01: Receive Staff Update

Chairperson Bauer stated that at the last Council worksession there was an item related to the City's housing policy, specifically multi-family parcels. He stated that there was a brief discussion on the item because of a heavy agenda and advised that the item will be discussed again at the March 24th worksession. He encouraged members of the Commission to provide any input to himself or staff, or to attend if interested.

Commissioner Peters stated that his son won the Geography Bee at Anoka Middle School for the Arts and will be attending the State tournament.

Commissioner Johnson asked when the topics will move forward that the Commission discussed in a previous worksession.

Commissioner VanScoy suggested that the sign ordinance discussion move forward quickly to ensure there is consistency.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl stated that the planning consultant is working on the zoning update to provide concrete items to be discussed, noting that the work began on the accessory dwelling structure language. She stated that a draft should be provided to staff within the next month. She provided an update on the April agenda, noting that there would not be a sufficient amount of space to add to that agenda. She noted that a worksession could be scheduled for later in April if desired to discuss accessory structures or signage. She confirmed that the items on the April agenda are not related to signage. She confirmed the consensus of the Commission to schedule a special worksession to discuss those topics. She reported that today was the deadline for the April meeting and noted that six applications were received. She stated that a workshop has been scheduled prior to that meeting to allow residents to attend and discuss a potential residential development and zoning change north of Trott Brook. She reported that Gardenview Villas, DC Ramsey LLC, has not provided an updated plan. She stated that the City has 120 days to respond to a request, which is coming to an end at the end of the month and therefore that item will move forward to the City Council at the March 24th meeting as is. She reported that Riverwalk Village will begin construction soon, advising that notification was provided to homeowners and businesses in that area to advise of the increased construction traffic. She stated that there is an item on the March 10th City Council agenda to hire a Planning Technician. She stated that the Planning Intern position has been posted on the website and will close on March 26th. She reported that Saturday April 4th the City will hold its Business Expo from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner VanScoy, seconded by Commissioner Peters, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Bauer, Commissioners VanScoy, Peters, Gengler, Johnson, and Woestehoff. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioner Anderson.

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chloe McGuire Brigl
Senior Planner

ATTEST:

JoAnn Shaw
Planning Division Secretary

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.