

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

The Ramsey Planning Commission conducted a regular meeting on Thursday, August 26, 2021, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Chairperson Randy Bauer (virtual)
 Commissioner Bruce Anderson
 Commissioner Cheri Gengler
 Commissioner Eric Peters
 Commissioner Gary VanScoy
 Commissioner Brian Walker

Members Absent: Commissioner Andrew Dunaway

Also Present: Senior Planner Chloe McGuire Brigl
 City Planner Chris Anderson
 Zoning Code Enforcement Officer Bria Raines
 Planning Technician Brian McCann
 City Council Liaison Matt Woestehoff

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairperson Bauer led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. CITIZEN INPUT

None.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

A roll call vote was performed:

Commissioner Peters	aye
Commissioner Walker	aye
Commissioner Gengler	aye

Commissioner VanScoy aye
Commissioner Anderson aye
Chairperson Bauer aye

Motion Carried.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

- 5.01: Approve the July 22, 2021 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes**
- 5.02: Adopt Resolution #21-232 Approving G-Will Liquors Site Plan (Project 21-127)**
- 5.03: Consider Setback Requirements for Accessory Structures**

City Planner Anderson noted that the information provided from Commissioner VanScoy to staff prior to the meeting will be reflected in the minutes.

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

A roll call vote was performed:

Commissioner Anderson aye
Commissioner VanScoy aye
Commissioner Gengler aye
Commissioner Walker aye
Commissioner Peters aye
Chairperson Bauer aye

Motion Carried.

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS/COMMISSION BUSINESS

- 6.01: Public Hearing: Consider Request for a Variance to Utilize an Alternative Tree Inventory Technique for Trott Brook North (Project No. 21-130); Case of Sotarra**

Public Hearing

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

Presentation

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report stating that the Environmental Policy Board supported the request to utilize the FRP technique within the planted areas due to the unique characteristics of these stands of trees (similar ages, sizes, species).

Commissioner Walker asked if the area shaded in green is the Peterson property and whether this is part of the Christmas tree farm.

City Planner Anderson confirmed that a portion is the Peterson property, and this portion is an active part of the Christmas tree farm. He stated that some of the trees would be removed as part of the Christmas tree farm operation.

Citizen Input

Tracey Rust, representing the applicant, clarified that the turquoise-colored area is the Peterson property and that is part of their Christmas tree farm. She noted that the Petersons hope to harvest most of that area as part of that operation this Christmas season.

Jeff Uker, 17121 Variolite Street, asked how it would be known that this method is accurate for counting. He stated that he would want to ensure that the counting method is accurate. He stated that when the project comes forward, he has a concern with density. He noted that he lives on ten acres and therefore transitioning to quarter acre lots would not be preferred, even with a 40-foot buffer.

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

A roll call vote was performed:

Commissioner Gengler	aye
Commissioner Walker	aye
Commissioner VanScoy	aye
Commissioner Anderson	aye
Commissioner Peters	aye
Chairperson Bauer	aye

Motion Carried.

Chairperson Bauer closed the public hearing closed at 7:15 p.m.

Commission Business

Commissioner VanScoy stated that the information in the packet seemed to indicate work has been done in the past to ensure the accuracy of this type of process. He asked if City staff believes this process would be fairly accurate.

City Planner Anderson confirmed that staff has reviewed this and the EPB has reviewed this, and staff is confident that this method would provide an accurate representation of what exists. He confirmed that the information would be available if a member of the public wished to view it.

Commissioner Walker commented that going back to May of 2020, when there was a public hearing on this project, the residents have not supported this project and therefore he will not support any action on this project.

Motion by Commissioner VanScoy, seconded by Commissioner Gengler, to adopt Resolution #21-247 Granting a Variance to Utilize a Fixed Ratio Plot Sampling Technique within the Planted Woodlands on the Subject Property.

A roll call vote was performed:

Commissioner Peters	aye
Commissioner VanScoy	aye
Commissioner Gengler	aye
Commissioner Walker	nay
Commissioner Anderson	aye
Chairperson Bauer	aye

Motion Carried.

6.02: Public Hearing: Consider Resolution #21-175 Denying a Home Occupation Permit for 8351 160th Ave NW (Project 21-119); Case of Jacob Johnson

Public Hearing

Chairperson Bauer called the public hearing to order at 7:18 p.m.

Presentation

Zoning Code Enforcement Officer Raines presented the staff report stating staff recommends denying the application for a Home Occupation Permit for a landscaping business at 8351 160th Avenue NW. This use will require additional maintenance of the neighborhood roadways at the cost of the public for public facilities and services. Additionally, staff has received complaints about the use and finds that the use is outside of what one would typically find in a residential setting. Staff finds that the use is more compatible with a commercial or industrial district.

Commissioner VanScoy asked what the issues are. He noted that there are standards for number of trips and outside storage.

Zoning Code Enforcement Officer Raines replied that there were two violations for the property related to the home occupation and trash.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl stated that there are three different levels of home occupation permits and reviewed some of the related regulations for each level. She stated that this request falls into the third category of home occupation permits because of the number of people coming to the property. She stated that staff believes that this would be better suited for an industrial area and would be willing to work with the applicant to find a suitable location in Ramsey.

Citizen Input

Jacob Johnson, 8351 160th Avenue NW, stated that this has been going on since 2019 and did not believe he ever received a letter about this issue. He stated that he also reached out to staff to request a copy of the letter. He noted that he was provided a copy of a letter sent to the previous owners of the home related to a septic system. He stated that he is down to four employees, which reduces the number of trips. He stated that the business does not function at the same level in the winter, as they operate at a smaller capacity for plowing. He noted that there are no landscaping materials kept on site at this time. He stated that his application included the hours of 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. but stated that they are typically done for the day around 3 or 4 p.m. He noted that he has also cleaned up the outdoor trash items on the property.

Chairperson Bauer stated that even with four employees, that would equate to eight trips. He asked the number of vehicles going out each day.

Mr. Johnson replied that two vehicles go out each day.

Chairperson Bauer asked if the landscaping material was planned to be stored on the left of the trees and received confirmation. He referenced a building shown on the aerial photograph and asked the purpose of that building.

Mr. Johnson replied that is a personal shed.

Commissioner Walker asked the resident's long-range plans for the business.

Mr. Johnson stated that he would like to build another shop on the very west of the property, on the other side of the trees. He stated that if that meant he detached garage needed to be removed, he would. He stated that at that time, everything would be moved to the west side of the property.

Commissioner Walker asked if there are woods to the west of the property for a bit before another home is encountered.

Mr. Johnson confirmed that to be true.

Commissioner Walker commented that if that occurred, no one would even know this business was back there unless they went back and looked.

Commissioner VanScoy asked the purpose of the building.

Mr. Johnson replied that he would store equipment inside the building.

Chairperson Bauer asked the largest structure size that would be allowed.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl commented that staff could look into that but would need the square footage of the existing accessory buildings to provide an accurate number.

Commissioner Gengler asked the number of work-related vehicles on the property.

Mr. Johnson replied that there are four pick-up trucks.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl asked if the trucks pull trailers and if those exist on the property.

Mr. Johnson confirmed that there are two trailers. He also confirmed that employees drive to his property and leave their personal vehicles onsite and then two of the trucks with trailers leave for the day.

John Wagner, 16030 Kangaroo Street, stated that he has the closest adjoining property with a household. He stated that this activity does not bother him, and the employees are very pleasant and drive at slow speeds. He stated that when they come and go from the property with the equipment it is quiet. He stated that there are 50,000 people that attend Game Fair and the traffic they incur during that time is more than will ever occur in one year from this business. He stated that the employees come to the property and get into trucks in groups of two to leave and do their work for the day. He noted that on garbage/recycle days, ACE Solid Waste comes through with three different trucks, along with the other haulers. He commented that traffic is heavy on 161st with people dropping animals off at the kennel. He stated that Mr. Johnson is a small business that employs a few people and does not disrupt the neighborhood. He stated that there is a park in that area that is overgrown to the point where it provides a visual and sound barrier for that neighbor. He believed that Mr. Johnson should be allowed to continue his small business as it has created no problems. He provided photographs of the Game Fair traffic, overgrown park condition, and applicant's property. He stated that Mr. Johnson has been operating for a few hours and there have been no problems. He stated that typically the employees return to the property around 2 or 3 p.m. He believed that Mr. Johnson should be able to continue to operate his business.

Elijah Quarnstrom, 16001 Kangaroo Street, echoed the comments of the last speaker noting that he and his wife have no problems with the business. He believed that the initial complaints arose a few years ago in a similar manner as the complaints he received on his property. He believed that Mr. Johnson should be able to continue operating his business. He agreed that Game Fair creates a much larger problem and has people allowing hundreds of vehicles of park on lawns. He stated that they support the business.

Adam Stordahl, 16041 Kangaroo Street, also echoed the comments of the previous speakers. He stated that Mr. Johnson is a good guy with a light crew and does not generate much traffic from his business. He stated that he does not believe this is a nuisance and commented that the property looks much better than it did when the previous owners had the property.

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

A roll call vote was performed:

Commissioner Anderson	aye
Commissioner VanScoy	aye
Commissioner Gengler	aye
Commissioner Walker	aye
Commissioner Peters	aye

Chairperson Bauer

Motion Carried.

Chairperson Bauer closed the public hearing closed at 7:41 p.m.

Commission Business

Commissioner Walker asked the traffic counts on 161st and Kangaroo Street. He stated that it seems that in the case of the City, the traffic from the trucks and employees is a big deal. He noted that he recently drove down 161st during Game Fair and found that to be a huge mistake. He was unsure how eight trips from the business cause a large impact on the road.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl commented that staff does not have that information available. She agreed that Game Fair has a lot of traffic and noted that there is an overlay parking standard during the two-week duration of the fair. She stated that staff could not approve the permit administratively because of the number of trips and because of employees parking on the roadway.

Chairperson Bauer commented that the case did mention parking on the street. He asked if there could be a condition that employees and business vehicles do not park on the street.

Mr. Johnson replied that currently there are no business vehicles parked on the street. He stated that the employees have been parking on the street as he has not hauled in the class five material to create a parking area. He stated that he does have approval to create the parking area but wanted to wait to see if the Home Occupation Permit is approved before making that investment.

Commissioner VanScoy asked if the parking area would be near the second driveway in the back, which was confirmed by the applicant. He also asked and received confirmation that there is not landscaping material being stored outdoors at this time. He noted that the applicant has said that his long-term vision would be to construct a building that could house the equipment as well. He asked if there is an anticipated date for the structure.

Mr. Johnson replied that he would like to have that built within the next three years.

Commissioner VanScoy asked if the nuisance items have been cleaned up.

Zoning Code Enforcement Officer Raines confirmed that she has been to the site and the nuisance items have been cleaned up.

Motion by Commissioner Walker, seconded by Commissioner VanScoy, to recommend that City Council adopt Resolution #21-175 Approving a Home Occupation Permit for a Landscaping Business at 8351 160th Avenue NW, conditional upon the addition of the second driveway and off-street parking area.

Further discussion

Commissioner Anderson stated that he is debating his decision on this request. He stated that he likes the idea that the business is growing but adding another building would seem to support moving the business to a commercial lot. He asked if the applicant has spoken with staff about available commercial spaces. Chairperson Bauer noted that whether there is a business or not, there is a maximum square footage pertaining to accessory buildings that would regulate that activity. Senior Planner McGuire Brigl confirmed that to be true. Mr. Johnson stated that the additional building would not be related to business growth, but the intention to move things to the end of the street and stored indoors. He noted that he would be willing to remove the existing detached garage in order to accomplish that goal. Commissioner Gengler stated that she is also conflicted. She asked the guarantee that the business would not continue to grow in this location. She stated that she could support this business for this location but would not want to see it continue to grow larger in this location. Mr. Johnson stated that if the business grows out of that space, he would move it to a different location. Commissioner Gengler asked if there could be limitations on the home occupation. Senior Planner McGuire Brigl confirmed that conditions could be put upon the permit. She reviewed the regulations that are placed within the Home Occupation Permit. Zoning Code Enforcement Officer Raines stated that the number of roundtrips would be included in the permit regulations, noting that the application requested 16 trips. Commissioner Walker asked if the action on the table would satisfy what the applicant needs. Mr. Johnson confirmed that 16 would be the maximum number of trips. He stated that in the winter there is no traffic in and out unless it snows.

A roll call vote was performed:

Commissioner Peters	aye
Commissioner Walker	aye
Commissioner Gengler	aye
Commissioner VanScoy	aye
Commissioner Anderson	aye
Chairperson Bauer	aye

Motion Carried.

6.03: Public Hearing: Consider Preliminary Plat and Zoning Amendment for Lynwood Subdivision on PID #20-32-25-44-0003 (Project No. 21-122); Case of Lennar

Public Hearing

Chairperson Bauer called the public hearing to order at 7:59 p.m.

Presentation

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report stating that staff recommends approval of the Zoning Amendment to rezone the R-3 Residential (High Density) portion of the subject property to R-2 Residential (Medium Density) but does not support rezoning the R-1 Residential (MUSA) – 80 area to R-1 Residential (MUSA) – 65. Approval of the Zoning Amendment needs to be

contingent upon approval of the CPA. Staff recommends approval of the Preliminary Plat with the following contingencies (which have been incorporated into the draft resolution):

- Approval of the Zoning Amendment to rezone R-3 Residential (High Density) to R-2 Residential (Medium Density)
- Approval of the CPA
- Approval of Anoka County for second access onto Armstrong Boulevard
- Full compliance with density transitioning requirements
- Modifications to ensure compliance with all bulk standards of the applicable zoning district(s).

Chairperson Bauer asked if these should be considered as two separate actions.

City Planner Anderson confirmed that he would recommend taking two separate actions.

Chairperson Bauer referenced the comment from the Metropolitan Council related to livable community eligibility and asked for clarification.

City Planner Anderson stated that the action of the Council did not include identification of other areas to guide as high density.

Chairperson Bauer asked if the City would risk eligibility for funds if this Comprehensive Plan amendment were approved without adding additional high-density housing.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl noted that was already decided by the City Council. She stated that this conversation is related to the rezoning and preliminary plat as the Council has already acted on the Comprehensive Plan amendment and decided not to reguide additional land.

Commissioner Peters asked if there is guidance on whether trees last longer on flat land or berms. He stated that in his neighborhood trees were planted on a slope and half of them are now dead.

City Planner Anderson commented that there is a technique that can be used to place trees on a berm. He stated that it is not unusual for there to be some mortality with plantings, noting that regular watering is a factor when being established. He stated that it is feasible and practical to plant on a berm.

Commissioner Peters stated that if there are plantings on a berm would that reduce the ability for homeowners to put features on their property.

City Planner Anderson commented that backyards would terminate at the start of the transition corridor and therefore it would not have an impact on what can be done on private property. He stated that the density transitioning corridor would need to be placed in its own lot under separate ownership to avoid that situation.

Commissioner VanScoy asked who would own the transition corridor.

City Planner Anderson stated that in this instance it sounds like the HOA would maintain ownership of that area.

Commissioner VanScoy asked how it would work if there was not an HOA.

City Planner Anderson stated that another option would be for that land to be deeded to the City once installed and established. He stated that in this scenario it would be likely that the HOA would own that parcel.

Chairperson Bauer asked if the City Council provided input on the 80 foot lots versus the 65-foot lots.

City Planner Anderson stated that the Council would prefer to see the property remain as 80 foot lots as a transition into the existing developed neighborhoods.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that it was an overwhelming consensus that the property remains at 80-foot lots. He asked the Commission to also support the 80-foot-wide lot requirement to avoid the situation where the Commission supports 65-foot lots only to get to the Council and have that denied.

Citizen Input

Paul Tabone, Lennar, thanked the Commission to listening to the request. He noted that he has been working closely with staff to propose different layouts for the property. He stated that at this time they are down to the lot sizes, noting that the Council was clear about the desire for 80-foot-wide lots. He stated that they are working with staff on the secondary access. He stated that the density transitioning is the biggest challenge. He noted that with the desire of the Council to have 80-foot lots, the depths of those home sites would be shortened if that transition area is put into its own parcel. He hoped that there could be some flexibility on that. He stated that he understands how important berming and density transitioning is in the City of Ramsey. He stated that this site is a challenge, surrounded by business, municipal, and rural residential uses. He asked if there could be flexibility in the density transitioning plan if the intent is still met. He stated that the draft landscape plan included as many trees as recommended by the landscaper per size at full maturity, which falls short of the requirement. He stated that if a berm is added, that would take space from the backyards of the residents. He commented that there are some fairly significant existing tree lines to the north and west of the site. He stated that an adjacent property owner previously made the comment that he would even support 65-foot lots, if properly screened. He noted that property has a row of evergreens and suggested that perhaps a row of evergreens be added on this site to increase the thickness of that screen. He stated that would meet the intent of screening without reducing the backyard sizes. He stated that if home sites cannot be platted to the lot line, as shown, it would create a challenge in having 80-foot lots. He commented that staff has been great to work with throughout this process.

Chairperson Bauer asked the concern with the size of the 80-foot lots.

Mr. Tabone reviewed the depth that is needed in order to meet the 10,000 square feet lot size for an 80-foot-wide lot. He noted that if the density transitioning corridor is required, that portion of the site would be rendered undevelopable at 80 feet wide.

Chairperson Bauer asked if a variance could be issued for that section of the property related to minimum lot size.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl confirmed that a minimum lot size variance could be provided, noting that would need to occur through separate action at a future meeting.

Kyle Swenson, 15049 Iguana Street, stated that this project seems to be a moving target as he has had different layouts mailed to him. He stated that the original layout would have had four 65-foot lots and three ponds that would come near his property but with the design change there would be several more homes along the existing residential boundary. He stated that the solution would be to include the buffer and remove a lot in order to have the minimum lot size met against that existing residential property line. He stated that the existing residents want to see a transition as it will be quite a difference to have 140 homes compared to the cornfield that exists. He stated that he likes the 80-foot-wide lot requirement and would suggest the developer remove a few lots in order to support that buffer.

Motion by Commissioner Peters, seconded by Commissioner Walker, to close the public hearing.

A roll call vote was performed:

Commissioner Anderson	aye
Commissioner Peters	aye
Commissioner VanScoy	aye
Commissioner Walker	aye
Commissioner Gengler	aye
Chairperson Bauer	aye

Motion Carried.

Chairperson Bauer closed the public hearing closed at 8:31 p.m.

Commission Business

Chairperson Bauer suggested the Commission begin with the requested rezoning.

Motion by Commissioner Anderson, seconded by Commissioner VanScoy, to recommend that City Council adopt Ordinance #21-19 Approving a Zoning Amendment to Rezone Portions of the Subject Property from R-3 Residential (High Density) to R-2 Residential (Medium Density).

A roll call vote was performed:

Commissioner Gengler	aye
Commissioner VanScoy	aye

Commissioner Walker aye
Commissioner Anderson aye
Commissioner Peters aye
Chairperson Bauer aye

Motion Carried.

Chairperson Bauer noted that the second request is related to the preliminary plat and asked staff to display the list of contingencies that were included in the staff report.

Commissioner VanScoy stated that he is a little confused on how the transition can have common ownership and how it is configured with the lot. He stated that the applicant stated that the transition area is currently part of the lot.

City Planner Anderson stated that as the applicant proposed, the density transition corridor is part of the individual lots, but City Code states that corridor should be held common ownership, such as a separate entity like an HOA. He confirmed that changes would be needed in order to meet that requirement of the Code. He stated that each individual lot should meet the lot width and area requirements, separate from the density transition area.

Commissioner VanScoy commented that if the layout is configured in that manner, the density corridor should not impact the lot depth.

City Planner Anderson stated that if laid out in that manner from the start, there would not be an issue. He stated that originally, these lots were proposed at 65 feet and under that scenario the lots would have met the minimum lot size requirement and there was sufficient spacing for the density transitioning corridor to be held in separate parcel. He stated that the minimum lot size is larger for 80-foot-wide lots and therefore with the separate density transitioning corridor, 80 foot lots in that area could not meet the minimum lot size requirement.

Commissioner Anderson stated that this would mean yards would be smaller in that area and therefore a variance request would need to come back in the future to consider those smaller lots.

City Planner Anderson stated that the applicant could choose to revise the plan in order to show the required minimum lot size. He noted that a resident did suggest that a lot or two be removed in order to support meeting those requirements. He stated that if the applicant chose not to do that, they could come back to request a variance.

Mr. Tabone stated that he would like the ability to continue to work with staff on the density transitioning standards to determine if the intent can be met without dropping lots. He stated that this is not the first time they have dealt with a buffer, wetland, trees, or screening and therefore believed there were additional options outside of dropping home sites. He stated that they have already dropped a few townhomes and they want to ensure the project would be feasible in delivering a market need.

City Planner Anderson stated that within the density transitioning ordinance it states that alternatives can be used if agreed upon by the City and developer.

Chairperson Bauer asked if this type of issue has come before the Council during the tenure of Councilmember Woestehoff.

Councilmember Woestehoff replied that he cannot recall an instance of that nature in his time on the Council.

Commissioner Anderson asked if this should be tabled to allow the developer and staff to work this out.

City Planner Anderson stated that the Code does provide for some flexibility and that discussion as to whether the proposal would be reasonable could be discussed and decided upon by the City Council during its review.

Motion by Commissioner Gengler, seconded by Commissioner VanScoy, to recommend that City Council adopt Resolution #21-252 Approving the Preliminary Plat of Lynwood Subdivision with the contingencies outlined in the staff report.

A roll call vote was performed:

Commissioner Anderson	aye
Commissioner VanScoy	aye
Commissioner Gengler	aye
Commissioner Walker	aye
Commissioner Peters	aye
Chairperson Bauer	aye

Motion Carried.

6.04: Public Hearing: Consider Resolution #21-248 Approving Preliminary Plat for North Brook Meadows, Case of Landform on Behalf of Platinum Land, LLC (Project 21-131 – Hunt Property)

Public Hearing

Chairperson Bauer called the public hearing to order at 8:42 p.m.

Presentation

Planning Technician McCann presented the staff report stating that staff recommends approval of the project and recommends adoption of Resolution #21-248.

Citizen Input

Darrin Lazan, representing the applicant, commented that this is a fairly straightforward proposal. He acknowledged the work that has gone into the project throughout this time and thanked staff for their cooperation. He noted that they continue to work with the City and adjacent property in terms of developing roadways and infrastructure.

Carla Beaterman, 7050 175th Avenue NW, stated that there has been a lot of discussion on this property before today. She stated that they have been neighbors to the Hunt family for the past 43 years and wish that family the best, they still have strong concerns about the density of the development. She commented on the traffic on 175th and difficulty in attempting to get onto and off of Nowthen Boulevard. She asked if there has been a traffic study completed and whether this could move forward prior to attempting to solve the traffic problem. She asked if it is the plan of the City to retain rural residential property or continue to push until that does not exist. She noted that she has received two requests to develop her property in recent years. She stated that there are areas of Ramsey, in The COR and near Highway 10, where smaller lots have been developed and she would prefer to keep the rural area of Ramsey rural. She asked if the Commission and developer would consider less homes on increased acreage for those that desire the more rural atmosphere of Ramsey.

Chairperson Bauer stated that the zoning of the property is R-1, therefore the number of homes proposed meets the zoning of the property.

Senior Planner McGuire stated that under the R-1 80 standards the minimum lot size is .25 acres and therefore the 77 lots proposed falls under that requirement. She noted that the density falls lower than the maximum allowed. She stated that the proposal meets the density, lot size, and bulk standards. She noted that a traffic study is being completed for the property to the south and staff is working to coordinate those efforts and there will most likely be an additional turn lane recommended for 173rd.

Carl Beaterman commented that he is opposed to this as it appears to pack in too many homes into an area that does not show that population. He stated that the other properties in that area range from two to 50 acres in size. He did not believe this development is what the neighborhood deserves. He asked what would be included in the density buffer. He believed there should be five to ten acre lots on this property. He stated that the surrounding properties have livestock and did not believe this type of development fits in this area.

Chairperson Bauer commented that the property is zoned for 80-foot-wide lots, not two or ten acre lots.

Mr. Lazan commented that the buffer would be provided on the entire west side as required and on the east side as recommended by staff but not required. He stated that there is a landscaping plan detailing the buffer areas.

Mr. Beaterman commented that he believes that both the Hunt and Makowsky properties had a 400-signature petition against these developments. He noted that it sounds like the City will allow this to move forward even though the residents should have a voice in what happens.

Debra Musgrove, 15247 Fluorine Street NW, asked staff for clarification on whether the 80-foot lot size is the minimum and whether larger lots would be allowed.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl commented that the minimum lot size would be 80 feet wide and .25 acres in size. She stated that any proposal that meets those minimums would have to be approved. She stated that the developer could choose to go with larger lots, but the City could not require that as the request meets the bulk standards. She stated that the buffer yard was added to benefit the existing residents and review the additional elements staff is recommending such as trails.

Chairperson Bauer asked how long the property has been zoned R-1.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl stated that she is unsure but believes at least ten to 15 years.

Chairperson Bauer stated that the petition mentioned was against the smaller lot sizes.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl confirmed that previous requests from this property and the Makowsky property included lot sizes of 55, 65, and 75 feet and that rezoning request was denied with very firm direction to continue with the 80-foot lots and no deviation from the bulk standards.

Chairperson Bauer stated that the City did listen to those property owners that signed the petition as that zoning request was denied and the zoning remained the same as it had been for years.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl commented that residents can continue to reach out to staff to determine if there is something that could make the project more palatable for them, such as trees near the property line being saved or trails.

Ms. Beaterman referenced the Comprehensive Plan and asked if the City intends to maintain the rural community or whether it intends to have all the rural properties developed into small lots.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl stated that there is a municipal urban service area (MUSA) and the properties within that area are meant to have City sewer and water services. She noted that the properties outside of that area are not guided for City utilities. She noted that the majority of acreage is not guided for City utilities.

John Weberg, 17512 Nowthen Boulevard, stated that he has concern with traffic and the road conditions. He stated that more vehicles would only increase the maintenance problems that already exist on the road. He asked if the Council has addressed how the road will be maintained. He asked if the developer has been on the property and whether there would be issues with the smell from adjacent livestock. He stated that it would not be fair to have new residents move to the area only to complain about the animals on adjacent properties.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl stated that if the property is in compliance with the Code standards for keeping of animals (cows, chickens, etc.) there would be no issue, even if there is a complaint. She stated that she will follow up with the resident to address any concerns about his animals.

Lonnie Gray, 17530 Nowthen Boulevard, commented that there is currently semi and other vehicle traffic traveling at high speeds. He stated that the traffic problem needs to be addressed before adding more homes in this area.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl confirmed that there is a traffic study currently being completed.

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

A roll call vote was performed:

Commissioner Peters	aye
Commissioner VanScoy	aye
Commissioner Gengler	aye
Commissioner Anderson	aye
Commissioner Walker	aye
Chairperson Bauer	aye

Motion Carried.

Chairperson Bauer closed the public hearing closed at 9:14 p.m.

Commission Business

Commissioner Walker stated that in preparation for the meeting, he read 29 pages of minutes from the May 7, 2020 Planning Commission meeting. He stated that there was comment after comment about residents not being happy about these urban subdivisions coming into their rural area. He stated that Ramsey either needs to start protecting its rural areas or remove the mission statement from the Comprehensive Plan. He provided a letter from a resident on Variolite to be submitted for the public record. He commented that he was not a supporter of the Hunt or Makowski proposals during the first round. He noted that he has spoken with residents that have lived here for 30 or 40 years and not one of them can remember getting a letter about the rezoning of the Hunt or Makowski properties. He stated that Ramsey continues to say it will have a rural character, but it keeps shoving urban developments into the rural areas. He stated that he has sympathy for the residents that continue to voice their concerns only to be ignored by the Commissions, staff, and City Council. He stated that there is a flow chart within the budget documents that show that the staff and Council report to the residents of the community. He stated that over 400 people were ignored last year when they opposed this type of development. He hoped that everyone could come together to develop some sort of compromise. He stated that the residents that have lived in their property since 1978 do not want to wake up and see 77 homes sitting next to them. He stated that he cannot support a plat for this type of development if it is not supported by the residents. He stated that he will continue to be a voice for residents.

Chairperson Bauer stated that the petition that came forward before was in opposition for the smaller lots, which was not approved, therefore they have listened to the residents.

Commissioner Walker stated that all of the residents stated that they did not want smaller lots, but the Commission voted to allow the smaller lots to remain when it made its recommendation to the Council. He stated that the City Council was the voice that did not allow that change.

Chairperson Bauer acknowledged that the Commission supported allowing smaller lots on the interior of the plat with 80 foot lots on the exterior. He noted that the current proposal meets the zoning and bulk zoning regulations.

Commissioner VanScoy asked the consequences of denying a request that meets bulk standards and fall into the existing zoning.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl stated that she is not an attorney, but if an application meets all the bulk standards, the Commission would be obligated to approve the request. She stated that if the request is not approved, the City would open itself up to liability.

Commissioner VanScoy stated that the preliminary plat is based on the existing standards for this zoning area, which has been in place for well over ten years. He commented that he understands the concern about development next door to an area where residents have lived for many years. He stated that the statement within the Comprehensive Plan is an attempt to balance the rural character of the community with urban growth. He did not believe the Commission has an option to deny the request at this time.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl commented that conditions of approval could be added, if desired.

Commissioner Walker stated that if Ramsey keeps having urban growth in the rural part of Ramsey, there will no longer be a rural part of Ramsey. He stated that the City continues to shove urban developments into existing rural areas.

Commissioner VanScoy commented that when he was young, he lived on a farm in Coon Rapids. He stated that the urban sprawl continues to expand, and the City can attempt to control that the best it can.

Commissioner Walker stated that before he moved to Ramsey two years ago, he selected his home because of the statement in the Comprehensive Plan. He stated that if this development continues to happen in the rural areas, that statement is pointless.

Commissioner VanScoy commented that this decision on the zoning happened over a decade ago. He stated that if Commissioner Walker wishes to make those types of decisions, he should become a part of the development of the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Walker noted that the Beatermans have lived in Ramsey since 1978 and asked if they were invited to be a part of the Comprehensive Plan and rezoning of the property.

Chairperson Bauer commented that the Comprehensive Plan identifies properties as urban and rural. He stated that this area is identified as R-1, while other areas are proposed to remain rural.

Motion by Commissioner Anderson, seconded by Commissioner Gengler, to recommend that City Council adopt Resolution #21-248 Approving Preliminary Plat for North Brook Meadows.

Further discussion

Commissioner Peters commented that a lot of the debate that happened tonight is reserved for the City Council. He stated that the job of the Planning Commission is to review the criteria and if those criteria are met, the application must be approved. He explained that there is more leeway for this type of debate with the City Council.

A roll call vote was performed:

Commissioner Anderson	aye
Commissioner Peters	aye
Commissioner VanScoy	aye
Commissioner Walker	nay
Commissioner Gengler	aye
Chairperson Bauer	aye

Motion Carried.

7. COMMISSION BUSINESS

7.01: Consider Allowing Accessory Dwelling Units on Single-Family Residential Properties

Presentation

Planning Technician McCann presented the Staff Report stating that staff recommends that the Commission direct City staff to draft an ordinance to be presented at the regular September 23, 2021 meeting with edits as discussed during the meeting.

Commission Business

Commissioner VanScoy commented that this would be a potential ordinance and noted that he believed this discussion was meant to determine if the Commission would like to consider an ordinance. He believed that a step was skipped.

Planning Technician McCann stated that there is not official ordinance drafting at this time.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl commented that this was meant to be a discussion and determine if the Commission would like to move forward. She noted that the City Council is interested in looking at an ordinance. She stated that staff continues to receive at least one request per month of this nature. She noted that the cost of senior housing is high, and the housing market also has high pricing, which is making more people think about living with a family member, or on the same property. She welcomed input from the Commission on whether they are interested in exploring this further and any other input they may have.

Commissioner Gengler asked why a basement conversion would not be allowed.

Planning Technician McCann stated that if someone wanted to convert a basement there would not be a way for the City to monitor that.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl stated that some people are doing that already. She noted that if there is access to that basement area from the front door, a kitchenette could be added and a secondary living space for a family member could be created.

Commissioner VanScoy stated that he called some other communities to gather information. He stated that he spoke with Andover city staff and that city stated that they receive inquiries while they do not see many of those requests move forward. He noted that Nowthen and Anoka do not allow this type of activity and asked how many other communities actually allow this activity.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl provided information on the cities that were selected, noting that most were chosen because there was a connection to the city staff and the ordinances were known to work well.

Commissioner VanScoy asked if there is a minimum lot size specified for other communities, noting that Andover requires 2.5 acres.

Commissioner Peters stated that if his neighbor were putting up a yurt or tiny home on his property, which is an 80-foot-wide lot, he would be opposed to that as he would believe the lot is too small. He stated that if the property is larger and meets the criteria, he would not be opposed.

Commissioner VanScoy asked what would be considered a reasonable sized lot.

Commissioner Gengler stated that she does not believe a lot would need to be huge to have an accessory building. She stated that sheds are already allowed and therefore she does not believe it would need to be a huge property. She stated that she would be comfortable allowing it on an 80-foot-wide lot in the R-1 zone.

Commissioner Walker stated that he would support a one-acre size, but also does not like excluding people from an opportunity to telling them to do on their own property.

Chairperson Bauer stated that perhaps more information could be gained on what is allowed by other communities, such as minimum lot size and any issues they have experienced.

Commissioner Walker commented that parking would be an issue on an 80-foot lot if there is an accessory dwelling structure. He stated that at least a half-acre or full acre lot would be needed in order to accommodate an accessory dwelling unit and parking.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl commented that in order to maintain the character of a rural community, you would not want additional parking structures or driveways. She stated that staff believes that the property should still look like a single-family home. She noted that if there are

problems with a parking, the parking standards would be able to regulate that activity. She stated that if a family member were at your home, they would park in the driveway. She noted that the intent would be to have the property remain looking like one home or single-family home property.

Chairperson Bauer asked if the Commission would like to continue to study this issue and what additional information, they would like staff to gather.

Commissioner Peters stated that he would be open to additional discussion. He noted that if people have sufficient space, he does not see a problem allowing this activity. He stated that he would be concerned with allowing a camper in the backyard of an 80-foot lot. He stated that residents should be provided direction.

Commissioner Gengler stated that she supports this and agree it bears further discussion. She stated that the majority of requests are not going to be for an Airbnb activity but to allow an older family member to live on the property and spend time with their loved ones. She stated that some people will view it as a way to make money, but noted that could be included in the regulations, specifying that rental could not be done. She stated that additional regulation could also be added that would prevent a camper on wheels from being used.

Commissioner Anderson stated that he is not strongly in favor of this, noting that he would want a lot more information on the maximum square footage, minimum lot size, whether there would be inspection of the structures, and the type of neighborhoods where this would be allowed. He stated that if someone has 20 acres of land and wants to build a tiny house next to their home, that would be different than that same structure on a one-acre lot.

Commissioner VanScoy stated that he did not think he would support this but as discussion continues, he is more interested in continuing the discussion. He stated that this could have value for the community, especially related to care for aging parents. He stated that he would like to see more information on surrounding communities and their requirements along with any issues they may have experienced. He believed this would be worth the time necessary to complete additional study.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl commented that people are already doing this to some extent and therefore having a way to permit the activity and make it safe would be great. She stated that they are attempting to streamline the ordinances and make the process more efficient and easier to use.

7.02: Review Ordinance Amending Digital Display Billboard Regulations

Presentation

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl presented the Staff Report stating that the Planning Commission should provide feedback on the draft ordinance and direct staff to bring the ordinance forward to City Council for final approval.

Commission Business

Commissioner Walker asked if this is City owned property that would be leased to a sign company. He asked if this ordinance would be intended to allow the City to do something that no other property could do.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl commented that three signs would be allowed with spacing two miles between signs, therefore other properties would be allowed if they met that distance.

Commissioner Walker stated that his issue is that the Commission would be recommending an ordinance that only the City would benefit from financially.

Commissioner Anderson asked the size of the sign that the City currently has on Highway 10.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl estimated the digital display section to be about 150 square feet.

Commissioner Anderson noted that the digital display section of the City sign is clearly too small while he believes the Champlin billboard is much too big. He stated that perhaps half of that size be allowed. He stated that it would be nice to generate revenue from the sign, but he was unsure that he wanted it to be owned by the City. He stated that perhaps the land is rented, which would generate income. He stated that sign height will also be an issue because the new interchanges may impact views.

Commissioner Gengler stated that she believes that the current proposal would have a sign company leasing the space from the City and the City would only have the one sign, which would leave two additional spots open for others that are interested.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl confirmed that the City does have a vendor it has been working with and the City is working on lease negotiations with that vendor. She stated that the EDA and City Council have chosen the vendor and made the decision to allow this, therefore an ordinance is needed.

Chairperson Bauer noted that two other private parties could come forward with proposals if they met the requirements of the ordinance and spacing.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl stated that the draft ordinance includes a stipulation that there would need to be some benefit to Ramsey, such as a welcome to Ramsey statement, or advertising space for the City.

Commissioner Gengler stated that she is concerned with the two privately owned lots. She stated that parts of the overlay are close to residential areas and asked if there could be stipulations on where the sign could shine to avoid impact to the adjacent residential areas.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl commented that the residential zoned and mixed-use zoned properties were not allowed and noted that an additional stipulation could be added requiring a certain distance from residential property.

Commissioner Peters referenced the sign for Suite Living, noting that the sign is very bright.

Commissioner VanScoy commented that he likes the idea of consolidating the signage into certain areas. He stated that the City currently has a master sign plan for The COR, which states that there will be three monuments. He asked how this would interact with the signage for The COR.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl commented that this would be a privately owned sign and would not be counted as a monument sign for the City.

Commissioner VanScoy asked if the concept of having three monuments for the businesses in The COR would be maintained. He believed that this should be reviewed as separate signage has been allowed within The COR and noted that there would be benefit to reviewing that signage plan.

Chairperson Bauer agreed that the sign ordinance should be reviewed because of the continued exceptions and variances that have been granted.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that the Council discussed this when it made the selection for the vendor. He stated that the Council was not unanimously supportive, as he opposed this. He noted that this would however generate about \$60,000 a year in revenue for the City from the land lease and the portion of the advertising sales the City would receive. He noted that the City would also be allowed to advertise its own messaging. He stated that there are currently three billboards between Armstrong traveling toward Anoka, noting that they are not always full with messaging. He noted that the other signage is related to business signage and would not be consolidated. He stated that he would believe that the regular billboards would be replaced with digital billboards if this is adopted. He stated that the EDA was unanimously supportive of this action.

Chairperson Bauer asked why Councilmember Woestehoff opposed this item.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that he had several hesitations, one of which was that there were 80 signs between Armstrong and Anoka, on one side of the road. He stated that he is also concerned with the timing as the final plans for Highway 10 have not yet been finalized and could impact visibility. He stated that he also feels that digital billboard detracts from the rural character of Ramsey. He stated that he would also be concerned that businesses akin to advertising on digital billboards would be mainstream fast food type businesses. He stated that he does not want to see Ramsey overwhelmed with fast food restaurants and believes that Ramsey should aspire to be more of a Main Street community rather than a Coon Rapids.

Commissioner Anderson stated that his strongest objection is the size of 700 square feet. He stated that he would like to see that number much smaller. He stated that the nighttime illumination section may address the brightness concerns. He stated that his biggest concern is the size of the sign and whether the visibility would be impacted following the Highway 10 project.

Chairperson Bauer asked for input from the Commission on the maximum sign size.

Commissioner Anderson stated that he would suggest perhaps 400 square feet. He stated that he does not want to see a 600 square foot sign in Ramsey.

Commissioner Walker stated that if the sign is going to be leased out, businesses in surrounding communities can advertise in Ramsey versus the actual Ramsey businesses.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that the vendor did provide preferential pricing to Ramsey businesses, it would allow businesses from other communities to advertise as well. He stated that the lease period was proposed at 30 or 35 years and the company committed to maintaining the sign during that period.

Chairperson Bauer commented that he did not believe the City could restrict businesses from other communities from advertising on the sign.

Councilmember Woestehoff noted that he found the proposed language in the previous vendor proposal which stated that 50 percent of advertising would be reserved for City messages and Ramsey businesses.

Commissioner Peters asked if there is language related to election messaging.

Councilmember Woestehoff confirmed there are stipulations that would prevent certain content, such as adult and political. He stated that although he agrees with Commissioner Walker, noting that he does not like the City being the only beneficiary, this City land might be the opportunity to test this out.

Chairperson Bauer asked if the language related to regulated content would be part of the lease or ordinance language.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that he believed that language was within the lease but noted that the ordinance could also have language related to content.

Commissioner VanScoy stated that he is also concerned with the number of signs and is disappointed that this will not result in consolidation. He stated that he does not support this type of sign, but if this moves forward he would like to see a restriction related to the size of the sign.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl commented that the pending lease would have a sign slightly smaller than 700 square feet. She recommended the discussion focus on location, distance between signs, number of signs, and architectural standards. She noted that the size of the sign has already been set.

Commissioner Anderson did not believe enough information has been provided. He stated that he would like information on placement, size, brightness, etc.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl stated that the discussion from the Commission could be forwarded to the Council, but he would not recommend that this goes forward to ordinance.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl stated that distance, location, brightness, and size of the sign is included in the draft ordinance.

Commissioner Anderson commented that he is not comfortable with the size of the sign.

Chairperson Bauer asked and received confirmation from staff that the City owned site has already been selected for one sign.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl stated that the proposed size of the sign is 672 square feet.

Commissioner Gengler stated that perhaps an overall square footage is allowed for all three signs in total, so that the 672 square feet is subtracted, and the other two signs would have to split the remaining size allowed.

Commissioner Walker stated that he does not support this type of sign in Ramsey.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl commented that the Commission can recommend denial.

Commissioner Walker stated that if the motion is for denial, it will most likely be overridden by the City Council and therefore the Commission would miss its opportunity to provide input.

Chairperson Bauer agreed that if the Commission has recommendations, it should include those for the Council.

Motion by Commissioner Anderson, seconded by Commissioner Walker, to recommend that City Council deny the ordinance.

Further discussion

Commissioner Anderson stated that he feels he does not have enough information. Senior Planner McGuire Brigl commented that the issue could be tabled. Councilmember Woestehoff advised of the upcoming joint meeting between the Planning Commission, City Council, and EDA and perhaps that would be a good time to discuss this item. Chairperson Bauer stated that the motion and second could be withdrawn and the issue could be tabled.

Commissioner Anderson withdrew his motion.

Commissioner Walker withdrew his second.

Motion by Commissioner Anderson, seconded by Commissioner Walker, to table this item until the time the joint meeting occurs with the City Council and EDA.

A roll call vote was performed:

Commissioner Anderson	aye
Commissioner Walker	aye
Commissioner Peters	aye
Commissioner Gengler	aye

Commissioner VanScoy aye
Chairperson Bauer aye

Motion Carried.

8. COMMISSION / STAFF INPUT

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl advised of the City’s Happy Days Festival which will take place on September 11th. She provided a brief update on construction activity within The COR area along with other residential development in Ramsey.

Chairperson Bauer stated that at the last meeting he was appointed to represent the Planning Commission on the interview screening panel for the new Assistant City Administrator/Community Development Director. He provided a brief update on that process, noting that seven candidates were recommended to continue in the process. He stated that one candidate withdrew, which leaves six candidates moving forward. He stated that there were two additional interview panels between the City Council and City staff department heads.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that yesterday and today they held the second round of interviews which included five candidates. He noted that all were extremely qualified and noted that the Council hopes to have a decision to bring a candidate onboard by mid-October.

Commissioner Walker read into the record the written letter he brought from a resident on Variolite related to the request from the Hunt property.

Chairperson Bauer asked if staff could research when the Hunt property was rezoned and the notifications that would have been provided at that time.

9. ADJOURNMENT

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

A roll call vote was performed:

Commissioner Peters aye
Commissioner Walker aye
Commissioner Gengler aye
Commissioner VanScoy aye
Commissioner Anderson aye
Chairperson Bauer aye

Motion Carried.

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission adjourned at 10:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chloe McGuire Brigl
Senior Planner

ATTEST:

JoAnn Shaw
Community Development Assistant

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.