

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

The Ramsey Planning Commission conducted a regular meeting on Thursday, March 24, 2022, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

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

Members Absent: None

Also Present: City Planner Brian McCann
 Senior Planner Chris Anderson
 Community Development Dir/Deputy City Admin Brian Hagen
 City Council Liaison Matt Woestehoff
 City Engineer Bruce Westby

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 Gengler, 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 February 24, 2022 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes:

Motion by Commissioner VanScoy, seconded by Commissioner Walker, to approve the consent 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.

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS/COMMISSION BUSINESS

6.01: Public Hearing: Consider Request for a Variance to City Services for a Lot on Green Valley Road; Case of Josh Hunt

Public Hearing

Chairperson Bauer called the public hearing to order at 7:02 p.m.

Presentation

City Planner McCann presented the staff report stating that staff believes the request meets the three-factor test and recommends approval of the variance.

Chairperson Bauer commented that the property is about 40 acres in size and the proposal would be to construct one home. He asked what would happen if the property desired to subdivide in the future in terms of utility connection.

Senior Planner Anderson stated that based on the City Charter, the City cannot force a property to connect to City sewer as long as there is a functioning septic system on the property, or as long as a failing system can be replaced on the property.

Commissioner Walker asked when the property was zoned into R-1 MUSA.

City Planner McCann commented that he did not have that information on hand.

Commissioner Walker asked if the rezoning was more recent or whether it occurred in 2011 and sewer and water has not been brought to this area.

Senior Planner Anderson commented that he did not have the date but believed that it could have been tied to a previous Comprehensive Plan update and confirmed that it was not done in the past few years. He explained that when a property is zoned MUSA, it is not the intention of the City to bring utilities to that property, but if the property were to develop, the developer would be charged with bringing utilities to the site.

Commissioner Walker asked how long the current owner has owned the property.

Senior Planner Anderson replied that the property has been in the family for a number of years.

Commissioner VanScoy commented that the statement was made that this property is a long distance from existing services and asked where the closest access would be.

Senior Planner Anderson replied that the closest access is south of Trott Brook right now, which would be one half mile to three quarters of a mile from this location. He noted that even if the two developments north of Trott Brook move forward, there would still be a quarter mile to this site.

Commissioner VanScoy stated that under normal circumstances a property of this size would be developed in multiple lots which would make it more feasible to bring in those services.

Senior Planner Anderson confirmed that is an accurate statement.

Citizen Input

No comments.

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

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.

Chairperson Bauer closed the public hearing closed at 7:10 p.m.

Commission Business

Commissioner Walker stated that this would propose to build one home on the corner of the lot with well and septic. He asked if it would be feasible to include a provision in the variance that if the property is sold and subdivided, the new properties would need to be connected to services.

Chairperson Bauer commented that he believes this action would only apply to this home and not the entire property.

Deputy City Administrator/Community Development Director Hagen stated that typically an existing lot of record would have entitlement to build one home. He stated that this parcel is guided for public services, therefore any further subdivision would require utilities to be brought to the site to support that development.

Commissioner Walker commented that his concern is that if the lot is sold in ten years with the intention to build multiple homes, there could be additional variance requests if the proposal includes larger lots. He stated that he would worry about multiple septic systems because of the wetlands.

Deputy City Administrator/Community Development Director Hagen noted that although an applicant could make that request, staff would recommend denial as it would not meet the standards.

Commissioner VanScoy asked if the Metropolitan Council would need to be involved because this is a variance for a MUSA parcel.

Senior Planner Anderson replied that the Met Council would not be involved as this does not change information within the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Anderson stated that if City services come to this area, he would want to know whether the home would need to connect to those services.

Senior Planner Anderson replied that the City cannot require anyone on a functioning septic system to connect to City sewer. He stated that if the system is not functioning but could be replaced on the property, the City could not force connection to City utilities. He confirmed that this home would not be required to connect to services even if the remainder of the lot were subdivided. He noted that in that scenario, if the property were subdivided, the new homes created would need to connect to utilities.

Chairperson Bauer noted that utilities are still a distance from the property, but if the property were subdivided, the utilities would need to be brought to the property to support that development.

Commissioner Walker used the scenario that the property subdivides into two 20 acre parcels and asked if the other 20 acre lot would be required to connect to City services.

Senior Planner Anderson confirmed that under City Code, the new lot would be required to connect to City services. He stated that the lot could apply for a variance, but that would need to go through the review process and the minutes from this meeting would be documented.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, the property to the west is still set as rural development, which means that this is the edge of the MUSA. He noted that the properties to the north, east, and south are all guided as MUSA.

Commissioner Peters used the scenario that City services are brought to the lot for development and asked if the applicant would then be responsible for that cost.

Senior Planner Anderson confirmed that is a cost born by a developer/applicant.

Motion by Commissioner Gengler, seconded by Commissioner VanScoy, to Adopt Resolution #22-066 Granting a Variance to City Services for the Construction of a Single-Family Dwelling on the subject property.

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.

6.02: Public Hearing: Consider Approving a Home Occupation Permit at 7230 175th Avenue NW; Case of Mabel LLC

Public Hearing

Chairperson Bauer called the public hearing to order at 7:20 p.m.

Presentation

City Planner McCann presented the staff report stating that staff recommends approval of the Home Occupation Permit.

Citizen Input

Carmen Schmitz, applicant, stated that she is aware of the regulations and is present to answer any questions.

Commissioner Gengler noted that there were quite a few semis on the aerial image and asked if those were from a previous property owner.

Ms. Schmitz confirmed that those were from the previous property owner and are no longer onsite.

Chairperson Bauer stated that the application notes that one vehicle would be stored outdoors and asked which vehicle that would be.

Ms. Schmitz replied that the camper would most likely be stored outdoors as that is more of a recreational vehicle. She explained that they need the camper when they travel for events.

Commissioner VanScoy asked if the camper is labeled as a commercial vehicle.

Ms. Schmitz replied that it is not and is just a recreational vehicle.

Commissioner VanScoy commented that it would then not be considered as a commercial vehicle. He stated that the recommendation recommends allowing the parking of one commercial vehicle outside, noting that it appears all the commercial vehicles would be parked indoors.

City Planner McCann stated that staff does not have any concern with the vehicles to be parked indoors but listed the vehicles for clarification.

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

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.

Chairperson Bauer closed the public hearing closed at 7:28 p.m.

Commission Business

City Planner McCann noted that the hours of operation were left blank and therefore should be addressed during the discussion.

Chairperson Bauer asked if the hours of operation would include the delivery time as the remainder of the business would be driving on and off the property to attend events. He noted that this is not

a typical occupation permit as the business will not be conducted onsite. He asked the applicant for input on the desired hours.

Ms. Schmitz commented that the only operations that would occur onsite would be stocking the vehicles, deliveries, and any other preparation. She stated that they have one vendor that delivers to them on Wednesday or Thursday of the week. She noted that the deliveries typically occur between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Commissioner VanScoy asked the times the vehicles would typically leave and return to the property.

Ms. Schmitz commented that it would depend on the event. She stated that they could leave the property at 6 a.m. or 2 p.m.

Commissioner VanScoy suggested the hours of operation of 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. and confirmed that would cover the needs of the applicant.

Commissioner Walker commented that this is not a typical home occupation and therefore sees this conversation as a waste of time.

Chairperson Bauer asked if the hours need to be restricted.

Deputy City Administrator/Community Development Director Hagen confirmed that Commissioner Walker makes a good point that this is not a typical permit and therefore hours of operation are probably not as important for this request.

Chairperson Bauer suggested that be left out and noted that the Council could add it back in if it feels it necessary.

Commissioner Anderson asked if there was any input from neighbors.

City Planner McCann stated that he received one inquiry and that caller did not have any concerns.

Commissioner VanScoy commented that there has been a significant amount of cleanup on the site and everything would be stored indoors with the exception of the camper, therefore he views this as an improvement.

Commissioner Walker noted that he lives near this property and has seen the semis on the site for years. He commented that he does not have an issue with this use and welcomed Ms. Schmitz to the neighborhood.

Motion by Commissioner Walker, seconded by Commissioner VanScoy, to recommend that City Council adopt Resolution #22-067 approving a Home Occupation Permit for a concession business at 7230 175th Avenue NW with no restriction on hours of operation.

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 for Rivenwick 4th Addition

Public Hearing

Chairperson Bauer called the public hearing to order at 7:36 p.m.

Presentation

Deputy City Administrator/Community Development Director Hagen presented the staff report stating that staff recommends approval of Rivenwick Village 4th Addition Preliminary Plat subject to compliance with staff review comments.

Commissioner VanScoy noted that there were a number of comments and asked if that is typical of preliminary plat.

Deputy City Administrator/Community Development Director Hagen replied that it is not uncommon to have a number of comments upon the first review. He noted that a number of the comments were minor in nature and would not change the overall look and feel. He stated that there are also some redundant comments from different City departments.

Commissioner VanScoy referenced the comment related to the outlot and whether that would be adequate for the intended use and asked for input.

Deputy City Administrator/Community Development Director Hagen replied that comment came from Economic Development, but the site is about three acres in size which is in line with the 2020 vision.

Commissioner Walker commented that he worries that if this moves forward as proposed with townhomes, the City could get stuck with an empty lot on Highway 10.

Chairperson Bauer asked if the EDA has provided input on the type of business that could fit on the three acre parcel.

Deputy City Administrator/Community Development Director Hagen stated that it is zoned commercial and could accommodate retail or office use. He stated that three acres is a fair amount of space.

Senior Planner Anderson stated that Village Bank is on a two-acre parcel and also provided sizes of adjacent commercial uses. He believed there would be viable space for a commercial use even with reserving a portion for stormwater use.

Commissioner Walker stated that he has concern with moving townhomes forward. He stated that perhaps enough money is generated from townhomes that the remainder of the lot remains empty.

Deputy City Administrator/Community Development Director Hagen stated that this site is a remnant of a large site that was developed in 2004. He stated that the ratio of commercial/residential has changed with the current rate of 80 percent residential and 20 percent commercial. He stated that this layout would fit into the ratio. He stated that the three acres is larger than neighboring commercial sites.

Commissioner Gengler asked for details on the proposal for street B and where that would be if it connected to Jaspar.

Deputy City Administrator/Community Development Director Hagen displayed an aerial photo of the site and traced the path street B would take.

Commissioner Gengler asked if there is benefit to having the road alignments match up.

Deputy City Administrator/Community Development Director Hagen replied that when possible staff prefers to have the streets match up, but they are overlapping in this scenario and there may be opportunity to shift them slightly south.

Citizen Input

Jay Roos, applicant, commented that they have a purchase option on the entire parcel, including the portion north of 139th and are proposing 27 townhomes. He stated that the streets within the townhome development are private and therefore maintained privately by the HOA, including snow removal. He commented that the private street does not align with the private street in the neighboring addition and do not have the opportunity to move the buildings south because of setbacks. He noted that was why they chose not to connect. He stated that one of the concerns in providing a connection would be cut through traffic to reach the commercial area. He stated that when the property to the north is developed, additional ponding would need to be dug in that area as there is a cross ponding agreement with Suite Living and the commercial site. He stated that the idea would be to expand that pond to have the more efficient use of space. He stated that the developable area of the commercial parcel would be reduced by the additional ponding. He noted that there is adequate stormwater storage for the townhome project on its own. He stated that they would be interested in expanding the townhomes onto the commercial portion of the property. He commented that they will be updating the tree replacement plan.

Commissioner Walker asked if there is a timeline for when the commercial portion of the property would be developed.

Mr. Roos commented that they are a residential developer and therefore will market that for sale to a commercial buyer. He stated that the site had been marketed in the past, around the time Suite Living developed.

Chairperson Bauer stated that in looking at the location he would anticipate that people would be reluctant to do something with that site when Highway 10 is under construction. He stated that once that road project is completed, the property could be highly desired.

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

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.

Chairperson Bauer closed the public hearing closed at 7:57 p.m.

Commission Business

Commissioner Anderson stated that he is having serious issues with the number of staff comments related to the preliminary plat given the past history of this site. He suggested that the applicant come back with a revised preliminary plat.

Chairperson Bauer stated that generally the process for preliminary plat includes review of staff to identify items that need to be addressed with final plat. He stated that although there were a number of comments, he did not believe there were major concerns identified. He noted that most of the comments were fairly routine.

Commissioner Walker asked to see the condensed list of comments.

Commissioner Gengler stated that she would like to see a condition related to lighting and architectural review.

Mr. Roos stated that could be made available for the Council review. He stated that they do not own the property and currently have it under contract for purchase. He stated that he would like to keep the process moving to ensure there is not an issue with timing. He stated that there are a lot of comments, but he did not see any of the comments as significant and most are housekeeping items that will be changed with final plat. He stated that WSB was contracted to provide a review

and was very thorough in its review. He stated that they did expect comments and revisions that would be needed, as preliminary plat never hits all the marks from the beginning.

Commissioner VanScoy stated that perhaps WSB providing a review added to the number of comments. He asked if this is pretty much a standard preliminary plat in the eyes of staff.

Deputy City Administrator/Community Development Director Hagen replied that staff does view this as complete or would have deemed it as incomplete before bringing it to the Commission. He stated that it does appear that the application will meet the standards.

Commissioner Walker echoed the comments of Commissioner Anderson. He stated that he is not comfortable with this group purchasing the property with the intention of selling part of the property at a later date for the commercial portion. He stated that with the Highway 10 project and inflation, he worries that the City will end up with three acres of nothing. He stated that he would prefer to see a complete plan for the entire site and therefore will not support the request.

Commissioner Anderson stated that he was unable to find the staff comments within the case. He stated that too many questions were raised that he could not do the research on and believed the case to be incomplete at this time. He suggested tabling this to the next meeting which would provide more time for review to provide an honest recommendation to the City Council.

Deputy City Administrator/Community Development Director Hagen replied that the staff comments were included in the attachment to the case titled plans with review comments. He stated that the Commission would have the ability to table if desired.

Commissioner VanScoy stated that he shared some of the concerns about what he read and how he interpreted it. He stated that the staff recommendation is that this is ready to be approved as preliminary plat and move forward.

Deputy City Administrator/Community Development Director Hagen confirmed that is correct. He noted that the R-2 and R-3 standards are very similar and therefore the majority of what will change will be those standards but believed that those standards are met in the request as the bulk standards are very similar for those districts. He agreed that many of these items are housekeeping in nature, such as showing the setbacks on the plan. He stated that the applicant could make some of the changes and updated documents could be provided to the City Council for its review, or the conditions could remain for that review and the project could be approved contingent upon those conditions.

Senior Planner Anderson stated that this goes through the full development review with every City department reviewing the plans. He noted that if one of those departments identified a significant issue, it would not be before the Commission for consideration. He stated that it is not the volume of comments but how impactful those comments would be to a layout. He stated that while there are a handful of comments, none of them raised to that level where staff believed it should not move forward. He stated that the recommendation is contingent upon compliance with all of those comments.

Mr. Roos stated that they will review through the comments to determine what is an ordinance requirement versus a want or request. He hoped that this could move forward, but noted that if this is continued, he would like clear direction on the expectations and what is wrong or does not meet the ordinance. He stated that he has great concerns with the commercial property as they are not a commercial developer and cannot come forward with a plan for that outlot. He stated that if that is a requirement, it would require someone to purchase the property that is a residential and commercial developer and would stop them from purchasing the property. He stated that he cannot guarantee that they will build or develop that property, but they will market the property for sale.

Commissioner VanScoy commented that this parcel is mixed use PUD, which holds a requirement that part of the property be developed as commercial. He stated that this plat would put the commercial portion into an outlot.

Deputy City Administrator/Community Development Director Hagen confirmed that residential portion of the property is in line with the residential/commercial ratios for the site and holds the desired commercial property for commercial development.

Motion by Commissioner VanScoy, seconded by Commissioner Peters, to recommend that City Council approve Rivenwick Village 4th Addition Preliminary Plat, subject to compliance with staff review comments.

A roll call vote was performed:

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

Motion Carried.

7. COMMISSION BUSINESS

7.01: Discussion Topic: Conceptual Architecture for Potential Townhome Project in The COR; Case of Jason Palmby and M/I Homes

Presentation

Senior Planner Anderson presented the Staff Report and asked for input on the front entryways proposed by the developer.

Commission Business

Chairperson Bauer stated that he asked staff to find supporting information on the original intent of requiring front porches.

Senior Planner Anderson stated that it was his recollection that the intention of The COR is to have everything pulled closer to the street to create a sense of community where people can gather, rather than segregate in backyards. He believed that previous discussions focused on single-family homes related to the front porch issue. He stated that he was unable to find anything that captured the discussion in review of previous minutes.

Commissioner VanScoy commented that there were discussions for both. He stated that at one time there was an architectural review committee that seems to have dissipated. He agreed that the intent was to create a sense of community in an area that is pedestrian oriented. He stated that the idea was that if a porch was provided, people would sit out there and it would make for easy conversation between neighbors. He stated that the developer has presented his preferred style, which appear to be a covered stoop. He noted that many of those include pillars and architectural features which look nice. He stated that he would not consider purchasing this type of architectural style home. He recognized that not all the townhomes that have been constructed in The COR are pleasing to him in terms of aesthetics. He stated that the stoop is functional but does not stand out. He was unsure how a six by six front porch would reduce lighting in the interior of the home.

Chairperson Bauer referenced examples of existing townhomes in The COR that were shown in the presentation and asked where those homes are located.

Senior Planner Anderson identified the areas in which those homes exist. He noted that one the examples would face this potential project site.

Chairperson Bauer invited the developer to address the Commission.

Jason Palmby, property owner, thanked the Commission for its consideration and the ability to provide feedback. He stated that in his initial discussions with staff, the theme was to create a sense of community. He noted that one of the ways to do that was through a covered front porch. He stated that in the research he has done, there are not a lot of layouts that meet that current requirement with the various plans they have reviewed. He stated that this project has done very well in the Chicago market. He recognized that this model is a bit more urban than what is currently in that area.

Emily Becker, representing the applicant, stated that she understands the significance of requiring a front porch as she was previously a City Planner. She felt that creating a sense of community is established with the patio and overhang and noted that the townhomes would still provide architectural significance. She stated that the customers of their townhomes like that the homes provide a lot of sunlight and the porch does block the sunlight. She stated that the porch also adds cost, which could hinder them moving forward with this project. She noted that this property has been vacant for a number of years.

Mr. Palmby stated that they are exploring the idea of creating a common area with picnic benches, or a barbeque area to create an added sense of community. He believed that would meet that desire.

Commissioner Gengler asked the approximate areas of the patios in front of the doors.

Mr. Palmby stated that they have been discussing that and the patio would go about four to five feet out and extend past the canopy above the door.

Ms. Becker stated that the City could set a minimum size for that patio area.

Commissioner Anderson stated that he is in agreement with Commissioner VanScoy. He commented that the proposed buildings look like Lego blocks and he does not prefer that style. He believed there should be covers on the steps. He asked whether there was a moratorium on townhomes in the City.

Senior Planner Anderson commented that the moratorium applies to City owned land and for multi-family apartment buildings.

Commissioner Anderson stated that he does not care for the proposed designs. He stated that he would want to see a different style building if this comes forward formally.

Commissioner Walker commented that there is a group that owns the property and will be investing money to complete the project. He stated that if they build something that people do not want to buy, that will fall onto them, not the City. He stated that perhaps this is a more modern design versus traditional. He commented that while he would not purchase a home like this, if the applicant believes it could be sold, they should be allowed to move forward.

Commissioner Gengler agreed that styles and tastes vary from person to person. She stated that she finds the buildings to be attractive. She stated that she agrees with having a strong front entrance that encourages people to be out and pedestrian friendly. She believed that the patio would encourage that activity more than some of the front porches that exist on other townhomes. She believed the patio reaches the goal.

Commissioner Peters also commented that he likes the look of the buildings.

Commissioner VanScoy stated that the City has had a requirement for the townhomes in The COR to have some sort of porch. He asked how many of those homes are currently vacant, as the comment was made that this is not a desire in the market.

Senior Planner Anderson stated that he would not have that figure.

Deputy City Administrator/Community Development Director Hagen commented that the townhomes are individually owned and are not rental units. He stated that the vacancy rate of the apartments is very low and therefore would suspect that the homes are well occupied.

Commissioner VanScoy commented that he has not noticed for sale signs for lengths of time. He stated that since The COR was initiated, the intent was to have a certain basic view of how things would be to encourage variety but also consistency. He stated that this townhome model does not

appear to fit in with what exists in The COR. He stated that this would be a significant difference in architectural quality.

Commissioner Walker stated that he is hearing that the City was trying to dictate how some of this is developed to encourage people to have a sense of community and want to talk to each other. He stated that he struggles with making people want to be a part of a community. He noted that people will do what they want to do, whether that is socializing or keeping to themselves. He believed that variety is good and would drive competition. He stated that if these homes are on the market and the existing homes are on the market, it will be clear which homes people prefer. He stated that the risk would be of the developer, not the City and therefore he does not see a problem with what is proposed.

Commissioner VanScoy acknowledged differences in taste. He noted that they are not forcing people to communicate and gather but encouraging that and making it easier.

Commissioner Walker commented that if people want to engage with others, they will do so regardless of how their home is designed.

Chairperson Bauer stated that there was a change to allow 55 foot lots in the City, which some people did not think was a good idea but noted that those lots are selling as fast as they go up. He acknowledged that people have different taste and preference for their home and what they want. He agreed that this is the developer's money and risk and they would not build something they do not believe would sell. He agreed that variety is needed.

Commissioner Gengler commented that The COR was created with the idea of being a planned development and design aesthetic in mind. She commented that it is a more urban residential environment with doorways facing towards the sidewalks. She believed that the patio space still achieves the overall intent.

Mr. Palmby thanked the Commission for its input.

7.02: Review Ordinance Amending Digital Display Billboard Regulations

Presentation

Deputy City Administrator/Community Development Director Hagen presented the Staff Report and asked for direction on any adjustments to the language prior to advertising for a public hearing to be held at the April 28, 2022 Planning Commission meeting.

Commission Business

Chairperson Bauer noted that once the Highway 10 projects are completed and the stoplights in Anoka and Ramsey removed, a vehicle would most likely only see one ad as they drive by. He did not believe that shortening the time by one second would provide much benefit and could instead cause conflict. He supported eight seconds for the message duration.

Commissioner VanScoy believed the original message duration recommendation from the Commission was ten seconds. He stated that he would support the eight second duration if that is the national standard.

Commissioner Walker stated that he did not support the billboard concept when it was originally discussed and believes it is a horrible idea.

Commissioner VanScoy agreed with Commissioner Walker and did not support the idea of having billboards in Ramsey. He commented that the billboard will be massive, distracting, and ugly and did not believe it would be safe.

Commissioner Anderson stated that he also agrees with Commissioner Walker. He referenced the recommendation of the EDA, noting that a sign that large would illuminate a long distance. He did not believe this should move forward.

Chairperson Bauer asked where the billboard would be located.

Deputy City Administrator/Community Development Director Hagen stated that this has been reviewed a number of times and this is the most current version. He stated that a public hearing will be required for this item and welcomed any recommendations from the Commission towards this version. He stated that this has been supported by the EDA and Council.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that he was the lone person against this concept upon prior review. He explained that this was originally brought forward through the EDA as it would provide better opportunity for the businesses that do not have frontage on Highway 10. He stated that his prior recommendation, and still today, was to be patient as development is starting to pickup again in The COR. He believed that the Highway 10 project would also alter that landscape. He stated that there is support for this under the premise that this will help the businesses in Ramsey. He stated that safety is the most important aspect for timing, but message duration also relates to the number of available time slots for advertising. He noted that perhaps that is why the EDA suggested the shorter timeframe for message duration as it would provide more advertising opportunity.

Commissioner Walker referenced the requirement for notification of a public hearing. He asked if there would be any way to expand that notification for the billboard public hearing. He stated that he would like to receive more input from residents of the community versus the four to six properties that surround the proposed sign location.

Deputy City Administrator/Community Development Director Hagen replied that general ordinance public hearings do not require mailed public hearing notices, only published notice. He stated that mailed notice would be provided to properties within 350 feet when a conditional use permit is requested.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that perhaps this would be an opportunity for the Commission to hold a public open house prior to the regular meeting in order to obtain additional feedback from the community.

Chairperson Bauer asked if there could be an article in the next *Ramsey Resident* related to this concept and then hold a public open house and public hearing.

Deputy City Administrator/Community Development Director Hagen replied that the next *Ramsey Resident* will be mailed May 1st and therefore the deadline for article submission is next week. He confirmed that staff could draft an article on this topic. He asked if the Commission would like to hold the open house and public hearing in the same evening.

Chairperson Bauer agreed that it has worked well to hold the open house prior to the regular meeting. He suggested having an article in the *Ramsey Resident* and then holding a public open house prior to the regular May meeting.

Commissioner Walker asked if there is a way to place public notices in the *Ramsey Resident*.

Deputy City Administrator/Community Development Director Hagen replied that the *Ramsey Resident* is delivered every two months, with a deadline for articles one month prior to that date therefore that is not a good option. He stated that the City can use social media and can advertise on the City's electronic message sign. He believed there would be an upcoming discussion on public notice, recognizing there are State minimums for notification, but the City can choose to go above that.

Commissioner VanScoy stated that while he opposes the concept, he expects that it will ultimately pass. He confirmed the consensus of the Commission to support a duration of eight seconds for messages. He asked if the Commission would also like to pass on a recommendation for a size of 400 square feet.

Commissioner Walker commented that if the recommendation was already passed on once and changed, it would seem that recommendation is not going to be accepted.

Deputy City Administrator/Community Development Director Hagen replied that this language was drafted by staff that is no longer with the City. He stated that he can attempt to track the changes from previous versions.

8. COMMISSION / STAFF INPUT

Chairperson Bauer noted that a new member should be joining the Commission at its next meeting.

Deputy City Administrator/Community Development Director Hagen provided an update on the hiring process for the vacant planning staff position.

Commissioner Anderson stated that he hopes to be back for in person attendance at the next meeting.

Commissioner Walker referenced a property that adjoins the north side of his property, on the end of Sapphire, which has been clear cut. He asked if there are any regulations against that activity.

City Planner McCann commented that was a plat that was approved last year which combined two lots for the purposes of building a home.

Senior Planner Anderson commented that staff works with applicants to provide information on trees. He noted in that instance the property owner was not desiring to build themselves but combined the properties for sale. He stated once the property is sold, the individual property owner can remove trees on their property if they choose. He noted that the tree preservation standards apply towards development. He stated that he would love to be able to say there is something that could prevent that, but a private property owner would have the right to remove trees if desired.

Commissioner VanScoy stated as he was reading the minutes, it occurred that whoever does that job does an outstanding job. He stated that the minutes are consistently well written and very accurate.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Anderson, seconded by Commissioner VanScoy, 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 9:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Brian Hagen
Deputy City Administrator/Community Development Director

ATTEST:



Nicole Laubach
Planning Administrative Assistant

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.