

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

The Ramsey Planning Commission conducted a regular meeting on Thursday, February 23, 2023, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Chairperson Randy Bauer (virtual)
 Commissioner Bruce Anderson (virtual)
 Commissioner Cheri Gengler
 Commissioner Eric Peters
 Commissioner Gary Van Scoy

Members Absent: Commissioner Tom Hunt
 Commissioner Brian Walker

Also Present: Planning Manager Todd Larson
 Senior Planner Chris Anderson
 City Council Liaison Matt Woestehoff

1. CALL TO ORDER

Acting Chairperson Gengler called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. She noted that because Chairperson Bauer is attending remotely, he has asked her to act as Chair for the meeting tonight.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Acting Chairperson Gengler led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. CITIZEN INPUT

None.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

A roll call vote was performed:

Commissioner Peters	aye
Commissioner Van Scoy	aye
Commissioner Anderson	aye
Commissioner Bauer	aye

Acting Chairperson Gengler aye

Motion Carried.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

5.01: Approve the January 26, 2023 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

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

A roll call vote was performed:

Commissioner Bauer	aye
Commissioner Anderson	aye
Commissioner Van Scoy	aye
Commissioner Peters	aye
Acting Chairperson Gengler	aye

Motion Carried.

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS/COMMISSION BUSINESS

6.01: Public Hearing: Request for Consider Preliminary Plat for Parkside Townhomes (Project No. 22-143)

Public Hearing

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

Presentation

Senior Planner Anderson presented the staff report stating that staff recommends approval of the Preliminary Plat, contingent upon enhancing the architectural finishes on the fronts and sides of the buildings facing a public road.

Acting Chairperson Gengler referenced the extra plantings proposed by the developer in lieu of the architectural additions and asked if those were the plantings marked as too close to the boulevard plantings.

Senior Planner Anderson replied that there is an individual row of additional trees, which is what staff recommends eliminating or reposition within the site. He stated that to offset the architectural features, there were some plantings around the base of the homes.

Acting Chair Gengler asked where the guest parking would be located, noting that she could only find 10 spots.

Senior Planner Anderson noted the locations proposed for guest parking.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked, and received confirmation, that the current land does not have the boulevard trees in place. He asked if the boulevard trees could not be planted, and the developer trees planted instead.

Senior Planner Anderson replied that with the design framework there is a heavy emphasis on streetscape specifically and there is a requirement for the boulevard trees. He noted that they have offered to eliminate that row of trees on the interior. He stated that if the applicant still wants those trees, they could plant them but there could be space constraints in the future.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that his thought was that this could potentially save the City some money. He stated that if the row of developer trees is eliminated, perhaps the developer take on half the cost of the boulevard trees.

Senior Planner Anderson clarified that the developer is responsible for the installation of the boulevard trees.

Citizen Input

Jason Palmby, applicant, commented that his intention would be to start construction on the first phase this spring/summer if all approvals are gained.

John Rask, M/I Homes, commented that they can look to relocate some of the trees within the site once they have the utility plans. He stated that they do not disagree with the staff recommendation on the stone but were hoping for some flexibility. He stated that they were trying to keep the cost of the homes down but would still move forward with stone if that is required. He noted that once they begin construction, they would most likely market homes for sale in one year.

Commissioner Peters asked if the interior roads would be fully constructed with phase one, or with each phase.

Mr. Rask commented that the roads would be phased with each phase of the homes.

Senior Planner Anderson commented that there would be multiple points of access as part of phase one.

Commissioner Van Scoy asked if the contingencies need to be defined or whether that could be worked out with staff.

Senior Planner Anderson replied that standard contingencies are included in the draft resolution and provided more details. He stated that if there were additional contingencies, the Commission should specify what that may be.

Commissioner Van Scoy commented that he had no additional contingencies but wanted to ensure that the comments of staff would be met.

Councilmember Woestehoff noted that there is a sidewalk on the east, along Rhinestone and asked if that would be the only sidewalk proposed.

Senior Planner Anderson replied that the sidewalk is in place along Rhinestone and the developer would be installing sidewalk on all four public roads.

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

A roll call vote was performed:

Commissioner Peters	aye
Commissioner Van Scoy	aye
Commissioner Anderson	aye
Commissioner Bauer	aye
Acting Chairperson Gengler	aye

Motion Carried.

Acting Chairperson Gengler closed the public hearing closed at 7:23 p.m.

Commission Business

Motion by Commissioner Van Scoy, seconded by Commissioner Bauer, to recommend that City Council approve the Preliminary Plat contingent upon compliance with Staff's review comments, including enhancing the architecture on the fronts and sides of the buildings facing a public road with stone, brick, or a similar material.

Further discussion

Commissioner Anderson stated that as before, he will not be supporting this proposal noting that he does not believe the porches proposed fit the character of the neighborhood. He stated that he was pleased to see the requirement for brick on the front but still does not believe that this would meet the requirement for a front porch.

A roll call vote was performed:

Commissioner Bauer	aye
Commissioner Anderson	nay
Commissioner Van Scoy	aye
Commissioner Peters	aye
Acting Chairperson Gengler	aye

Motion Carried.

7. COMMISSION BUSINESS

7.01: Zoning Code Update: Mixed Use/COR

Planning Manager Larson presented the Staff Report and welcomed input on the proposed changes as well as any additional changes the Commission would like to see.

Commissioner Bauer commented that he agreed with the elimination of COR-5 and COR-3a, instead using the city-wide districts of P and PI.

Acting Chairperson Gengler agreed that those additional districts are not needed when those uses could easily go within other zoning districts.

Commissioner Van Scoy stated that all the districts within the COR are specialized. He stated that there is additional flexibility allowed within the COR districts that would not be available in the other districts. He asked that if that flexibility would still be provided within the park district.

Planning Manager Larson provided some example language that they will be considering for the park district in the coming discussions. He was not concerned that they would lose anything by making this change. He stated that at this time they do not have a plan for the design framework but could review and update that in the coming year as well.

Commissioner Van Scoy commented that some of these changes proposed would make changes to the design framework.

Planning Manager Larson commented that would be true because they would be eliminating districts but noted that some of those districts were not original to the design framework. He noted that the focus at this time is on the City Code and those zoning code updates.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that by removing COR-5 from Code but having it within the design framework would not be an issue because COR-5 will not exist and therefore nothing could be built. He agreed that at some point they should also update that design framework. He noted that if there were conflict between the document and City Code, City Code would prevail.

Planning Manager Larson continued to review the proposed changes. He asked for guidance on indoor recreation uses and whether that should be added to the allowed uses.

Commissioner Peters stated that he would not want a roller derby rink but would be okay with a bowling alley that has a restaurant and video games.

Commissioner Van Scoy asked how they would clarify what would be acceptable and what would not be.

Planning Manager Larson replied that it could be limited by size, such as no larger than 40,000 square feet.

Commissioner Van Scoy agreed that size could be a good way to control that.

Commissioner Anderson asked how the proposed new dome would fit and whether that would be considered commercial indoor recreation.

Planning Manager Larson confirmed that would fit within that use.

Commissioner Anderson asked if that dome parcel would then need to be rezoned.

Planning Manager Larson replied that parcel was rezoned to E-3 to accommodate that use and other potential future uses. He noted that the dome is in excess of 100,000 square feet.

Commissioner Anderson stated that there should perhaps be more thought put into what would be considered commercial indoor recreation.

Commissioner Bauer stated that if the goal is to draw people into the COR, commercial indoor recreation would do that and could lead to people visiting other businesses while they are there. He agreed that there would need to be more work put into what would or would not be allowed.

Commissioner Anderson asked if a community center, such as a YMCA, would fit into that category of commercial indoor recreation.

Planning Manager Larson replied that fitness center has its own category, and a YMCA would fall into that category.

Acting Chairperson Gengler stated that she would be interested in seeing the different sizes of indoor recreation spaces in other communities in order to find the appropriate size threshold.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that he generically feels protected in the COR as the architectural guidelines would need to be met and could price out some of those things from the downtown area. He stated that an indoor trampoline park could fit, size wise, but was unsure they would want to meet the architectural guidelines. He believed that some other uses would fit great.

Planning Manager Larson confirmed that staff could look into the sizes of different indoor recreation uses.

Commissioner Peters noted that gas stations are included but asked if charging stations on properties are allowed.

Planning Manager Larson replied that one or two charging stations would be fine and that falls under the parking regulations. He noted that could be addressed on a city-wide scale.

Commissioner Bauer commented that he believes the issue should be reviewed city-wide as the demand continues to increase for those charging stations. He noted that while the COR would be a great location, other areas of the community would benefit as well suggesting even park locations.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that while he agrees with removing the restricted uses, he would wonder if adult uses should still specifically be labeled as not allowed.

Planning Manager Larson commented that there is a lengthy definition of adult uses and they are not proposing changes to that. He continued to review the proposed changes and provided additional clarification.

Commissioner Van Scoy commented that 2B would seem to restrict a restaurant, which is a desired use.

Senior Planner Anderson agreed that he was unsure they would want to restrict a sit-down restaurant from within that area. He stated that perhaps staff could look to amend that, so it is not limited to just drive-thru or take-out.

Planning Manager Larson replied that restaurants are allowed in 2B.

Senior Planner Anderson noted a conflict in Code and the more restrictive would rule.

Commissioner Van Scoy commented that it seems to be very restrictive, which he did not believe was the intent. He recognized that perhaps the restrictions are specific to a secondary use which he did not originally read that way.

Acting Chairperson Gengler confirmed that section provides restrictions for a convenience store.

Planning Manager Larson provided more information specific to gas stations and when they would be permitted as a primary or secondary use.

Councilmember Woestehoff provided additional context related to parcel 46 and recent discussion of the Public Works Committee. He noted that there has been interest in that site for multi-family housing and the Council has generally been in agreement.

Commissioner Van Scoy commented that he did not believe 2B was ever intended to exclude housing. He stated that the concept of 2B may need to be reviewed.

Commissioner Anderson commented that 2B was meant to be retail. He stated that if all housing is put into that area, it would take away the opportunity for retail. He stated that he would be opposed to all housing on that site.

Planning Manager Larson continued to review the proposed changes. It was noted that once this review is completed, the entire document should be reviewed to correct any grammatical issues as well.

Senior Planner Anderson provided additional details on the lack of landscaping standards. He stated that staff would recommend some minimum standards for internal landscaping as currently there is only a requirement for boulevard trees.

Commissioner Bauer stated that he would prefer to reference the city-wide standards rather than developing additional standards.

7.02: Zoning Code Update: Residential Districts (Continued Discussion)

Planning Manager Larson presented the Staff Report and welcomed any feedback, changes, and questions on the proposed language.

Commissioner Anderson stated that while he would like to see covered parking for apartments, he realizes that it is a large expense and was unsure that he would want to force that.

Senior Planner Anderson replied that some projects did look at underground parking, but it would have been extremely costly because of the high water table in some areas of the COR.

Commissioner Bauer commented that putting fewer restrictions would allow more variable price points for residents. He noted that residents that want covered parking would be willing to pay higher rents while those wanting lower rents may not care about covered parking.

Planning Manager Larson reviewed the proposed changes to outdoor storage allowance on residential lots and received guidance from the Commission. The Commission also provided input on junk vehicles. He then moved to driveways.

Senior Planner Anderson provided additional details on the different minimum standards for different lot sizes. He confirmed that the five-foot setback is already a standard, but this simply provides the information in one place for clarification. He provided more details on the allowed surfaces that could be used for parking as well as language related to second driveways.

Planning Manager Larson continued to review the proposed changes. He noted that the Environmental Policy Board (EPB) will be reviewing the landscaping section for residential properties at its next meeting.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if the EPB could review the COR landscaping standards as well.

Senior Planner Anderson noted that the case he prepared was more of a starting off point but stated that he could bring up that concept and it could be further discussed at the March EPB meeting.

Councilmember Woestehoff referenced the screening and asked if the authority provided to Council could be transitioned to a variance reviewed by the Planning Commission.

Planning Manager Larson provided additional context on the thought of that authority.

Commissioner Van Scoy noted that the authority of the Council would simply be a discussion whereas a variance would have specific criteria and cost to the applicant.

Senior Planner Anderson commented that he did not believe this situation would meet the practical difficulties necessary for a variance.

Commissioner Bauer referenced home occupations and asked for clarification on what the different levels would be.

Planning Manager Larson replied that they have not yet discussed home occupations as they would like to have a joint meeting between the City Council and Planning Commission on that topic. He provided different examples of what could be considered level one or level two. He summarized the topics that will be discussed at future meetings related to the zoning update.

Commissioner Van Scoy asked if parking in the COR would be addressed.

Councilmember Woestehoff noted that would most likely fall under the design framework update.

Commissioner Van Scoy asked the definition of side yard and rear yard.

Senior Planner Anderson provide those definitions. He noted that staff will be adding graphics to some definitions to make it clearer.

8. COMMISSION / STAFF INPUT

Senior Planner Anderson provided an update on removal of ash trees that has been going on related to Emerald Ash Borer.

Commissioner Van Scoy asked if those trees would be replaced.

Senior Planner Anderson stated that the trees in logical locations would be replanted, whereas tree will not be replanted where it would not make sense.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Van Scoy, seconded by Commissioner Peters, to adjourn the meeting.

A roll call vote was performed:

Commissioner Anderson	aye
Commissioner Bauer	aye
Commissioner Peters	aye
Commissioner Van Scoy	aye
Acting Chairperson Gengler	aye

Motion Carried.

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission adjourned at 9:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Todd Larson
Planning Manager

ATTEST:

Dana Verbeek
Planning Administrative Assistant

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.