

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

The Ramsey Planning Commission conducted a regular meeting on Thursday, May 25, 2023, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

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

Members Absent:                   None

Also Present:                       Planning Manager Todd Larson  
  City Council Liaison Matt Woestehoff

**1.     CALL TO ORDER**

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

**2.     PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chairperson Gengler led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3.     CITIZEN INPUT**

None.

**4.     APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

A roll call vote was performed:

|                       |     |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Commissioner Hunt     | aye |
| Commissioner Anderson | aye |
| Commissioner Van Scoy | aye |
| Commissioner Bauer    | aye |
| Commissioner Heineman | aye |

Commissioner Peters            aye  
Chairperson Gengler           aye

Motion Carried.

**5.        CONSENT AGENDA**

**5.01:    Approve the April 27, 2023 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes**

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

A roll call vote was performed:

Commissioner Peters            aye  
Commissioner Heineman        aye  
Commissioner Bauer            aye  
Commissioner Van Scoy        aye  
Commissioner Anderson        aye  
Commissioner Hunt            aye  
Chairperson Gengler            aye

Motion Carried.

**6.        PUBLIC HEARINGS/COMMISSION BUSINESS**

**6.01:    CorTrust Bank – Site Plan Review, Rezoning, and Plat at the Northeast Corner of Sunwood Drive and Zeolite Street NW**

**Presentation**

Planning Manager Larson presented the staff report stating that staff recommends approval of the proposal.

Commissioner Anderson asked if the lighting would be downcast.

Senior Planner Larson replied that the lighting would be downcast shielded lighting and provided details on the additional wall mounted lighting and canopy lighting.

Commissioner Van Scoy noted the referenced knee wall and asked where that would be located.

Commissioner Hunt asked if the wall portion would count towards the building.

Senior Planner Larson confirmed that is counted in the calculation.

Commissioner Bauer asked for details on the current zoning and requested rezoning, asking if it would make sense to rezone the entire parcel rather than just the southwest corner.

Planning Manager Larson commented that it did not appear there were many use differences between 2A and 2B, more design differences. He stated that the Council heard a proposal for multifamily housing and townhomes in a recent worksession. He stated that there will most likely be a mapping exercise upcoming and that could be an opportunity to review the remainder of this parcel.

### **Citizen Input**

Chairperson Gengler invited the applicants to speak.

Mark Pitts, representing the applicant, stated that he is present to answer any questions.

Commissioner Van Scoy referenced the staff recommendations and asked if the applicant has any issues with those.

Mr. Pitts replied that from a design standpoint he has no objections.

Dean Suchy, Market President for CorTrust, commented that they were hoping they could have a third lane, uncovered, for an ATM. He confirmed that the current plans they worked on with staff have two covered drive thru lanes.

Councilmember Woestehoff referenced the space between the driveways on Zeolite and asked if that will remain grass or whether there are other plans.

Mr. Suchy replied that there are no plans other than grass at this time.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that perhaps trees could be planted between the two driveways.

Planning Manager Larson stated that a 1,000 square foot building with a few parking spaces could fit within that space. He acknowledged that this design does not make the best use of the space but noted that this driveway would align with the hotel driveway that will be across the street.

Chairperson Gengler asked and received confirmation that the empty space is not needed for water treatment.

Commissioner Bauer referenced the interest in the ATM lane and asked if that could be accommodated.

Planning Manager Larson replied that given that the use is allowed, a variance could not be granted and therefore in order to allow that, they would need to do a text amendment. He noted that perhaps the ATM could be located on the island where the outside drive-thru lane is to stagger those.

Commissioner Bauer stated that he would encourage the applicant to work with staff to determine if the plan could be modified to allow that.

Mr. Suchy stated that if they could not do the third lane, he would move the ATM inside.

Commissioner Anderson asked why the canopy would not cover both lanes.

Planning Manager Larson replied that is not a City restriction and noted that many businesses choose not to cover both lanes to allow options for oversized vehicles.

Commissioner Anderson asked if a third lane is really wanted or needed. He stated that if there is that need, something should be done to accommodate that.

Mr. Suchy commented that he does not see the ATM as a third lane. He stated that if the ATM would not be allowed outside the canopy, it would be placed inside the bank.

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

A roll call vote was performed:

|                       |     |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Commissioner Hunt     | aye |
| Commissioner Anderson | aye |
| Commissioner Van Scoy | aye |
| Commissioner Bauer    | aye |
| Commissioner Heineman | aye |
| Commissioner Peters   | aye |
| Chairperson Gengler   | aye |

Motion Carried.

Chairperson Gengler closed the public hearing closed at 7:27 p.m.

### **Commission Business**

Motion by Commissioner Van Scoy, seconded by Commissioner Bauer, to recommend that City Council approve Ordinance #23-12 Rezoning Property at the Northeast Corner of Sunwood Drive and Zeolite Street NW from COR-2a to COR-2b.

A roll call vote was performed:

|                       |     |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Commissioner Peters   | aye |
| Commissioner Heineman | aye |
| Commissioner Bauer    | aye |
| Commissioner Van Scoy | aye |
| Commissioner Anderson | aye |

Commissioner Hunt            aye  
Chairperson Gengler        aye

Motion Carried.

Motion by Commissioner Van Scoy, seconded by Commissioner Peters, to recommend that City Council approve of Resolution #23-111 Approving Site Plan and Preliminary Plat for a Bank at the Northeast Corner of Sunwood Drive and Zeolite Street NW.

A roll call vote was performed:

Commissioner Hunt            aye  
Commissioner Anderson       aye  
Commissioner Van Scoy       aye  
Commissioner Bauer           aye  
Commissioner Heineman       aye  
Commissioner Peters          aye  
Chairperson Gengler          aye

Motion Carried.

Planning Manager Larson noted that this item will proceed to the City Council at the June 13, 2023 meeting.

## **7. COMMISSION BUSINESS**

### **7.01: Aldi – Architectural Review for a New Retail Store at 7992 Sunwood Drive NW**

#### **Presentation**

Planning Manager Larson presented the Staff Report requesting feedback on the proposed building design and direction on how the Commission would like to see the plans revised.

#### **Commission Business**

Commissioner Bauer commented that he likes the original proposal with two buildings. He referenced the statements related to pedestrian activity and noted that Aldi is not a typical store accessed by pedestrians. He stated that he would prefer to concentrate more on the appearance of the designs rather than pedestrians. He noted that he would prefer to have a nicer view for those driving by on Sunwood.

Commissioner Heineman commented that he likes the architecture plan, façade, and colors. He commented that this will not be distracting and fits well into the theme of the COR. He suggested adding shrubs to break up the brick areas.

Commissioner Anderson asked the disadvantage of turning the building to having the back of the store to the back of the strip mall.

Planning Manager Larson identified an area that will be preserved for future use, whether that is a multitenant building or single user.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that would be an issue of visibility for Aldi. He commented that the business is attempting to draw traffic from Armstrong and if you spin the building, you will not see the Aldi arch. He commented that he is not a huge fan of what is occurring on the Sunwood side, making businesses have doors onto Sunwood while others do not. He commented that with parcel 46 to the north, there would most likely be residents walking to Aldi. He noted that apartment residents also walk to Coborns and would most likely walk to Aldi as well along with those at the dome. He stated that he likes the mural concept but would also be in favor of forcing a door on that side of the building as other businesses were made to do so. He stated that he loves the other sides of the building and would like to see a similar design scape on the back. He commented that he believes pedestrian facilities are still a must.

Commissioner Anderson noted that his suggestion to back the buildings up would prevent the developer from having to invest more into the design of the back side of the building.

Chairperson Gengler invited the applicant to address the Commission.

Ryan Anderson, representing the applicant, stated that there is a lot of flexibility and discretion within the concepts. He thanked the Commission for allowing this informal review to provide input so that the public process can proceed smoothly. He stated that the presented concept would be the preferred aesthetic of Aldi. He commented that they want to have a nice building that fits within the framework of Aldi and also works well within the City's design. He commented that while the changed orientation could be an option, that would be a last resort. He believed that they could enhance the design in the current proposed location. He stated that they have the ability to add windows in the rear to make it look more four sided. He commented that the rear of the building is warehouse and storage space, therefore they would prefer the opaque version of windows. He commented that although not everyone will walk to get groceries, some users would and provided a general overview of the pedestrian connections. He stated that they would not prefer to add a second door as that would not function well with the floorplan. He commented that with the corner entrance, it does face the parking lot and street to the north. He agreed that they could add landscaping to break up facades.

Commissioner Heineman commented that in his experience an Aldi is set up to have one entrance into the building with customers weaving through the aisles, therefore having a second door would not work well with that layout.

Mr. Anderson confirmed that to be true. He commented that there are some rare locations where a second door has been added but those are more unique designs.

Commissioner Heineman referenced the northeast corner with an angled sidewalk and asked if that were to connect straight rather than angled, perhaps that would be a compromise to an entrance on Sunwood.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that he does not see issue with the north side of the building, as the corner entrance meets the desire to have frontage on Sunwood. He commented that the east side could be enhanced easily with architecture but finds the south side of the building more troublesome because of the loading dock and industrial look. He believed that pedestrian access would be more challenging on the south side.

Commissioner Heineman asked how close the south side of the building backs to Sunwood Nutrition.

Planning Manager Larson estimated a distance of about 200 feet.

Commissioner Heineman referenced an area near the parcel and asked if there are plans to do anything with that area as that could help screen the southern area.

Planning Manager Larson replied that is a stormwater basin on a separate parcel that is privately owned.

Commissioner Anderson commented that he likes the idea of people walking to the store and asked where the trash is located.

Mr. Anderson replied that Aldi has a small dumpster in the loading dock area and that will be hidden by the brick wall.

Commissioner Anderson commented that while he is not a fan of people walking by a loading dock, he also does not see any other option.

Mr. Anderson acknowledged that this is a unique site with three street frontages.

Chairperson Gengler asked if there would be space for greenery on the south side.

Mr. Anderson replied that there would not be additional space because of the building, drive, and sidewalk.

Chairperson Gengler commented that she would be concerned with the discontinuation of the sidewalk which would cause people to walk in front of a vehicle. She stated that she likes the trees and spacing on the north side and perhaps the building could be shifted up a little to provide more separated walking space on the south. She commented that the dock is well screened and would simply like more space for pedestrians.

Councilmember Woestehoff noted that adding more space would require more walking of pedestrians. He asked the length of the dock and how far out a semi would stick out.

Mr. Anderson commented that the truck would fully fit within and would not cross over the painted marks.

Commissioner Anderson asked the timing of deliveries.

Mr. Anderson replied that typically deliveries are timed to occur prior to the opening of the store but a truck could come during business hours.

Chairperson Gengler commented that she likes the Brooklyn Park design with the awnings and tower. She stated that while she does like murals, she was unsure this would be the best fit.

Commissioner Anderson commented that something should be done to the east side if the building is not rotated. He commented that the fake windows would be sufficient.

Commissioner Heineman commented that he does not like awnings and looks strange when done for show. He agreed that it could break up the area but preferred the original concept with greenery to break up the east side.

Commissioner Bauer stated that he understands the concerns of Commissioner Anderson and his preference to rotate the building but noted that would kick the can down the road when an additional building is added. He stated that he prefers the location as proposed. He asked if something could be done on the loading dock side, similar to what is proposed for the east, to break up that appearance.

Mr. Anderson commented that he thinks they could work something up. He stated that they had not considered the south side prior to tonight and is something they could add to.

Planning Manager Larson commented that the Aldi locations they found with awnings had slanted awnings whereas other businesses on Sunwood have more straight-out awnings, which could better fit. He stated that one of the staff comments was that a sign added to that corner could break that side up and direct traffic.

Commissioner Van Scoy commented that he does not see the feasibility in adding another door and would agree that the east side should have something to break up that façade through architecture.

Commissioner Hunt agreed that greenery and fake windows could help to break up the façade.

## **8. COMMISSION / STAFF INPUT**

Commissioner Van Scoy asked if staff received input from legal counsel on the topic of conditional use permits.

Planning Manager Larson noted that legal counsel will attend the public hearing to answer that question and any others that may arise.

Commissioner Bauer asked if there is a delay on the sports dome.

Planning Manager Larson commented that approval has been granted to construct a practice facility and it is now in the courts.

Councilmember Woestehoff replied that the City has given the necessary approvals and the project is delayed for other reasons.

Planning Manager Larson noted that there are five public hearings scheduled for the June meeting and provided a brief overview.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that public works has been out filling potholes in addition to their other work. He stated that the City has also contracted with an outside party to assist in filling potholes.

## 9. ADJOURNMENT

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

A roll call vote was performed:

|                       |     |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Commissioner Peters   | aye |
| Commissioner Heineman | aye |
| Commissioner Bauer    | aye |
| Commissioner Van Scoy | aye |
| Commissioner Anderson | aye |
| Commissioner Hunt     | aye |
| Chairperson Gengler   | aye |

Motion Carried.

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Todd Larson  
Planning Manager

ATTEST:

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Dana Verbeek  
Planning Administrative Assistant

Drafted by Amanda Staple, *TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*