

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

The Ramsey Planning Commission conducted a regular meeting on Thursday, January 26, 2023, 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 Tom Hunt  
  Commissioner Eric Peters  
  Commissioner Gary Van Scoy

Members Absent:                   Commissioner Brian Walker

Also Present:                       Planning Manager Todd Larson  
  Community Development Director Stephanie Hanson  
  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 Gengler, to approve the agenda as presented.

A roll call vote was performed:

Commissioner Hunt	aye
Commissioner Van Scoy	aye
Commissioner Gengler	aye
Commissioner Peters	aye
Commissioner Anderson	aye

Chairperson Bauer aye

Motion Carried.

## **5. CONSENT AGENDA**

### **5.01: Approve the December 1, 2022 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Van Scoy noted on page four, the first line, it should state, “Chairperson ~~Peterson~~ Bauer...”

Motion by Commissioner Van Scoy, seconded by Commissioner Peters, to approve the consent agenda with the noted change.

A roll call vote was performed:

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

Motion Carried.

## **6. PUBLIC HEARINGS/COMMISSION BUSINESS**

### **6.01: Public Hearing: ARAA Dome Site Plan, Plat and Variance to Height – 14600 Ferret Street NW**

#### **Public Hearing**

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

#### **Presentation**

Planning Manager Larson presented the staff report stating that staff recommends approval of the plat, site plan review and variance.

Chairperson Bauer asked the maximum number of people that could be in the building per building and fire code prior to the requirement for a special event permit being triggered.

Planning Manager Larson replied that he believed it was around 360 people.

Mark Bigelbach, representing ARAA, commented that in the last conversation he believed that the total was 635 people.

Chairperson Bauer asked the number of parking stalls required.

Planning Manager Larson replied that 175 stalls would be required which is based on training for high school aged kids that would drive themselves.

Chairperson Bauer referenced the tentative additional building noting that the mentioned uses would have their own parking requirements and asked if that is being provided in this plan or whether that would be constructed in the future.

Planning Manager Larson replied that area would remain vacant field until those uses come in, and parking would be provided in the future based upon those uses. He identified the areas where parking is currently proposed.

Chairperson Bauer referenced the variance in height and asked how that would be visible from the highway and Bunker Lake Boulevard.

Mr. Bigelbach commented that structurally the dome has to have a certain curve to shed snow, which is the reason for the variance.

Planning Manager Larson commented that the dome will be a noticeable structure in the community, especially from the highway. He commented that it will be noticeable from Armstrong as well. He commented that these domes are not see through, therefore someone driving by would not be aware if lights are on or off.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that 135 stalls are listed in the case, but staff mentioned 175 stalls.

Planning Manager Larson noted that was his error and the packet information is correct.

Commissioner Hunt asked for details on the process in terms of combination of lots and subsequent division for the potential future development.

Planning Manager Larson commented that because the future development is not yet known, it makes more sense to create one lot now and deal with future development requests in the future.

Commissioner Van Scoy asked for details on the change to zoning.

Planning Manager Larson replied that there is no change in zoning proposed but there will be additional zoning related discussions during the meeting tonight.

Commissioner Van Scoy referenced the ratio of lot coverage proposed and asked how future subdivision could impact the lot coverage ratio.

Planning Manager Larson stated that is one of the discussion items that will come later tonight is that there is not a coverage limitation at this time.

Commissioner Van Scoy stated that there is a limitation on the building footprint. He noted that the zoning provides different limitations on lot coverage. He asked if they could create a lot that would be nonconforming.

Planning Manager Larson replied that they could not create a nonconforming lot, without variance or use of PUD.

Commissioner Van Scoy stated that he supports the project, but his concern would be with how restrictions on footprint could restrict the applicant's future plans.

Mr. Bigelbach stated that they do not see a problem meeting the staff recommendations.

Reese Sedtelgte, project engineer, referenced the concept for future development and noted that is not set in stone as they have looked at multiple configurations of what that could look like. He believed that they would have no problem providing the necessary parking for those uses at that time.

Commissioner Peters asked if there are any restrictions on concession stands within these types of buildings.

Mr. Bigelbach replied that he recommends not to put in concession stands for these types of buildings and therefore it was not included in the plans.

### **Citizen Input**

Matt Kuker, PSD, commented that they support the dome but has concern with the parking. He stated that a previous drawing showed 294 stalls, which equated to one stall per 606 square feet. He stated that Adrenaline Sports Center, which has hosted large users and events, has 205 parking stalls and they experience overflow parking into adjacent lots. He stated that overflow parking will likely flow into his adjacent industrial lots, which operate seven days per week. He stated that he did not want to see that type of issue arise and therefore would prefer to address the issue now. He stated that the drawing now shows 135 stalls which is a big concern. He stated that if the applicant could utilize underground stormwater facility that would allow parking above. He referenced a sports center in a neighboring community that had major issues with parking. He believed that parking would become an issue and he would like to avoid that as an adjacent property owner. He stated that he does fully support the project but believes it to be severely under parked.

Mr. Sedtelgte commented that they did look at parking and completed a traffic and parking study. He stated that they assumed that all courts were being used at the same time, along with the turf areas. He stated that they estimated 96 stalls needed for full use and therefore the 135-projection allowed for turnover of those arriving and departing. He stated that there will be a retaining wall on the north property line, with a fence. He stated that they could extend the fence line to dissuade people from parking where they should not be. He stated that if parking becomes an issue, parking

could be added over the infiltration basin. He noted that they would like to avoid underground treatment, if possible, because of the cost.

Commissioner Van Scoy stated that the calculations seemed to be based upon those involved in the activities.

Mr. Bigelbach replied that he based his parking numbers off his experience at his other dome locations. He commented that not all the kids are driving or have a parent that is staying. He noted that some carpool and some parents drop their child off and pick them up after practice. He noted that there are spectators during events.

Commissioner Van Scoy asked how parking is determined for spectators.

Mr. Bigelbach commented that is hard to predict as some events have no spectators and others would have a lot of spectators.

Commissioner Peters asked if there have been issues with people parking on grass at other locations that were under parked.

Mr. Bigelbach stated that in West Saint Paul there was no grass available for parking and the city addressed that pretty quickly in adding a second lot.

Commissioner Peters commented on his experience with parking at sporting events for children, noting that people park however they want, especially in the winter.

Mr. Bigelbach noted that they would plow the area correctly for people to continue to follow the parking areas.

Commissioner Van Scoy asked if there is a plan B, in the case this is not adequate parking.

Mr. Bigelbach commented that they have reviewed a lot of variations and that is why they have not sold additional land for other users. He stated that this is the plan they are moving forward with and could use that future expansion area for parking in the future if that is needed. He noted that they did attempt to purchase the lot behind them, but it had been sold to another user.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that it has been his understanding that this would exclusively be used as a practice facility, whereas the case makes it sound like there could be some events. He asked for clarification. He stated that he could see the design being suitable for a training facility but noted that parking would be an issue for events.

Mr. Bigelbach referenced the West Saint Paul location he constructed and noted a shared parking agreement that have reached for events. He noted that in Vadnais Heights they bussed people to the dome location from a city parking lot. He stated that at the Lakeville location he does not allow events and does not experience any parking problems.

Mr. Kuker commented that he sees this being a great place for doing tournaments on the weekends for basketball. He stated that players arrive 30 minutes early, therefore there is overlap in people arriving. He again commented that additional parking is needed.

Commissioner Hunt asked if the adjacent industrial lots are typically at full capacity.

Mr. Kuker replied that typically the lots are close to full. He noted that there are large, paved areas that are not used for parking because the area is needed for semi-truck maneuverability.

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

A roll call vote was performed:

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

Motion Carried.

Chairperson Bauer closed the public hearing closed at 7:42 p.m.

### **Commission Business**

Chairperson Bauer asked staff to review the variance criteria.

Planning Manager Larson explained that a variance must be unique for the use and specific to the property proposed. He reviewed the different criteria that are considered and explained how this request would meet those criteria.

Chairperson Bauer commented that the proposed use would necessitate the variance.

Motion by Commissioner Peters, seconded by Commissioner Gengler, to Adopt Resolution #23-04 Approving a Variance to Structure Height in the E-3 Zoning District.

A roll call vote was performed:

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

Motion Carried.

Motion by Commissioner Hunt, seconded by Commissioner Van Scoy, to recommend that City Council adopt Resolution #23-025 Approving Plat of “ARAA Subdivision”.

A roll call vote was performed:

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

Motion Carried.

Commissioner Van Scoy commented that the request is for a training facility and not events at this time. He asked if events are going to be planned in the future, would that have to go through the City.

Planning Manager Larson confirmed that the City would review requests for special events. He noted that some of the questions asked at that time would be related to traffic, parking and anticipated attendance. He noted that it may be determined that alternate parking is required such as shuttling from another location.

Commissioner Van Scoy noted the willingness of the applicant to construct additional parking, should that be deemed necessary in the future.

Motion by Commissioner Gengler, seconded by Commissioner Peters, to recommend that City Council adopt Resolution #23-026 Approving Site Plan Review for an Athletic Training Facility at 14600 Ferret Street NW.

A roll call vote was performed:

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

Motion Carried.

Planning Manager Larson noted that this item will move forward to the City Council for consideration at its February 14, 2023 meeting.

Chairperson Bauer invited the new Community Development Director to introduce herself.

Community Development Director Hanson introduced herself. She looked forward to working with everyone and getting to know the businesses in the community as well.

## **7. COMMISSION BUSINESS**

### **7.01: Zoning Code Update – Business Districts**

#### **Presentation**

Planning Manager Larson presented the Staff Report and asked for feedback from the Commission.

#### **Commission Business**

Chairperson Bauer referenced two different uses with a slash between on page two and asked if the intention would be for the group to decide whether that is permitted or conditional.

Planning Manager Larson provided additional explanation, using the example of a small gym which would be permitted and a larger gym which would have additional considerations and therefore would be conditional.

Commissioner Van Scoy stated that he finds the table useful but found the language related to funeral homes or fitness center to be confusing. He asked if it would make more sense to separate the smaller and larger uses, such as fitness center under a certain size and fitness center over a certain size.

Chairperson Bauer agreed that would make sense as they would have different requirements.

Planning Manager Larson stated that they attempted to keep the standards out of the table and provide that in a different area. He noted that staff could separate those two items as mentioned (fitness center, funeral home/crematorium).

Commissioner Peters commented that ACE has a recycling center and asked where that would fit.

Planning Manager Larson stated that staff did discuss that business and did not find a good category for it. He noted that all users/uses do not need to be accommodated for. He stated that they would become nonconforming and could continue to exist. He stated that if that type of facility is desired, they could add a line item or define it under another category.

Commissioner Peters commented that he would see that business as a collection and distribution facility. He asked and received confirmation that the City would not allow another landfill.

Commissioner Van Scoy asked the difference between an indoor recreation center and fitness center.

Planning Manager Larson commented that an indoor recreation facility would be users like Adrenaline and the sports dome.

Councilmember Woestehoff referenced the language that states that if a use is not listed, it should be considered as prohibited. He commented that there is one item in the table that is listed as not permitted and asked if there is a reason to have it listed if it is not permitted.

Planning Manager Larson replied that in his experience with some auto repair shops, those businesses would sometimes purchase salvaged vehicles with intent to repair and resell but do not get around to them. He stated that this language would prevent the situation where those vehicles accumulate.

Community Development Director Hanson noted that she has had similar experience with those types of businesses and commented that the specific language is helpful for enforcement.

Planning Manager Larson continued to review the staff report providing details on performance standards.

Commissioner Gengler asked the definition of a transient merchant.

Planning Manager Larson provided the definition, examples and reviewed the permitting process.

Commissioner Gengler commented that perhaps that should be clarified as it would seem upon reading that the use is just permitted.

Commissioner Van Scoy referenced accessory dwelling units (ADU), which seems to be a new use.

Planning Manager Larson confirmed that this would be new and modeled after the residential ADU regulations. He provided some examples of businesses that may want someone to live onsite or have a room onsite, such as a funeral home, self-storage facility, or emergency veterinary clinic. He noted that the ADU would only be able to be occupied by someone employed by the business and could not just be used for rental. He noted that the unit may be subject to rental licensing requirements and would then be subject to related inspections.

Commissioner Van Scoy commented that he would be a bit uncomfortable allowing businesses to have an ADU and would want to see more details. He asked if the use would be open to all businesses or limited to those listed.

Planning Manager Larson reviewed the language that would address that concern, noting that staying onsite would need to be a requirement of the employee's job. He did not anticipate that there would be a lot of requests. He continued to review the staff report including adult uses.

Commissioner Gengler referenced Sections D and E, outdoor recreation, which is tied to a brewery/taproom/restaurant and asked if that is too restrictive.

Planning Manager Larson stated that staff began with breweries and what can be found and then tried thinking of other businesses and could not think of others outside of that category. He moved to the topic of motor vehicle sales and provided details on that section.

Commissioner Van Scoy commented that this would seem to be a lot of building for a sales office but acknowledged that the intention would be to have some vehicles inside as well.

Planning Manager Larson confirmed that to be true. He noted that the change would make many of the existing vehicles sales locations noncompliant, but they would be grandfathered in and could continue to operate.

Commissioner Van Scoy referenced language related to rental space within B-2 and asked if the intention is to limit self-storage uses.

Planning Manager Larson confirmed that the intent would be to have a building that looks like a building rather than a row of garages. He reviewed the districts that use would be allowed in. He reviewed details on bulk standards and reviewed the direction staff is seeking.

Chairperson Bauer stated that perhaps it would make sense to have impervious surface limitations for properties near the river, lake, or pond.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if the COR districts would fall under B-3.

Planning Manager Larson commented that staff is not proposing to do anything with the COR, other than the most western part that is outside of the framework. He noted that many of the uses within the COR would best fit within B-2.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that when speaking of the COR development is desired that perhaps would not require the same amount of greenspace as a business outside of that area. He noted the intention for concentrated development and use of space, noting that he would support a larger building footprint on a lot, but would not want to see a large parking lot occupying the majority of a lot within the COR.

Commissioner Peters commented that a large parking lot could also be minimized in visual impact by the use of islands with trees.

Planning Manager Larson provided details on the topic of building height and asked for input from the Commission.

Commissioner Gengler stated that she is comfortable leaving the maximum height as is and reviewing higher requests on individual basis.

Commissioner Van Scoy asked if there is any idea of how many times the City has been requested to go higher for building height that was denied.

Planning Manager Larson replied that staff could not recall any incidents.

Commissioner Van Scoy stated that if retail were to go into I-2, the parking lot could go to the setback. He stated that perhaps using an impervious surface maximum of 75 percent or so.

Commissioner Gengler stated that she would support the idea of a maximum for lot coverage but would not want to create a situation that could not be met.

Planning Manager Larson commented that staff can provide suggestion that would range between 75 and 85 percent. He moved to the topic of accessory structures and asked for input.

Commissioner Van Scoy stated that he would support that allowance if the maximum building footprint included all buildings.

Planning Manager Larson confirmed that would be the intention. He stated that if the building were already at the maximum footprint allowed, the business would not be eligible for an accessory structure. He provided more details on the topic of parking and asked for input from the Commission.

Chairperson Bauer asked for details on parking, using the example of Coborn's and the different businesses.

Planning Manager Larson commented that is a great example of where shared parking signs are not helpful. He stated that in that case, the employees should be parking in further locations that are not often used to make parking more convenient for customers.

Commissioner Van Scoy asked if vehicles that do not belong could be towed, using the example of a warehouse.

Planning Manager Larson replied that it is private property and therefore unauthorized vehicles could be towed, but generally that is posted by sign.

Chairperson Bauer provided an example where overflow parking from a church occurred in an area for an adjacent business and those vehicles were towed.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that Mr. Kuker mentioned a concern with spillover from the dome could occur into his industrial properties and noted that is a situation where towing could occur. He stated that the language being discussed in this code would be shared parking similar to Coborn's where vehicles could not be towed in that same manner.

Planning Manager Larson continued to review information related to parking.

Commissioner Peters asked if there is a requirement for parking lot maintenance.

Planning Manager Larson commented that is addressed under the property maintenance code.

Councilmember Woestehoff referenced the concept of reserved parking and asked if stalls could be reserved for electric vehicles, should there be charging facilities in that location.

Planning Manager Larson confirmed that could be done.

Commissioner Van Scoy referenced the term “berth” which is mentioned for loading docks and asked if different language should be used.

Planning Manager Larson stated that language already existed in code and confirmed that could be replaced with “designated loading zone”. He provided details on landscaping and confirmed the consensus of the Commission on the proposed simplification to buffer zones. He reviewed the proposed changes to architectural standards.

Commissioner Van Scoy stated that he would not see the necessity to screen loading docks from public right-of-way in an industrial area.

Chairperson Bauer commented that the loading docks for Delta ModTech are visible from the residential area, and he does not see an issue with that.

Commissioner Gengler stated that she would think of the sounds and activity of a loading dock, along with the visual impact, and therefore would support screening between loading docks and residential areas.

Commissioner Hunt agreed that screening should be required when adjacent to a residential area but did not see the need to screen from a public right-of-way.

Commissioner Anderson commented that he would also agree with buffering between loading docks and residential areas but could go either way.

Councilmember Woestehoff agreed that the City does not want to be a burden to a business development but would agree with screening between a loading dock and residential use. He stated that he would not necessarily think screening would be necessary for public right-of-way or in an industrial area. He asked and received confirmation that buffering/screening could simply move trees that would be required to be planted to be moved to the desired area.

Commissioner Van Scoy referenced the parking lot screening mentioned and asked if a berm would be required.

Planning Manager Larson replied that the screening could also be provided through landscaping.

Commissioner Van Scoy did not believe that type of screening currently exists and whether there would be a need.

Planning Manager Larson commented that it is helpful with mitigating traffic issues from lights shining, but the screening would also assist in mitigating the impact of a parking lot visually.

Commissioner Van Scoy commented that he did not see the need for that type of screening noting that it would add additional cost to a project.

Commissioner Hunt agreed. He stated that he could see the requirement for that when adjacent to residential, but otherwise would not see a need for it.

Planning Manager Larson confirmed that could be left out.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if snow storage should be addressed in the parking standards.

Planning Manager Larson commented that there is a lot of business fencing in the community, but no regulation related to that. He provided some examples of regulation that could be added.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented on recent mention of barbed wire that is used for security to deter theft.

Planning Manager Larson commented that there are other ways to deter theft that are more attractive. He stated that many of the fence regulations would be similar to what is found in residential regulations. He noted that this would sum up the discussion on the business districts for tonight and noted that if the Commission think of any other comments, they could provide that via email or phone call.

## **7.02: Zoning Code Update – Residential Districts**

### **Presentation**

Planning Manager Larson presented the Staff Report and asked for feedback from the Commission.

### **Commission Business**

Chairperson Bauer suggested using one acre as the minimum lot size.

Commissioner Anderson commented that his concern would be the ability for people to split lot into two one acre lots and he would be uncomfortable with that.

Commissioner Van Scoy recognized the intent to maintain rural character but noted that Ramsey is a suburban community that has a MUSA area that will continue to expand. He believed that rural developing would continue to be the better description.

Planning Manager Larson commented that they could be intentional on where the zoning is changed to the one acre minimum. He stated that minimum lot width could also be maintained to prevent undesired splitting.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that he would have concern with creating a large number of lawful nonconforming properties.

Planning Manager Larson commented that a majority of those properties would already be lawful nonconforming.

Commissioner Van Scoy asked how this occurred to have these smaller nonconforming lots.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that there is a development, south of Central Park and east of Armstrong, which was developed before the City incorporated. He imagined that the City inherited a lot of these lot sizes.

Planning Manager Larson agreed noting that there were many PUDs that allowed smaller lots.

Commissioner Gengler commented that it would seem that only one third of the area zoned for 2.5 acre lots actually has 2.5 acre lots.

Commissioner Hunt recognized that this issue already exists and therefore is unsure what the best answer would be.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if PUDs would be allowed to continue to exist in the zoning update.

Planning Manager Larson commented that will be part of the continued zoning discussion. He stated that it would seem that PUDs were used in the past to secure lesser lot sizes in return for open space dedication. He noted that going forward staff would suggest that it be used to support a mix of different developments within one overall development rather than a tool used simply for obtaining smaller lots sizes. He moved to the topic of density, providing input on the challenges in reaching the required density.

Commissioner Van Scoy stated that the intent with 80-foot lots was to reach the four units per acre but recognized that the stormwater areas and roads make that difficult. He supported further investigation as to what would allow achievement of density.

Commissioner Gengler stated that she does support smaller lot sizes.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that he does find it interesting to see what other communities are doing and reviewed the requirements for Anoka.

Planning Manager Larson commented that the intent in updating the zoning code is to be compliant with the Comprehensive Plan. He reviewed information on density transitioning including the current requirements and potential ideas to consider.

Commissioner Peters provided input on the density transitioning that was done by a development, noting that there were not requirements on spacing or watering and it did not turn out well.

Chairperson Bauer asked if this could be left open and developments could be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine screening needs.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that he likes the idea that neighbors are neighbors, but when you transition from low to high density, or residential to business or industrial, there should be transitioning.

Commissioner Van Scoy commented that when a large lot neighbor's smaller lots, the odds are that eventually the larger lot will split. He did not see the need for transitioning between rural and R-1. He stated that he could also see a benefit in transitioning between low and high density and between residential and industrial or commercial.

Planning Manager Larson commented that staff will continue to bring back different sections for discussion as the zoning update continues.

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

Commissioner Van Scoy commented that Public Works has done an outstanding job on snow removal during this snowy winter. He stated that he did note a correction to the minutes tonight but that is rare and commented on the excellent job the person doing the minutes does.

## **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 Peters	aye
Commissioner Gengler	aye
Commissioner Van Scoy	aye
Commissioner Hunt	aye
Chairperson Bauer	aye

Motion Carried.

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission adjourned at 10:00 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.*