

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

The Ramsey Planning Commission conducted a regular meeting on Thursday, November 30, 2023, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present:                   Chairperson Cheri Gengler  
  Commissioner Randy Bauer  
  Commissioner Ryan Heineman  
  Commissioner Tom Hunt  
  Commissioner Eric Peters  
  Commissioner Gary Van Scoy

Members Absent:                   Commissioner Bruce Anderson

Also Present:                       Planning Manager Todd Larson  
  City Planner Adam Martin  
  Senior Planner Chris Anderson  
  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 Peters, seconded by Commissioner Hunt, to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Gengler, Commissioners Peters, Hunt, Bauer, Heineman, and Van Scoy. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioner Anderson.

**5.     CONSENT AGENDA**

### **5.01: Approve the October 26, 2023 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes**

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

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Gengler, Commissioners Bauer, Heineman, Hunt, Peters, and Van Scoy. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioner Anderson.

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

### **6.01: Public Hearing: Consider a Variance Request Related to Accessory Structure Setback Regulations (Project 23-120); Case of Nick Larson**

#### **Public Hearing**

Chairperson Gengler called the public hearing to order at 7:01 p.m.

#### **Presentation**

City Planner Martin presented the staff report stating that staff recommends adoption of Resolution #23-294, approving a variance to accessory structure setbacks at 6070 143<sup>rd</sup> Lane NW.

Commissioner Van Scoy asked if the request is to reduce the front yard setback.

City Planner Martin confirmed that to be correct. He noted that with the newly adopted zoning code updates, the minimum setback for accessory structures is no closer than the front of the house and this variance would reduce that to 15 feet.

Commissioner Van Scoy referenced the statement that the accessory structure could not be placed in the side yard. He stated that there appears to be a space that is relatively flat on the side of the home and asked why that location would not work.

City Planner Martin replied that he would defer that question to the property owner as that statement was made by the property owner.

Commissioner Hunt asked for more details on the line shown on the site plan.

City Planner Martin explained that the site plan submitted used a lot survey of when the home was constructed in 1993. He stated that he visited the site and measured the setback from the property line to be 15 feet. He stated that the shed is more in line with the front of the garage rather than the front of the home.

Chairperson Gengler asked if the setback is measured by the home itself or the most protruding point, which would be the garage in this case.

Planning Manager Larson provided additional details on how that standard would typically be measured and how it was measured in this instance.

Commissioner Van Scoy commented that he would believe that the garage is part of the principle building in this instance.

### **Citizen Input**

Nick Larson, applicant, stated that there is a large tree on the side of the home which has a large root system they did not want to disrupt. He stated that the location of the shed also did not interfere with the location of the sprinklers. He stated that they also considered locating near the deck, but the runoff would have gone onto the neighbor's property. He confirmed that they would need to uproot the entire sprinkler system to have the shed in the side yard location. He believed that the location for the shed fits well with the existing vegetation and additional vegetation that they planted for screening.

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

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Gengler, Commissioners Bauer, Van Scoy, Heineman, Hunt, and Peters. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioner Anderson.

Chairperson Gengler closed the public hearing at 7:13 p.m.

### **Commission Business**

Commissioner Van Scoy stated that when reviewing a variance, they should consider whether there is another place that would fit the requirements. He stated that there is another location that would meet the standards, but the issue was the cost to relocate the sprinklers and cost cannot be considered. He stated that he would think that because of the screening, he does believe that this location is probably the better choice but would still have a hard time supporting the request.

Commissioner Heineman commented that this is a suitable location, and the variance process exists for this reason. He found this to be a reasonable ask and will therefore support the request.

Planning Manager Larson stated that while financial considerations cannot be the sole factor, they can weigh in on the overall determination.

Motion by Commissioner Bauer, seconded by Commissioner Heineman, to adopt Resolution #23-294 Approving a Variance to Accessory Structure Setbacks at 6070 143<sup>rd</sup> Lane NW.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Gengler, Commissioners Bauer, Heineman, Hunt, and Peters. Voting No: Commissioner Van Scoy. Absent: Commissioner Anderson.

**6.02: Public Hearing: Consider a Conditional Use Permit from Rare Pomeranians at 15110 Uranimite St NW**

## **Public Hearing**

Chairperson Gengler called the public hearing to order at 7:16 p.m.

## **Presentation**

City Planner Martin presented the staff report stating that staff recommends approval of Resolution #23-293 approving a Conditional Use Permit for a commercial dog kennel for a commercial dog breeder at 15110 Uranimite Street NW.

Commissioner Bauer asked if there is a maximum number of dogs that one owner can have under the previous code.

City Planner Martin replied that three dogs would be allowed without a private kennel license or commercial kennel license.

Commissioner Bauer asked the maximum number of dogs within the revised code.

Planning Manager Larson replied that there is not a maximum.

## **Citizen Input**

Angeliah Kohout, applicant, commented that she is a passionate dog owner, and her dogs are well cared for. She stated that this has been a dream of hers for some time.

Commissioner Peters asked if there is licensure from the AKC or other organization that would be required for breeding.

Ms. Kohout replied that she does have the registration papers and also made her own personal health certification for the dogs to go home with.

Commissioner Bauer stated that there was a letter received complaining about dogs barking. He asked how often the dogs are outside and how much noise they are making. He asked if the applicant has heard that complaint from her neighbors.

Ms. Kohout replied that she has not heard anything from her neighbors but recently added bark collars, which do not shock. She noted that it was one of the smaller dogs that was barking, and she was finally able to find an appropriate fit, which has reduced the barking.

Commissioner Bauer asked for details on the breeding process and whether the client brings their dog in to be bred and then leaves the same day.

Ms. Kohout replied that she does not have outside clients of that nature and her operation is all in-house.

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

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Gengler, Commissioners Bauer, Peters, Heineman, Hunt, and Van Scoy. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioner Anderson.

Chairperson Gengler closed the public hearing at 7:25 p.m.

### **Commission Business**

Commissioner Van Scoy acknowledged the letter received relating to noise that was entered into the record.

Motion by Commissioner Hunt, seconded by Commissioner Van Scoy, to recommend that City Council adopt Resolution #23-293 Approving a Conditional Use Permit for a Commercial Dog Kennel for a Commercial Dog Breeder at 15110 Uranimite Street NW.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Gengler, Commissioners Hunt, Van Scoy, Bauer, Heineman, and Peters. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioner Anderson.

### **6.03: Public Hearing: Consider a Code Amendment Pertaining to Address Numbers**

#### **Public Hearing**

Chairperson Gengler called the public hearing to order at 7:26 p.m.

#### **Presentation**

City Planner Martin presented the staff report stating that staff recommends approval of the ordinance pertaining to address numbers.

Commissioner Bauer referenced number one under specifications and asked how a four-inch number on a building 30 feet from the street would be visible at night without being lit.

City Planner Martin replied that a common strategy would be to use colors that offset from the base color to increase contrast. He noted that there are also requirements for reflectivity. He stated that for homes set even further back, there is a requirement to have a posted sign if the home cannot be seen from the road.

Commissioner Bauer stated that vehicle headlights would be shining on the street for a passing vehicle and therefore the lights would not shine on the home until you are in the driveway. He stated that he is not aware of many places where house numbers are visible from the street at night and did not want to create an undue burden.

City Planner Martin stated that this code was developed using language from other communities. He stated that Ramsey is one of the few cities that does not have a requirement of this nature.

Commissioner Van Scoy asked if other cities require visibility of the number of the home from the street at night and asked how that is enforced.

City Planner Martin replied that is correct.

Senior Planner Anderson replied that the language can be tweaked. He recognized that unless the outside lights of the home are on, the house number would not be visible at 2 a.m. He stated that the intention would be that the house number is visible during daylight hours for public safety staff.

Commissioner Van Scoy commented that would seem more reasonable.

Commissioner Bauer referenced number two which mentions a minimum of four inches, while number four mentions a minimum of three inches for multi-tenant structures. He asked for clarification on the different size requirements.

City Planner Martin replied that the specifications were pulled from the building code. He stated that the intent for multi-tenant structures would be for the primary address number to meet the requirement in number three which requires a large number, while the tenants could then have smaller numbers.

Planning Manager Larson commented that this would apply more to the back of a multi-tenant space, again for public safety purposes.

### **Citizen Input**

No comments.

Motion by Commissioner Bauer, seconded by Commissioner Heineman, to close the public hearing.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Gengler, Commissioners Bauer, Heineman, Hunt, Peters, and Van Scoy. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioner Anderson.

Chairperson Gengler closed the public hearing at 7:37 p.m.

### **Commission Business**

Commissioner Van Scoy referenced the construction site requirements which states that the address must be visible but did not notice a size requirement.

City Planner Martin replied that requirement was added with input from the building department. He stated that the idea is that the address would be posted and visible at all times.

Planning Manager Larson replied that the same permanent requirements would apply during construction in terms of size.

Commissioner Van Scoy stated that perhaps additional clarity should be added.

Motion by Commissioner Heineman, seconded by Commissioner Van Scoy, to recommend that City Council adopt Ordinance #23-18, Amending Chapter 105, Buildings and Building Regulations, Pertaining to Address Numbers with the clarification of daylight hours as discussed.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Gengler, Commissioners Heineman, Van Scoy, Bauer, Hunt, and Peters. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioner Anderson.

#### **6.04: Public Hearing: Consider Ordinance #23-19 Amending Temporary Sign Regulations**

##### **Public Hearing**

Chairperson Gengler called the public hearing to order at 7:40 p.m.

##### **Presentation**

Planning Manager Larson presented the staff report stating that staff and the EDA recommend adoption of Ordinance #23-19 pertaining to temporary signs.

Commissioner Bauer asked if a business could have a temporary sign for 20 weeks in the first year and 20 weeks in the second year. He stated that some businesses were lost during the Armstrong interchange construction because of the reduced visibility and difficulty reaching those businesses. He asked why the temporary signage would be limited to 20 weeks.

Planning Manager Larson replied that this is a temporary sign. He stated that if a business wanted to invest in permanent signage changes, they could do so, noting that taller signs are now allowed in the corridor. He stated that the EDA was looking to provide a low-cost option for a business, without allowing something that would be tacky or a distraction.

Commissioner Bauer commented that he did not believe a business would want to install a permanent sign that would only be needed for one to two years. He stated that the ordinance does allow for signs to be located on other property if the permission of the property owner is obtained. He noted that people will most likely use that option to assist in directing traffic to their business. He stated that he would favor this without the 20-week annual limit.

Planning Manager Larson stated that issue was discussed. He noted that in the winter months the construction would ease up and therefore the 20-week period would cover most of the construction season.

Commissioner Bauer commented that 20 weeks would cover a portion of that time, but not the entire construction season.

Senior Planner Anderson commented that there will still be a limitation on the number of signs on any given property. He stated that if a business is allowed to have a sign on a property year-round, that would preclude another business from using that location.

Planning Manager Larson commented that the benefit of a temporary sign is that it is a change in the vision. He stated that after 20 weeks, a driver would no longer notice a sign that has been there for that period of time.

Commissioner Bauer asked if a business could have a temporary sign in one location for 20 weeks and then swap to another location for another 20 weeks.

Senior Planner Anderson commented that temporary signage has been enforced per property. He stated that if a business wants to have an off-site sign, with the permission of the property owner, for four weeks that would leave 16 weeks for that property to have other temporary signs. He explained that the regulation applies per property, not per business.

Commissioner Bauer stated that his interpretation was that the regulation was applied to the business rather than the property.

Commissioner Peters asked if this would include the feather signs that say, “still open”.

Planning Manager Larson replied that this would apply to any temporary sign. He stated that this project is much more involved than the Armstrong project and includes an outreach team. He would hope that if a business were struggling, they would reach out to the outreach team in order to find a solution/strategy for their problem.

Commissioner Van Scoy asked if there was consideration to allow signage for the duration of the construction rather than using time limits.

Planning Manager Larson commented that if a sign stays out for two years, it will blend into the background and no longer catch the attention of passersby.

Commissioner Heineman stated that while he understands the idea of having a time limit, he does think it would make sense to allow the temporary signs for the duration of construction. He noted that perhaps a fresh sign is required every 20 weeks to ensure that they are keeping attention of drivers rather than having the same sign.

Chairperson Gengler commented that when there are multiple tenants at a property, she would want to ensure there is the ability for rotation as well.

Commissioner Hunt stated that he also agrees it would be great to extend the timeline, as 20 weeks seems arbitrary. He stated that he would support allowing the temporary signage for the duration of construction and leave it up to the business as to whether the sign continues to provide benefit.

Councilmember Woesthoff stated that the limitation helps to ensure the signs stay in good shape rather than someone placing a sign and forgetting about it.

Commissioner Hunt agreed that is a valid point and stated that perhaps there is language that could be added that would provide the ability to address damaged signs.

Commissioner Van Scoy asked how a violation would be defined for temporary signage.

Planning Manager Larson replied that the sign code includes standards and provided some examples.

### **Citizen Input**

No comments.

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

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Gengler, Commissioners Bauer, Peters, Heineman, Hunt, and Van Scoy. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioner Anderson.

Chairperson Gengler closed the public hearing at 7:58 p.m.

### **Commission Business**

Commissioner Bauer asked the length of time needed for an ordinance to take effect after the recommendation is made by the Planning Commission.

Planning Manager Larson replied that this would go to the Council for introduction on December 12<sup>th</sup> and if that first reading is approved, the second reading and adoption would occur at the first meeting in January. He stated that this would be effective prior to the construction season.

Motion by Commissioner Bauer, seconded by Commissioner Van Scoy, to direct staff to revise the proposed ordinance to lengthen the duration to allow temporary signage for the duration of construction and to include language that would address ongoing maintenance and condition of signs as discussed.

### **Further discussion**

Planning Manager Larson commented that there will not be a meeting in December and therefore this will come to the Commission in January, the Council in February, and would not become effective until March. Commissioner Bauer stated that the Commission would not need to see the final draft and once revised to capture the comments of the Commission it could move forward to the City Council. Councilmember Woestehoff stated that perhaps it is as simple as removing the “up to” related to the extension, which would allow for additional extensions in perpetuity until the end date specified. Commissioner Bauer stated that he could agree to that. Commissioner Hunt asked how a business would request an extension. Planning Manager Larson provided those details. Chairperson Gengler asked why this would be allowed city-wide rather than specific to the area impacted by construction. Planning Manager Larson stated that three map options were

presented to the EDA and the EDA recommended that this apply city-wide. Commissioner Van Scoy asked if the motion needs to be modified.

Commissioner Bauer withdrew his motion and Commission Van Scoy agreed.

Motion by Commissioner Bauer, seconded by Commissioner Van Scoy, to recommend City Council approval or Ordinance #23-19 Amending Temporary Sign Regulations, with the modification to remove “up to” related to the eight-week restriction for extensions, which would allow the ability for perpetual extensions during the length of construction.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Gengler, Commissioners Bauer, Van Scoy, Heineman, Hunt, and Peters. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioner Anderson.

## **7. COMMISSION BUSINESS**

### **7.01: Consider Site Plan and Minor Plat for Storyteller Café Located at 7790 Sunwood Drive NW (Project 23-118); Case of Stories Foundation**

#### **Presentation**

Senior Planner Anderson presented the Staff Report stating that staff recommends approving the Site Plan and Minor Plat, contingent upon compliance with staff’s review comments (this contingency is incorporated into the draft resolution) and that the Planning Commission provide staff and the applicant direction on the preferred method to address the proposed live-work units (Conditional Use Permit or a rezoning from COR-2 to COR-1).

#### **Commission Business**

Commissioner Bauer asked if everything east of Yolite, after this parcel is zoned COR-1.

Senior Planner Anderson provided details on previous zoning actions and stated that if the zoning option is chosen, staff would recommend incorporation of Sunwood Village as well so that everything east of Yolite would be COR-1 and everything west would be COR-2.

Commissioner Bauer commented that seems to be the most logical path.

Chairperson Gengler asked if that divide extends north of Sunwood as well.

Planning Manager Larson provided details on that zoning. He stated that the intent of mapping within the zoning districts, and subdistricts within the COR, is to track the changes that have occurred.

Commissioner Van Scoy asked if the subdistricts within the COR will be reviewed in the future by the Commission.

Planning Manager Larson recalled a recent meeting involving a sketch plan for townhomes, which is also a change in the subdistricts, but was wrapped into the zoning code update. He stated that the Commission will most likely review that townhome request in January under the new subdistrict.

Jessica Dolezal-Rowland applicant, commented that she would also prefer the rezoning option. She confirmed that she can comply with the suggestions of staff.

Commissioner Hunt referenced the live/work unit and asked if someone working at the business would then live above the business, or whether anyone could live in one of those units.

Planning Manager Larson commented that the unit would morph between living and working space and provided additional details. He stated that the apartments are intended solely for the clients and not for general occupancy.

Commissioner Van Scoy asked the math used to determine the parking.

Senior Planner Anderson stated that staff did request additional information on parking. He noted that the parking proposed is an increase from what had originally been proposed in the first review. He stated that between the retail, office and living space, eight parking stalls would be required and the remainder would be allocated for the café use. He stated that staff will use the additional information from the applicant to determine if parking is sufficient. He recognized that this will be a tighter space and therefore there will be limitations on the number of stalls that can exist while still ensuring sufficient space for emergency vehicles and maneuverability. He confirmed that there would be on-street parking available as well.

Motion by Commissioner Heineman, seconded by Commissioner Peters, to recommend that City Council adopt Resolution #23-296 Granting Approval of the Site Plan and Minor Plat for Storyteller Café contingent upon compliance with staff's review comments.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Gengler, Commissioners Heineman, Peters, Bauer, Hunt, and Van Scoy. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioner Anderson.

Motion by Commissioner Heineman, seconded by Commissioner Van Scoy, to direct staff and the applicant to address the live-work units via a Zoning Amendment to rezone the subject property from COR-2 to COR-1.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Gengler, Commissioners Heineman, Van Scoy, Bauer, Hunt, and Peters. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioner Anderson.

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

Planning Manager Larson commented that the Commission will not be holding a December meeting. He reported that the updated zoning code was adopted by the Council on November 17, 2023.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

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

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Gengler, Commissioners Van Scoy, Hunt, Bauer, Heineman, and Peters. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioner Anderson.

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission adjourned at 8:30 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.*