

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

The Ramsey Planning Commission conducted a regular meeting on Thursday, August 22, 2024, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

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

Members Absent: Commissioner Bruce Anderson

Also Present: Planning Manager Todd Larson
 Senior Planner Chris Anderson
 City Council Liaison Michael Olson

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 Bauer, seconded by Commissioner Peters, to approve the agenda as presented.

A roll call vote was performed:

Commissioner Hunt	aye
Commissioner Van Scoy	aye
Commissioner Bauer	aye
Commissioner Peters	aye
Commissioner Heineman	aye

Chairperson Gengler aye

Motion Carried.

5. **CONSENT AGENDA**

5.01: Approve the July 25, 2024 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

**5.02: Continue Consideration of a Variance for a Lean-To Structure at 6850 148th Lane
 (Michael Ploumen) Until September 26, 2024**

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

A roll call vote was performed:

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

Motion Carried.

6. **PUBLIC HEARINGS/COMMISSION BUSINESS**

**6.01: Public Hearing: Consider a Request for a Variance to Setbacks for a Building
 Addition at 14220 Basalt Street NW (Project No. 24-118); Case of Quad Logic**

Public Hearing

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

Presentation

Senior Planner Anderson presented the staff report stating that staff recommends approval of the variance to deviate from the minimum rear yard setback.

Commissioner Van Scoy asked for more information on the right-in/right-out comment from Anoka County.

Senior Planner Anderson replied that comment was not from the County, but from City staff. He stated that even if there were an access there, it would be a right-in/right-out because of the median.

Commissioner Van Scoy commented that he did not see that as a relevant issue as that is already the case.

Citizen Input

No comments.

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

A roll call vote was performed:

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

Motion Carried.

Chairperson Gengler closed the public hearing at 7:09 p.m.

Commission Business

Motion by Commissioner Bauer, seconded by Commissioner Hunt, to adopt Resolution #24-227 Approving a Variance to the Minimum Rear Yard Setback on the Property Located at 14220 Basalt Street NW.

A roll call vote was performed:

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

Motion Carried.

6.02: Public Hearing: Consider Preliminary Plat for Parkside Townhomes (Project No. 24-117) in The COR; Case of COR at Ramsey, LLC

Public Hearing

Chairperson Gengler called the public hearing to order at 7:10 p.m.

Presentation

Senior Planner Anderson presented the staff report stating that staff recommends approval of the Preliminary Plat, contingent upon compliance with staff's review comments.

Commissioner Bauer asked why there is a 12-month expiration on preliminary plats.

Planning Manager Larson replied that length of time could be adjusted, but the purpose is to ensure that an approved plat does not sit for years as times and regulations could change then prior to construction. He stated that there are allowances for time extensions and some applicants do request that extension of time.

Senior Planner Anderson replied that final plats are valid for two years.

Commissioner Bauer stated that he would think more time would be allowed between preliminary and final plat as the applicant would still need to come back for final plat and therefore if conditions change, that could be addressed at that time.

Planning Manager Larson noted the element of public engagement and notice, as if plans sit for too long, people will forget about it.

Senior Planner Anderson noted that the notification requirement is only triggered for preliminary plat, not final plat.

Commissioner Bauer asked for details on the comments from staff and the different departments and asked for an update on the progress on those items.

Senior Planner Anderson replied that almost all the comments have been addressed noting that only some minor comments are left to address that would not impact the layout or design of the plans.

Citizen Input

Jason Palmby, applicant, stated that one of the primary issues for the delay was the market conditions and projected cost. He stated that many things have changed since then and they are moving forward to the Council with both the preliminary and final plat requests.

Chairperson Gengler noted the reduction of ten units and asked for details.

Senior Planner Anderson commented that the overall number of units did not change, but the split between phases did change and therefore the first phase has ten less units.

Daryl Snow, 14642 Sapphire Street NW, asked the developer to provide details on anticipated street closures. He stated that since moving here about one year ago they have found that there are no playgrounds for children with the exception of crossing Bunker and asked if there have been any mentions of a playground.

Senior Planner Anderson replied that Waterfront Park is in the design phases currently, although he was unsure of the anticipated timeline. He stated that there is another park west of PACT Charter School, but was unsure if there was playground equipment in that park. He stated that the intent would be for Waterfront Park to serve The COR without having to cross Bunker.

Mr. Palmby stated that their property is basically an island and therefore the staging and construction will be self-contained within that area.

Diana Gadba, 14583 Rhinestone Street NW, stated that she has called the City and Police several times because of vehicles running the stop sign multiples times per day at Rhinestone and Ramsey Parkway. She was concerned that the additional vehicles would increase the chance of an accident. She commented on the large number of people that walk dogs in the area and do not clean up after themselves and had concern that would also increase.

Senior Planner Anderson stated that all applications are routed through the Development Review Committee, which has representation from all departments, and no concerns were raised related to traffic or safety.

Naomi Golnitz, 7379 East Ramsey Parkway, echoed the comment of the last speaker related to people running the stop signs. She asked where the construction workers would be parking for this project. She also echoed the comments of people not picking up after their dogs.

Chairperson Gengler asked if the construction workers would be parking within the limits of the site.

Mr. Palmby confirmed that they could find a way to make that work.

Ms. Gadba asked how the additional homes would impact the sound and quality from the music in the park events.

Commissioner Hunt asked the anticipated length of construction.

Emily Becker, M/I Homes, replied that would be market driven.

Commissioner Van Scoy asked if there is any thought for off-site parking available for the construction crew.

Senior Planner Anderson replied that only a portion of the block would be final platted and therefore the western half of the block would be readily available for the workers to utilize. He stated that the area is also surrounded by public roads that have on-street parking available.

Commissioner Van Scoy noted the comments related to traffic compliance and asked the response of the City.

Senior Planner Anderson replied that if there are issues of that nature, the residents should continue to call the Police. He stated that staff will also share the comments with public safety and perhaps patrols or temporary signage could be used to curb that behavior.

Commissioner Bauer commented that there are safety issues that were brought forward but that is not a design flaw but an issue of compliance. He noted that issue is not unique to that neighborhood as he experiences that in his neighborhood as well. He stated that is more of an issue of enforcement.

Commissioner Hunt asked if there would be a traffic volume that would trigger a roundabout type of improvement.

Senior Planner Anderson replied that he would not think a local road would meet the thresholds for that type of improvement.

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

A roll call vote was performed:

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

Motion Carried.

Chairperson Gengler closed the public hearing at 7:36 p.m.

Commission Business

Motion by Commissioner Hunt, seconded by Commissioner Van Scoy, to recommend that City Council approve the Preliminary Plat, contingent upon compliance with staff's review comments.

A roll call vote was performed:

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

Motion Carried.

7. COMMISSION BUSINESS

7.01: Driveway Discussion

Presentation

Planning Manager Larson presented the Staff Report stating that at the July 23rd City Council meeting, the Council discussed the side yard setback requirements of residential driveways and the process for applying for a variance, should a property owner request one. The City Council requested that the Commission review the regulations and determine if a variance process could be simplified. He stated that staff recommends leaving the existing driveway rules and variance procedures in place.

Commission Business

Chairperson Gengler asked if the Commission is being asked to consider the five-foot side yard setback, the variance process, or both.

Planning Manager Larson replied that would be both. He explained that the Council was interested in making the variance process easier for applicants, but that must be done through a public hearing process, therefore the option then would be to change the regulation if that were desired.

Chairperson Gengler referenced the side yard setbacks for other communities and received confirmation that those were all for single-family homes. She referenced the communities where the setback is a range and states depending and asked for clarification.

Planning Manager Larson replied that Blaine has a few different single-family zoning districts and Columbia Heights it depends on the year the lot was platted.

Chairperson Gengler referenced cities that have a zero setback and asked if both structures could be built to the property line.

Planning Manager Larson clarified that these setbacks are just for driveways, not for structures.

Commissioner Bauer recognized the concerns within the staff report about reduced setbacks to be legitimate. He referenced a comment of a Councilmember that perhaps neighbors just work it out together and noted that while that would seem to be an ideal situation, that is not always possible. He stated that one neighbor may agree to the situation, but the next neighbor may not agree to that situation. He also commented that snow removal is an issue without a setback. He stated that he would prefer to leave the setback as is and the variance process can be used for those desiring a lesser setback.

Commissioner Peters stated that perhaps the initial construction of the driveway would be five feet but if adjustments need to be made, it could be reduced to three feet.

Planning Manager Larson stated that it would seem that side yard setback should then just be three feet, rather than requiring five feet and then it could be reduced a month later.

Commissioner Van Scoy asked where a fence would go between two properties, specifically whether that can be placed on the property line or whether it must be set back.

Planning Manager Larson replied that the Code requires the fence to be on your own side of the property line.

Commissioner Van Scoy commented that he also supports leaving the regulation as is and continue to review deviations through the variance process. He commented that there logically needs to be space between driveways for vehicle doors to open, snow removal, and should someone want a fence.

Commissioner Heineman stated that if someone buys an acre and if five feet is taken from the perimeter that is essentially a ten percent reduction of the property size. He stated that if the issue is snow removal, that is essentially treating a problem before it arises. He stated that people could push snow to the other side of their driveway. He recognized that he may be in the minority on this issue. He stated that although he would not recommend someone put their driveway zero feet from their property line, someone should be able to if they wanted.

Commissioner Hunt stated that he could see keeping the variance process the same but could also support a reduction from five feet. He stated that perhaps the setback is reduced to one foot as that would allow for the placement of a fence if that were desired in the future.

Planning Manager Larson commented that a five-foot setback tends to be common in early subdivisions built in the 1970s and on to allow for drainage to flow between the properties and away from the homes.

Chairperson Gengler commented that the cases they heard at the last meeting were different and specific and could not recall a lot of requests of this nature that the Commission has considered in the past, therefore this would seem to be fixing an issue that is not widespread. She stated that she would also prefer to keep the regulation and variance process as it is.

8. COMMISSION / STAFF INPUT

Planning Manager Larson provided an update on planning related matters.

Senior Planner Anderson noted the upcoming Fall Recycling Event in September and the Fix It Clinic in October.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Bauer, seconded by Commissioner Peters, to adjourn the meeting.

A roll call vote was performed:

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

Motion Carried.

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Todd Larson
Planning Manager

ATTEST:

Abdi Sahal
Planning Assistant

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.