



# CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Richfield, Minnesota

## Joint City Council, Planning Commission, and HRA Work Session

### May 10, 2022

<b>CALL TO ORDER</b>
----------------------

The work session was called to order by Mayor Pro Tempore Supple at 5:45 p.m. in the Bartholomew Room.

Council Members Present: Mary Supple, Mayor Pro Tempore; Simon Trautmann (5:47 p.m.); Sean Hayford O'leary; and Ben Whalen

Council Members Absent: Maria Regan Gonzalez, Mayor

Planning Commission Members Present: James Rudolph, Chair; Brett Stursa; Brendan Kennealy; and Ben Surma

Planning Commission Members Absent: Kathryn Quam and Eddie Holmwig-Johnson

HRA Members Present: Mary Supple, Chair; Lee Ohnesorge; and Gordon Hanson

HRA Members Absent: Maria Regan Gonzalez; Erin Vrieze Daniels

Staff Present: Katie Rodriguez, City Manager; Melissa Poehlman, Community Development Director; Chris Swanson, Management Analyst; and Kari Sinning, City Clerk

Others Present: Lance Bernard and Bryan Harjes, Representatives of HKGi and Tim Pabst, Representative of Olin 1 LLC

<b>ITEM #1</b>	<b>EXPLORE REDEVELOPMENT GOALS AND DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PROPERTY AT 1600, 1620, AND 1710 - 78TH STREET EAST</b>
----------------	---

Mayor Pro Tempore Supple explained that Mayor Regan Gonzalez is out of town and introduced the topic and Community Development Director Poehlman. Director Poehlman gave a brief overview of the staff report and introduced Lance Bernard and Bryan Harjes from HKGi.

Lance Bernard presented an overview of the site, the ideas that are being explored, the potential site opportunities and challenges, and some prospective examples such as hotels, entertainment developments, and medical/office spaces.

Council Member Hayford Oleary asked about the ownership of the frontage road right-of-way that is dead ended. Lance Bernard stated that he was unsure but it would be great to utilize that space if it was moved further towards the tunnel. Director Poehlman guessed that it is owned by MnDOT but would follow up. Council Member Hayford Oleary also asked if they have been in contact or thought about the needs of the Jaguar dealership. Bryan Harjes shared that it was a topic of discussion which could help the dealership and the property in question. Council Member Hayford Oleary also asked where the retaining walls start to lower towards the tunnel and Director Poehlman showed the locations on the map. Council Member Hayford Oleary stated that this will hopefully be a gateway to Richfield and it would be great to incorporate those into the area much like Lake Street and Hiawatha Ave.

Council Member Whalen asked about the zoning and use of the site to the northeast that is vacant. Director Poehlman stated that the site is not available for redevelopment and City Manager Rodriguez stated that it must be used for a public use.

Mayor Pro Tempore asked about pedestrian access. Lance Bernard stated that dependent upon the chosen use of the site but they still want to make sure that this is a walkable environment. Director Poehlman explained that there will be pedestrian walkways from Richfield Parkway.

Council Member Trautmann thanked them for the explanation of the site to the northeast and expressed urges to utilize the northeast site to complement the redevelopment. Lance Bernard appreciated the comment as it helps them and potential developers to understand the goals and aspirations of the area.

Lance Bernard shared example ideas and asked the attendees for input that would be in line with their goals of the area. Example ideas included entertainment spaces (bowling, pickleball courts, mini golf, iFly), restaurants with rooftop access to watch the planes, hotels with banquet halls, and medical office uses.

Commissioner Hanson asked about the capacity for a hybrid model (hotel and entertainment). Lance Bernard stated that it might be difficult to incorporate that model into the 3.7 acre site; however, a smaller entertainment like Pinstripes or iFly might work with a hotel. Lance Bernard stated that the specific design is dependent upon the developer and the goal of the work session is to gauge the goals of area.

Commissioner Kennealy was drawn more towards indoor entertainment uses that could be used year round. Lance stated that they were also drawn more towards entertainment uses as it has a regional draw and local asset.

Planning Commission Chair Rudolph expressed interest in entertainment purposes that would be able to be used all year round and promoted a Pinstripes-like atmosphere that could even include curling. Lance Bernard asked the collective group regarding the year round use and Bryan Harjes stated that indoor uses might be more appealing due to travelers from the airport during spring break or the holidays.

Council Member Whalen stated that this site should be a destination to travelers but most importantly be accessible and affordable to the neighborhood. He stated support for indoor entertainment due to the noise of the airport. He strongly encouraged incorporation of neighboring community use; perhaps a new home for Benefactor Brewing of which Director Poehlman has already been in contact with Benefactor about the site.

Council Member Hayford Oleary shared that this site might be a little out of the way for active social activities as it is kind of boxed in with the dealerships and the residential area but he would be okay with it if the visibility to the freeway brings value to the area.

Council Member Trautmann shared concerns to placing an entertainment site that could be vacant for years with the downturn of the economy and promoted the thought of having a medical office due to the proximity to the airport as a surgical destination. He also promoted the idea of a mid-sized athletic facility that could double as meeting spaces.

Commissioner Stursa expressed consideration of the local neighborhood specifically activities for older kids.

Bryan Harjes asked about the identity of the neighborhood and how Washington Park to the north, the vacant lot to the northeast and this development could collaborate. Director Poehlman shared that the recreation department would like more parking due to the well-attended events at the pickleball courts and soccer fields. Council Member Whalen added that indoor pickleball would be a hit because people are already used to going to the area for that and also strongly urged against a strip mall on this site.

Mayor Pro Tempore Supple shared her aversion to a hotel that could create minimum wage jobs and would like to see opportunities to provide jobs that pay more than minimum wage such as a medical office. She echoed the comment of Commissioner Stursa to provide activities for teens and would support a mixed use. She also shared an idea of a global farmer's market since the area is a food desert.

Commissioner Kennealy shared a brainstorming idea of a concert venue.

Commissioner Ohneosorge stressed the importance of green spaces and shared an idea of a long-term care facility.

Council Member Whalen liked Mayor Pro Tempore Supple's idea of a global market and wondered about indoor playgrounds. Bryan Harjes mentioned something like the Brookview Backyard Indoor Playground in Golden Valley that also has meeting spaces.

Council Member Trautmann also agreed with a cultural or global market that could be a regional draw.

Commissioner Surma mentioned that with the underpass, transit opportunities would be more accessible.

The presenters summarized the prior discussion stating that this site should be integrated into the neighborhood and provide some sort of entertainment value to the community. Bryan Harjes asked for thoughts on how to balance intensity of use and density due to the major interstates and the visibility and the neighborhood aspect.

Council Member Hayford Oleary shared thoughts that the site should have a minimum height that is as close to the maximum height possible for more visibility from the interstate and as little surface parking as possible.

Commissioner Hanson echoed the comment of Council Member Hayford Oleary that the site should be used for high intensive use.

Council Member Trautmann asked if parking could be a use of the non-developed parcel to the northeast. City Manager Rodriguez said that it would be.

Commissioner Kennealy asked for clarification of access from the interstate. Director Poehlman stated that if someone was on I-494, they would need to exit at 24<sup>th</sup> Ave or Portland Ave and reiterated that this should be a destination that would attract people to want to go there purposefully.

Council Member Whalen echoed the comment of high intensive use and possibly stepping it down as it gets closer to the park.

Chair Rudolph asked if the limited access to the site could restrict the type developments. Bryan Harjes stated that with the underpass and the connection to the Mall of America there shouldn't be a problem with that and the site will continue to be a high visibility area; the main difficulty will be how to balance the connection to the neighborhood.

Director Poehlman asked Tim Pabst if there was anything he wanted to add. Tim Pabst stated that they would like to continue to be involved with the project if they are able. Director Poehlman stated that there will be a memorial honor to the Mathwig family that donated the site.

Director Poehlman summarized the work session and the next steps. HGKi gathered feedback from the work session and will meet with the City again for more concrete ideas. She stated that if developers that wonder about the property that the general community would want to see something that provides benefits to the community, provides higher paying jobs, and provides visibility that draws people into Richfield.

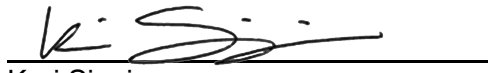
Mayor Pro Tempore Supple thanked Tim Pabst for the donation and HGKi for coming to share their ideas.


**ADJOURNMENT**

The work session was adjourned by unanimous consent at 6:49 p.m.

Date Approved: May 24, 2022

  
Mary B. Supple  
Mayor Pro Tempore

  
Kari Sinning  
City Clerk

  
Katie Rodriguez  
City Manager