



Planning Commission Minutes

September 28, 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Kathryn Quam, Commissioners Bryan Pynn, Sean Hayford Oleary, Peter Lavin, and James Rudolph, Susan Rosenberg, Brett Stursa

MEMBERS ABSENT: none

STAFF PRESENT: Melissa Poehlman, Asst. Director of Community Development
Nellie Jerome, Assistant Planner

OTHERS PRESENT: Christine and Renato Kirsnik for Public Hearing Item #1; Paul Lynch, PLH & Associates, and Charlie Bird, for Public Hearing Item #2

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

M/Rudolph, S/Lavin to approve the minutes of the July 27, 2020, meeting.

Motion carried: 7-0

OPEN FORUM

No members of the public spoke, no comments received.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

M/Lavin, S/Pynn to approve the agenda.

Motion carried: 7-0

PUBLIC HEARINGS

ITEM #1

Public hearing to consider a request for variance for a driveway wider than the allowed maximum at 2015 Forest Drive. Assistant Planner Nellie Jerome read the staff report for this variance application. Commissioners discussed hardships of bringing the driveway into compliance, and the requirements for granting a variance. The applicants were present and stated that this was a mistake made by their contractor. Public comments were supportive of granting the variance as it does not alter the character of the neighborhood. Assistant Community Development Director Melissa Poehlman explained that the requirements for granting a variance are dictated by the State, and the Planning Commission decides if those requirements are met.

M/ Rudolph, S/ Pynn to close the public hearing.

Motion carried: 7-0

M/Rudolph, S/Lavin to approve the variance for a driveway wider than the allowed maximum at 2015 Forest Drive, finding that the required conditions for variance approval are met.

Commissioner Lavin discussed difficulties of removing the excess driveway pavement.

Motion failed: 3-4 (nay votes from Quam, Rosenberg, Stursa, and Hayford-Oleary)

M/Stursa, S/Rosenberg to approve the resolution denying a variance for a driveway wider than the allowed maximum at 2015 Forest Drive.

Commissioners discussed the

Motion carried: 4-3 (nay votes from Rudolph, Lavin, and Pynn)

ITEM #2

Consideration of an amendment to approve final development plans for a mixed use development at 101 66th Street East (66th Street and 1st Avenue). The proposed amendment reduces commercial space and increases the number of apartments in the project. Assistant Community Development Director Poehlman presented the staff report for the project known as the Emi. The developer is requesting to reduce ground floor commercial space and provide affordable housing units instead.

Commissioners discussed parking ratio minimums and maximums, and staff explained that the current proposal is above the parking maximums for both residential and commercial spaces. Staff clarified that they were recommending that the developer remove a row of twelve spaces and keep it as pervious landscaping, with the option to add parking if needed in the future. The developer was present to answer questions. The developer proposed bringing the parking ratio under the maximum by removing 5 parking stalls instead of 12.

Written comments that were received before the meeting were given to Commissioners. During the meeting, callers brought up concerns with unpleasant construction disturbance with projects like this, the size of the building, neighborhood traffic and parking, trash around the project site, and a want for more inclusion of community members in the planning process. An adjacent neighbor noted that he preferred that the additional 12 parking stalls on the south side be kept as landscaping.

Assistant Community Development Director Melissa Poehlman addressed the written comments and concerns from callers, noting that the façade is of high-quality materials and that the proposal being considered tonight will reduce traffic and parking with the reduction of commercial space. She added that the choice of environmental friendly landscape maintenance will be up to the developer. Commissioners requested that this project be completed soon.

M/ Pynn, S/ Quam to close the public hearing.

Motion carried: 7-0

Commissioners discussed design changes in approved projects and what threshold of changes would require a return to the Planning Commission for re-approval. Assistant Community Development Director Poehlman explained that she can bring the concern up at the City Council meeting.

M/ Pynn, S/ Hayford Oleary to approve recommended action with the condition that the number of parking stalls is limited to 67 total.

Motion carried: 6-1 (nay vote from Rudolph)

LIAISON REPORTS

Community Services Advisory Commission: playgrounds are going in at Washington, Taft, and Madison, and the dog park is nearly ready.

City Council: no report

Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA): no report

Richfield School Board: no report

Transportation Commission: Nothing to report.

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Chamber of Commerce: (vacant)

CITY PLANNER'S REPORT

Nothing to report

ADJOURNMENT

The next regular meeting will be Monday, October 26, 2020, at 7pm on Webex online meeting platform.

M/Pynn, S/Hayford Oleary to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried: 7-0

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at **9:25 p.m.**


James Rudolph (Dec 8, 2020 18:17 CST)

Planning Commission Secretary




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Final Audit Report

2020-12-09

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