



PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES Richfield, Minnesota

Regular Planning Commission Meeting

October 23, 2023

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Holmwig-Johnson at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Planning Commissioners Present: Brendan Kennealy, Eddie Holmwig-Johnson, Benjamin Surma, James Rudolph, Matt Taraldsen, and Brett Stursa

Commissioners Excused: Cole Hooey

Staff Present: Sam Crosby, Planner II; Ruby Villa, Assistant Planner; Melissa Poehlman, Community Development Director

Others Present: Paul Mellblom, MSR Design; Kevin Walker, Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative

See item #3 for additional public hearing speakers.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

M/Rudolph, S/Surma, to approve the minutes of the Regular Planning Commission meeting of August 28, 2023.

Motion carried: 6-0.

OPEN FORUM

Chair Holmwig-Johnson reviewed the options to participate in the open forum. There were no callers or speakers.

ITEM #1	APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA
----------------	-------------------------------

M/Stursa, S/Taraldsen, to approve the agenda.

Motion carried: 6-0.

ITEM #2	CONSIDERATION OF A MOTION TO RESCHEDULE THE DECEMBER PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING TO DECEMBER 11, 2023.
----------------	---

Planner Villa presented staff report No 14.

M/Stursa, S/Surma, to reschedule the December Planning Commission meeting to December 11, 2023.

Motion carried: 6-0.

ITEM #3	CONDUCT A PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FOR A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT, REZONING, PRELIMINARY PLAT, SITE PLAN APPROVAL AND TWO VARIANCES FOR 38 UNITS OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING AT 6613-6625 PORTLAND AVENUE SOUTH. ALSO, CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION FINDING THAT THE SALE OF THIS LAND FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THIS PROJECT WILL BE CONSISTENT WITH THE PROPOSED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT.
----------------	--

Planner Crosby presented Staff Report No.15.

Paul Mellblom, Architect, and representative for Beacon Interfaith Housing, gave a brief overview of the proposed site plan layout.

Kevin Walker, Vice President of Housing at Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative, spoke on the history and mission of Beacon as an organization.

Chair Holmvgig-Johnson opened the public hearing.

Scott Dahlquist, 6913 11th Ave, expressed his support for Beacon and spoke in favor of the requests.

Hope Hutchinson, Minneapolis resident and Reverend of Richfield United Methodist Church, spoke in favor of the requests.

Megan Webster, 7027 3rd Ave, spoke in favor of the requests.

Martin DuBois, a former resident of affordable housing, spoke in favor of the requests.

Donna Drummond, 6438 Knox Ave, spoke in favor of the requests.

Allison Linsmeyer, 6815 5th Ave, spoke in favor of the requests.

Sara Ochoa, 6612 Oakland Ave S, spoke in opposition to the requests and inquired about the proportion of housing units that will be dedicated to non-neuro-diverse individuals.

Luis De la Riva Gasga, 6624 Portland Ave, spoke in opposition to the requests and development of the subject property. Gasga also inquired about the proportion of housing units that will be considered affordable, and what it means for housing units to be “affordable.”

Sara, De la Riva Brunzell, 6624 Portland Ave, spoke in opposition to the requests and development of the subject property.

Kristina Kessel, 6324 Sheridan Ave, spoke in favor of the requests.

Judy Moe, 6920 5th Ave, spoke in favor of the requests.

M/Stursa, S/Taraldsen, to close the public hearing.

Motion carried: 6-0.

In response to Commissioner Stursa, Crosby addressed concerns regarding affordability of housing units in the development, as well as targeted populations. Crosby clarified that all housing units will be affordable, with two different rates of affordability: 30% AMI, and 50% AMI. Crosby also explained that Area Median Income is determined by the Metropolitan Council, based on information from HUD.

Walker stated that 19 of the 38 housing units will be set aside for individuals with neuro-diverse conditions. The other 19 units do not have a targeted population and will only be set aside as affordable units up to 50% AMI. In response to Commissioner Stursa, Walker also explained that, for the Twin Cities region in 2023, 30% AMI is \$26,100 and 50% AMI is \$43,500.

Commissioner Rudolph expressed his concerns regarding variance procedures and required findings. Crosby clarified that although the roundabout construction occurred in 2008, the current proposed re-platting of the property is what would cause the infringement on the front setback and necessitates one of the variances.

Commissioner Kennealy invited the applicant to address concerns regarding staffing on site and parking. Walker referred to staff report No. 15, as well as the parking analysis provided by Beacon. Walker stated that national data indicates 16% car ownership at 50% AMI. Walker also stated that the amount of parking proposed is adequate based on comparable Beacon developments with similar affordability levels. Regarding staffing, Walker commented that Beacon estimates five full-time staff members at the proposed site.

In response to Commissioner Taraldsen, Walker provided details about service providers.

In response to Commissioner Rudolph, Walker provided details about estimated rents and subsidies.

Commissioner Stursa inquired about the history of the 10% transit reduction policy and expiration of variance approvals. Crosby clarified that, if approved, the Comprehensive Plan amendment and rezoning would “run with the land” and remain, even if the proposal was ultimately abandoned. In contrast, the variances would not remain and would be void.

Community Development Director Poehlman commented on the history of the 10% transit reduction policy. Poehlman also clarified that, as the current owner, the HRA has authorized Beacon to apply for the variance requests.

In response to Commissioner Surma, Crosby addressed the project's assumed guarantee of affordability, based on funding requirements. Poehlman added that the affordability portion of the project would be guaranteed through the development agreement with the HRA.

In response to Commissioner Kennealy, Crosby stated that there have been multiple opportunities for the public to address questions and concerns to the applicant, including a neighborhood meeting that was held in May of this year. There is a large sign that has been posted on the property for several weeks, with contact information for the developer, and staff contact information was also made available through mail and newspaper notices.

After further discussion regarding the required findings of the setback variance,

M/Stursa, S/Taraldsen, to recommend approval of a resolution amending the Comprehensive Plan designation of the properties located at 6613-6625 Portland Avenue South from Medium-Density Residential to High-Density Residential.

Motion carried: 6-0

M/Stursa, S/Surma, to recommend approval of a resolution rezoning the properties located at 6613-6625 Portland Avenue South from MR-2 Multi-Family Residential to MU-N Mixed Use-Neighborhood.

Motion carried: 6-0

M/Stursa, S/Taraldsen, to recommend approval of the preliminary plat, proposed site plan, and two variances for 38 units of affordable housing at 6613-6625 Portland Avenue South.

Motion carried: 6-0

M/Stursa, S/Surma, to recommend approval of a resolution find that the sale of 6613-6625 Portland Avenue South for the construction of 38 units of affordable housing will be consistent with the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment.

Motion carried: 6-0

ITEM #4	LIAISON REPORTS
----------------	------------------------

- Community Services Commission: Commissioner Rudolph had no report.
- City Council: Commissioner Kennealy had no report.
- Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA): Commissioner Stursa reported that John Young has joined the HRA. The HRA also authorized the sale of 6626 14th Avenue and approved a resolution supporting the velodrome project with Minnesota Cycling Center.

- Richfield School Board: Chair Holmwig-Johnson reported that at its most recent meeting, the school board adopted changes to the hazing and harassment policies. They also discussed updates that the last legislature took, as well as conducted closed labor negotiations. Also, Richfield Athletics has partnered with Holy Angels Academy to add girls' lacrosse to the high school.
- Transportation Commission: Commissioner Surma reported that the Transportation Commission held two meetings to discuss Hennepin County's proposed reconstruction of Nicollet Avenue between 66th Street and 77th Street. Construction is estimated to begin in 2026. Hennepin County is beginning public outreach and engagement efforts.
- Chamber of Commerce: Commissioner Hooey was absent.
- Sustainability Commission: Commissioner Taraldsen reported that the city received a \$550,000 grant from the USDA to remove trees in boulevards infested with Emerald Ash Borer. There was also an audit of organic waste in the city and there was found to be less than 1% contamination. October 11th was the opening of the new Taft Bike Park.

ITEM #5	CITY PLANNER'S REPORT
----------------	------------------------------

Planner Crosby had no report.

ITEM #6	NEXT MEETING TIME AND LOCATION
----------------	---------------------------------------

The next regular meeting is on Monday, November 27, 2023, at 7:00 pm in the Council Chambers.

ITEM #7	ADJOURNMENT
----------------	--------------------

M/Rudolph, S/Surma to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried: 6-0 and the meeting was adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Submitted by:



Ruby Villa
Assistant Planner



Brett Stursa
Planning Commission Secretary