



Planning Commission Minutes

April 22, 2019

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairperson Allysén Hoberg, Commissioners Sean Hayford O'Leary, Susan Rosenberg, Peter Lavin, James Rudolph, and Kathryn Quam

MEMBERS ABSENT: Commissioner Pynn

STAFF PRESENT: Matt Brillhart, Associate Planner
Melissa Poehlman, Assistant Community Development Director

OTHERS PRESENT: Applicant, David Fong, 6433 Penn Ave (Tii Cup)
Applicant, Cole Montgomery, 6220 Clinton Ave

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

M/Rudolph, S/Rosenberg to approve the minutes of the February 25, 2018 meeting.
Motion carried: 6-0

OPEN FORUM

No members of the public spoke.

ITEM #1 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

M/Quam, S/Roseberg to approve the agenda.
Motion carried: 6-0

PUBLIC HEARING(S)

ITEM #2

19-VAR-02, 19-SP-01 – Consideration of a request for site plan approval and a variance for a restaurant at 6433 Penn Avenue S.

Assistant Director Melissa Poehlman presented the staff report.

Commissioners Lavin and Rudolph expressed concerns regarding the availability of parking and suggested removing the landscaping on the north side to accommodate more parking spaces. Poehlman responded that doing so would instead require variances to impervious surface and landscaping requirements, and that staff's preference is to leave the landscaping in place, which is indicated on the site plan as future proof of parking space, if necessary.

Commissioner Hayford O'Leary inquired with staff about the process if parking is found to be inadequate. Poehlman explained that if the applicant deems that parking is inadequate, they would return to the Commission for a variance from impervious surface requirements, to remove the landscaping.

In response to Chair Hoberg, Poehlman confirmed that staff's recommendation is to not remove any landscaping and expressed the need to consider how removing the landscaping could impact the neighboring property's foundation.

M/Rosenberg, S/Rudolph to close the public hearing.
Motion carried: 6-0

April 22, 2019

M/Rosenberg, S/Hayford Oleary to approve the site plan and variance for a restaurant at 6433 Penn Avenue S.

Commissioner Quam stated that the variance request from 15 to 13 parking spaces is relatively small and they don't have the data suggesting it won't be enough. She further stated opposition to removing greenspace unnecessarily and expressed support for the project.

Commissioner Hayford Oleary concurred with Commissioner Quam and expressed support for the project. He further clarified that while staff may have made recommendations to the applicant, they are merely recommending approval of what the applicant has brought forth.

Commissioner Lavin stated that he is in favor of the business but will be voting against the proposal because he does not support the parking variance.

Commissioner Rosenberg expressed support for the project and stated that this is the type of business that they want to see coming to the Penn Avenue corridor.

Motion carried: 4-2 (Rudolph & Lavin opposed)

ITEM #3

19-VAR-03 – Consideration of a request for a variance to allow a second curb cut for a driveway at 6220 Clinton Avenue S.

Associate Planner Matt Brillhart presented the staff report.

Commissioner Quam inquired if there were any drawbacks to granting the variance. Brillhart stated that the distance of the existing curb cut to the intersection would be a concern at busier intersections, but it is not as important in this unique location.

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

Motion carried: 6-0

M/Rosenberg, S/Rudolph to approve a variance to allow a second curb cut for a driveway at 6220 Clinton Avenue S.

Motion carried: 6-0

ITEM #4

Public Hearing to consider amendments to Zoning Code Section 537: Mixed Use Districts and Section 512: Districts

Associate Planner Matt Brillhart presented the staff report

Commissioner Hayford Oleary requested to allow the Planning Commission to be more engaged through work sessions for future amendments. Commissioner Rudolph concurred. Poehlman expressed that staff can accommodate that request and clarified that the proposed changes were seen as housekeeping items to make the code more consistent.

In response to Commissioner Rudolph, Poehlman responded that the zoning code is always required to match the comprehensive plan. Brillhart further clarified that no properties are being rezoned as part of this amendment.

April 22, 2019

Commissioners briefly discussed the items in Tables 1 and 2, before moving the discussion to Table 3.

Commissioner Lavin confirmed that the intent was to make the parking requirements for Mixed Use consistent with the High-Density Residential parking requirements. He inquired about what would trigger a request for a variance on parking requirements. Poehlman described the process if a development proposed less parking than is required. Commissioner Lavin expressed concern over lowering the parking requirements and inquired if there were any proposed projects that would benefit from this change. Poehlman responded that there are no applications and any project in the conceptual phase has not provided parking numbers yet.

In response to Commissioner Rudolph, Poehlman clarified that Plaza 66 is a commercial development, not mixed-use and explained the process for determining parking requirements for that type of development. Commissioner Rudolph stated that Plaza 66 does not have adequate parking and expressed concern over lowering the parking requirements in the mixed use district. Poehlman clarified that the proposed changes are to residential parking requirements, not commercial.

Commissioner Hayford Oleary stated that current parking requirements are high and stated that developers want to provide adequate parking to attract residents. He expressed support for lowering the requirement to 1.25 spaces per unit and thought that it provided flexibility to developers while also avoiding the need for variances. Commissioner Lavin responded that he prefers to have higher requirements and put the onus on the developer to lower them. Commissioner Hayford Oleary responded that he does not think it's in the city's best interest to have more parking than necessary.

Chair Hoberg commented that Richfield does seem to provide excessive parking and that it warrants reconsidering the requirements. Brillhart clarified for Commissioner Quam that the parking reduction applies to the residential portion of the mixed use district and explained the range of uses in the district that would have different requirements. Poehlman further clarified how parking requirements vary depending on the type of development and that this amendment will not change the parking requirements for commercial uses in the Mixed Use District.

Commissioner Hayford Oleary commented that the parking requirements are determined by unit rather than bedroom. He further stated that many of the new developments are studios and one-bedrooms and that these households may be less likely to have cars. Commissioner Lavin disagreed, stating that the city is trying to get more multi-bedroom apartments, which could result in more cars. He expressed opposition for lowering the parking requirement to 1.25 spaces per unit. Poehlman provided context for how parking requirements have been determined over the past 8 to 10 years and further stated that staff has not received parking complaints at residential developments.

Brillhart stated that the proposed requirement is the minimum, and that most of the developments approved over the past few years were in the 1.25 to 1.3 range.

Commissioner Hayford Oleary stated that he hoped for agreement on 1.25 spaces per unit since that requirement is consistent with the high density residential district, and stated that he would also support the further reduction for proximity to transit service, but is open to discussion.

April 22, 2019

M/Hayford Oleary, S/Rudolph to close the public hearing.

Motion carried: 6-0

M/Lavin, S/Rudolph to approve Table 1 and 2 as presented.

Poehlman clarified that there are also text amendments outside of the tables and suggested to move to split the question to approve all but Table 3.

M/Lavin, S/Rudolph to amend the motion to split the question to consider approval of all recommended changes in the amendment with the exception of those in Table 3.

Motion carried: 6-0

M/Quam, S/Rudolph to recommend approval of all recommended changes in the amendment with the exception of table 3.

Motion carried: 5-1 (Lavin opposed)

M/Hayford Oleary, S/Rosenberg to recommend approval of amending residential parking requirements in Table 3 to 1.25 spaces per unit with a 10% reduction for proximity to transit.

Motion tied: 3-3 (Lavin, Rudolph, Quam opposed)

Poehlman stated that she couldn't recall a tie vote and provided guidance that another motion could be made or the Commission could let the tie vote stand with no recommendation to the Council on Table 3. Chair Hoberg stated that she felt the tie reflected the lack of consensus on the Commission.

Commissioner Lavin noted that he may have mistakenly voted 'no' to the previous motion and clarified that he was supportive of all changes except those in Table 3.

In response to Commissioner Quam, Commissioner Hayford Oleary confirmed that without another motion, they would not be making any recommendation to the City Council on Table 3.

OTHER BUSINESS

ITEM #5

PC Letter #3 – Review the Planning Commission Bylaws (continued from February 25, 2019 meeting)

Associate Planner Matt Brillhart presented the staff report.

Commissioner Quam thanked staff for looking into the issue and withdrew her motion, but restated her concern over suspending the rules. Brillhart gave an example of what part of the rules was suspended when the 10 minute recess was given at a previous public hearing.

Commissioner Hayford Oleary inquired about suspending the rules in regard to holding a public hearing. Poehlman explained what requirements are guided by State Statute and what the city is legally required to provide applicants. There was further discussion over what was in the purview of the Commission to uphold. Clarification was given for Commissioner Hoberg regarding the tie vote that just occurred.

No motion was required.

April 22, 2019

LIAISON REPORTS

Community Services Advisory Commission: No report

City Council: No report

HRA: No report

Richfield School Board: Commissioner Rudolph updated the Commission on school projects.

Transportation Commission: Commissioner Hayford Oleary noted the start of construction on Lyndale as well as the upcoming open house.

Chamber of Commerce: No report

CITY PLANNER'S REPORT

Poehlman noted the time and location of the open house for the Lunds apartment development as well as the housing proposal at the former City Garage site, and reminded the Commission about the upcoming Citizen Planner training session.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at **8:37 p.m.**

Motion carried: 6-0

Planning Commission Secretary