



# Planning Commission Minutes

October 28, 2019

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairperson Allysén Hoberg, Commissioners Bryan Pynn, Sean Hayford Oleary, Peter Lavin, James Rudolph, Susan Rosenberg and Kathryn Quam

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Brad Lis, Lunds Real Estate  
See attached sign-in sheet.

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

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

M/Hayford Oleary, S/Pynn to approve the minutes of the August 26, 2019 meeting.

*Motion carried: 7-0*

## OPEN FORUM

No members of the public spoke.

## ITEM #1 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

M/Quam, S/Rudolph to approve the agenda.

*Motion carried: 7-0*

## PUBLIC HEARINGS

### ITEM #2

#### **19-VAR-07 – Consideration of a request for a variance from sign code requirements at Southdale Square (2900 66th St W).**

Associate Planner Matt Brillhart presented the staff report.

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

*Motion carried: 7-0*

M/Hayford Oleary, S/Rosenberg to approve a resolution granting a variance from sign code requirements at Southdale Square.

*Motion carried: 7-0*

### ITEM #3

#### **19-SP-02, 19-VAR-06 – Consideration of a request for site plan approval and variances for a proposal to construct a 127-unit apartment building on a portion of the Lunds property at 6200 & 6228 Penn Avenue.**

Brillhart presented the staff report.

Brad Lis of Lunds introduced the project, and responded to Commissioners' questions about the parking study, building setback, traffic access configuration, and pedestrian access routes.

Poehlman stated that the plans and proposed traffic access changes were under review by Hennepin County and would be finalized prior to City Council consideration.

Speakers at the public hearing (sign-in sheet attached) stated concerns with traffic impacts on Penn Avenue, 64th Street, and the southerly access route over Fraser's property, as well as potential impacts on property values.

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

*Motion carried: 7-0*

M/Rudolph, S/Pynn to recommend approval of the site plan and variances for a 127-unit apartment building on Lunds property at 6200 & 6228 Penn Avenue.

M/Hayford Oleary, S/Hoberg to amend the recommended action to include a stipulation requiring a direct east-west pedestrian connection from the apartment building entrance to Penn Avenue that meets minimum ADA requirements.

*Amendment carried: 7-0*

*Main motion carried: 7-0*

#### **ITEM #4**

##### **19-CUP-10 – Consideration of a request for a conditional use permit to allow small wireless facilities in the right-of-way at 6920 Penn Avenue.**

Brillhart presented the staff report.

No one spoke at the public hearing.

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

*Motion carried: 7-0*

Responding to a number of questions from the Commission, Poehlman stated that the State Legislature and Federal government have tied cities' hands and limited the ability to block these facilities from coming in. In terms of health impacts, the World Health Organization does not currently recognize electromagnetic hypersensitivity as a medical diagnosis. Poehlman further stated that the Planning Commission's discretion in this CUP process was largely limited to questions of neighborhood character and aesthetics, by potentially regulating the design and quantity/concentration of pole locations. Based on the projected spacing between antennas of 1-2 blocks, city staff was not proposing additional spacing requirements at this time.

M/Hayford Oleary, S/Pynn to recommend approval of a conditional use permit to allow small wireless facilities in the right-of-way at 6920 Penn Avenue.

*Motion carried: 6-1 (Rudolph opposed)*

##### **19-CUP-11 – Cancel public hearing for 7108 Lyndale Avenue.**

M/Pynn, S/Hayford Oleary to cancel the public hearing for 7108 Lyndale Avenue.

*Motion carried: 7-0*

#### **ITEM #5**

##### **19-APUD-05 – Continue a public hearing to consider an amendment to the Richfield-Bloomington Honda Planned Unit Development to November 25, 2019.**

M/Hoberg, S/Quam to continue the public hearing.

*Motion carried: 7-0*

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

##### **ITEM #6**

##### **Consideration of a motion rescheduling the December Planning Commission meeting to December 9, 2019.**

M/Hoberg, S/Quam to reschedule the December meeting.

*Motion carried: 7-0*

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**LIAISON REPORTS**

Community Services Advisory Commission: No report.

City Council: No report.

HRA: No report.

School Board: Elections on November 5.

Transportation Commission: No report.

Chamber of Commerce: No report.

**CITY PLANNER'S REPORT**

Poehlman informed the Commission that there would be a work session on November 18 to review proposals for the HRA-owned property at 6501 Penn Ave; as well as an open house on November 14 to discuss right-of-way improvements in the Penn Avenue corridor. Brillhart shared that Metro Transit would be holding open houses to discuss potential changes to local bus service that connects with the future Orange Line rapid bus.

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at **9:07 p.m.**

*Motion carried: 7-0*



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Planning Commission Secretary



**From:** Sean Hayford Oleary <sdho@sdho.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, October 25, 2019 9:28 AM  
**To:** Melissa Poehlman; Matt Brillhart  
**Subject:** Lunds site plan concerns

Hey Melissa and Matt:

I am excited to see that the Lunds proposal moving forward, but am pretty concerned about the site plan.

The very large setback the developer is proposing creates unique issues for pedestrian access to the apartment building. Were the building within 20' as normally required, there'd be a very limited area pedestrians have to navigate. As it stands, the front door appears to be about 250 feet from the Penn sidewalk.

### **Routing concerns**

Unfortunately, the proposed pedestrian circulation makes pedestrians travel even further than that. If traveling from the north — such as, from the closest bus stop — pedestrians are expected to navigate more than 500' to travel that 250' distance.

Of course, this is unrealistic. As was the case with the circuitous pedestrian routing at Village Shores, people just walk through the parking lot — negating the safety benefits and welcoming aspects of creating a pedestrian connection at all.

### **Accessibility concerns**

In addition to the routing, the sidewalk the developer proposes would be heavily subject to obstructions that would make its usability and ADA compliance variable on a daily or even hourly basis.

A primary part of the idea is using the sidewalk in front of the store as part of the route. This sidewalk is frequently crowded with merchandise and other obstructions (see [Google Street view](#)). This is very common at all grocery stores, and even if the developer commits to maintaining an open width — that's subject to change and constant babysitting by staff if a manager who isn't familiar with this condition uses it for merchandise display.

In the new portion of interior sidewalk, they are proposing a very narrow north-south sidewalk adjacent to nose-in car parking. This creates an inherent issue with car hoods — the accessibility of the sidewalk is dependent on how drivers happened to have parked that day.

Here is an example from Onyx Edina, where this is truly an every-single-day problem:



**Summary of problems**

Here is my summary of the problems with accessing the front door from the bus stop via the designated path:



**Suggested alternative**

Obviously the best-case scenario would be the building along Penn. However, given the proposed location of the building, I think the next best option would be a direct, wide, and unobstructed path that follows the northern drive aisle:



