

**REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE  
VADNAIS HEIGHTS PLANNING COMMISSION  
MARCH 27, 2018**

**OPEN MEETING**

Chairperson Joseph Stumph called the Regular Meeting of the Vadnais Heights Planning Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. on March 27, 2018 and welcomed new Planning Commissioner Jerry Moynagh.

Commissioner Moynagh shared he has lived and been involved in the community for 27 years and said he appreciated the opportunity to work with the City of Vadnais Heights.

**ROLL CALL**

Joseph Stumph, Chairperson	Present
Dave Anderson	Present
Linda Bigelbach	Present
Edward Caillier	Present
Brian Carnes	Present
Evan Cordes	Present
Martin Jokinen	Present
Curt Cooper, First Alternate	Present
Jerry Moynagh, Second Alternate	Present

Also present: Nolan Wall, Planning/Community Development Director and Jeff Melcoch, Cable Producer.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Upon motion by Commissioner Carnes, seconded by Commissioner Cordes, it was

“RESOLVED, to approve the March 27, 2018, Regular Meeting Agenda.”

Ayes – 7                      Nays – 0

The motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Upon motion by Commissioner Jokinen, seconded by Commissioner Cordes, it was

“RESOLVED, to approve the minutes of the February 27, 2018, Regular Meeting.”

Ayes – 7                      Nays – 0

The motion carried.

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Chairperson Stumph opened the floor to the public at 7:05 p.m. for questions and comments on items not on the agenda.

No one wished to address the Commission, Chairperson Stumph closed the meeting to the public at 7:05 p.m.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

A. Case 18-002: Spire Credit Union. Conditional Use Permit and Site Plan Review at 940 East County Road E.

Planning/Community Development Director Wall described this item and provided a presentation with background information regarding the Conditional Use Permit and Site Plan Review for Spire Credit Union, 940 East County Road E. He said the applicant/property owner is requesting approvals to construct an approximately 5,000-square foot credit union building on the property. As part of the request they are requesting flexibility from several city code standards as part of the POD process.

Commissioner Cordes referred to the trash receptacles near Wendy's and confirmed the applicant was not planning to include any outside Spire such as the area by the ATM. Planning/Community Development Director Wall said that would be an operations decision as staff are not recommending trash receptacles be included based on bank use not generating as much trash as a fast food restaurant.

Commissioner Moynagh inquired about the obligation the City and/or the applicant have for shared access for the driveway and asked what might happen if the agreement with Walmart were to change in the future. Planning/Community Development Director Wall indicated the property boundary lines and the main shared driveway are on Walmart's property and each of the businesses have separate agreements with Walmart for access into the property which carries through to the Park and Ride. This is not a City issue.

Commissioner Caillier inquired if the proposed navy-blue exterior color fits with the City's conditions. Planning/Community Development Director Wall said the colors were more of a collection of the tone of the building and will have various browns, tans, etc. but that this is the applicant's brand and the intent of the City Center regulations is not to restrict specific colors.

Planning/Community Development Director Wall commented on the proposed signage that includes three wall signs of various heights throughout the building, a 65-foot tall pylon sign of 180 square feet as allowed by Code in the City Center District, and a monument sign that replaces the existing Wendy's sign of 40 square feet and 8 feet 8 inches tall. Wall said the wall sign requires flexibility from one wall sign per building to one sign on each elevation, some of which are 15 feet off the ground which is higher than outlined in Code. He said the pylon sign has an electronic message center component and is a dynamic sign by definition, adding a Conditional Use Permit was required as part of the

request. He said the rationale for supporting flexibility with the signage is consistent with what is in the area and shared a matrix of all flexibility required as part of the development allowed under the Planned Unit Development overlay district. Wall stated staff recommends approval of the requests based on findings of fact outlined in the staff report, with conditions.

Chairperson Stumph opened the public hearing at 7:43 p.m.

No one wished to address the Commission, Chairperson Stumph closed the public hearing at 7:43 p.m.

Upon motion by Commissioner Cordes, seconded by Commissioner Anderson, it was

“RESOLVED, to recommend approval of the Conditional Use Permit and Site Plan for subject site, as presented by staff, based on the following findings of fact:

1. The proposed use is permitted within the City Center District, and consistent with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive and City Center Plans.
2. The proposed development will achieve a majority of the Planned Unit Development Overlay District’s general requirements and standards.
3. Flexibility from certain applicable City Code standards, as part of the Planned Unit Development Overlay process, is justified and allows for reasonable development of the subject property without negatively affecting the surrounding area.

Subject to the following conditions as amended, adding one trash receptacle near the sidewalk based on the rationale that the nearby businesses of Walmart, Wendy’s and KFC will result in the need for one more trash receptacle.

Commissioner Cordes amended his motion to add an exterior trash container. Seconded by Commissioner Anderson.

1. A Development Agreement shall be entered into by the applicant and all others with interests in the subject property, with the City, to be filed at the applicant’s cost with the offices of the Ramsey County Recorder and/or Register of Titles, prior to issuance of a Building Permit.
2. A Building Permit shall be submitted for administrative review/approval, prior to commencement of any construction activities on the subject property.
3. Alternative options to reduce potential traffic movement conflicts on the site, including additional signage, striping, medians, landscape islands, and one-way designation, should be explored by the applicant and any revisions to the applicable plans are included in the Development Agreement.
4. Reasonable accommodations shall be made as part of the proposed development for bicycle/personal travel storage on-site, including, but not limited to, installation of a bike rack(s) in an appropriate location(s) and

revisions to the applicable plans are included in the Development Agreement.

5. Ground-mounted mechanical/electrical units, or similar equipment, shall be adequately screened by solid fencing and/or landscaping and revisions to the applicable plans are included in the Development Agreement.
6. The Landscape Plan shall be revised to include additional coniferous plantings to demonstrate compliance with the applicable minimum requirements and revisions to the applicable plans are included in the Development Agreement.
7. Existing vegetation proposed to be preserved shall be compliant with the applicable requirements of Chapter 20.020(2)(5)(h) of the City Code.
8. Written permission shall be obtained, and provided to the City, from the Metropolitan Council/Metro Transit for the proposed light pole on their property located on the south side of the existing driveway accessing the site, prior to installation.
9. The dynamic sign component of the proposed pylon sign shall be operated in compliance with the applicable City Code standards.
10. A Sign Permit(s) shall be submitted for administrative review/approval, prior to any signage being installed on the subject property.
11. Compliance with the Fire Chief’s memorandum, dated 21, 2018.
12. Compliance with the Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization’s memorandum, dated February 26, 2018.
13. Compliance with the City Engineer/Director of Public Service memorandum, dated February 28, 2018.
14. The applicant shall provide one additional exterior trash receptacle.

Ayes – 7                      Nays – 0

The motion carried.

B. Case 18-005: Vanguard Construction. Conditional Use Permit Amendment, Variances, and Site Plan Review at 3501 Vadnais Center Drive.

Planning/Community Development Director Wall described this item and provided a presentation with background information. He said the applicant is requesting the following approvals to construct a 6,000-square foot one-story office building on the subject property; Conditional Use Permit (CUP) Amendment for a freestanding sign in the City Center Zoning District; variances from building setback and pylon sign location standards; and Site Plan review for commercial development.

Commissioner Jokinen asked if the building profile would obscure the pylon sign for the Country Inn and Suites. Planning/Community Development Director Wall this will be addressed in the variance request and that the building could be pushed a little to the south but said it was a significant distance away from the building and further to the north and west. Country Inn and Suites was notified of this building proposal.

Planning/Community Development Director Wall stated staff recommends approval of the requests based on findings of fact outlined in the staff report, with conditions. He noted a condition has been included, if approved, that the pylon sign not exceed the height of the building.

Jeff Benedict, Vanguard Construction, stated that the building will likely include only one tenant. He said that Great Waters wants to purchase the property, but that Vanguard will build it. He noted that the pylon sign is important to Great Waters.

Chairperson Stumph opened the public hearing at 8:14 p.m.

No one wished to address the Commission, Chairperson Stumph closed the public hearing at 8:14 p.m.

Commissioner Carnes said the site was approved in 2006 without a pylon sign and understood the applicant's need for a pylon sign and said he would support the request. Commissioner Caillier agreed.

Upon motion by Commissioner Carnes, seconded by Commissioner Jokinen, it was

“RESOLVED, to recommend approval of the approval of the Conditional Use Permit amendment, variances, and Site Plan review for the subject site, as presented by staff, based on the following findings of fact:

1. The proposed office use is permitted within the City Center District, consistent with the goals/policies of the Comprehensive and City Center Plans, compliant with the applicable conditional use permit and site plan review standards and is consistent with the previous approval.
2. The existing development was designed and approved for two office buildings on separate properties that share parking and access; both uses are permitted in the City Center District and are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
3. The proposed interior lot line building setback is consistent with the variance request approved as part of the original development plan, which has since expired due to inactivity.
4. The subject property is part of a unified development plan that has already been constructed around it and the entire site is constrained by the existing shared access and easements, as well as the surrounding freeway and wetlands.
5. As proposed, and previously-approved, the development was designed to have

a unified look by placing the buildings closer to each other, which still allows for adequate access and space for landscaping/maintenance.

6. Not honoring the previous interior lot line building setback variance, by requiring the proposed building to be moved further north or reducing the footprint, would actually alter the essential character of the area since the site improvements have already been constructed in compliance with the previously-approved plans.
7. The City Code intends to allow taller pylon signs in a limited area within the City Center District to increase the visibility of uses surrounding the I-35E/County Road E interchange, but past interpretations and former standards appear to have allowed similar signage in the area that might now be considered existing non-conformities.
8. Both the existing and proposed buildings are one-story, gabled-roof designs that limits potential wall signs facing the freeway to the cornices and the subject property has no other visible roadway frontage to utilize a monument sign, due to the existing access conditions.
9. The proposed pylon sign is shorter than surrounding pylon signs that may be been approved under either different standards or interpretations and will not alter the essential character of the area.

And subject to the following conditions:

1. A Development Agreement Amendment shall be entered into by the applicant, and all others with interests in the subject property, with the City, to be filed at the applicant's cost with the offices of the Ramsey County Recorder and/or Register of Titles, prior to issuance of a Building Permit.
2. A Building Permit shall be submitted for administrative review/approval, prior to commencement of any construction activities on the subject property.
3. Ground-mounted mechanical/electrical units, or similar equipment, shall be adequately screened by solid fencing and/or landscaping and revisions to the applicable plans are included in the Development Agreement Amendment.
4. Existing vegetation proposed to be preserved shall be compliant with the applicable requirements of Chapter 20.020(2)(5)(h) of the City Code.
5. The proposed pylon sign shall be no taller than the peak of the proposed building's roof and revisions to the applicable plans are included in the Development Agreement.
6. A Sign Permit(s) shall be submitted for administrative review/approval, prior to any signage being installed on the subject property.
7. Compliance with the Fire Chief's memorandum, dated February 21, 2018.

8. Compliance with the City Engineer/Director of Public Service memorandum, dated February 28, 2018.

Ayes – 7

Nays – 0

The motion carried.

Commissioner Cordes clarified that a Planning Commission alternate may make a motion but cannot vote.

**NEW BUSINESS**

None.

**OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**REPORTS**

A. Council Liaison

None.

B. Planning Commissioners

Commissioner Cordes announced the birth of his son two weeks ago, Lucius Vincent Cordes. The Commission congratulated Commissioner Cordes.

Commissioner Bigelbach requested the Commission be updated on the result of planning items forwarded to the City Council.

Commissioner Jokinen inquired about the White Bear Lake traffic signal improvement informational meeting for the Byerly's/Lund's proposal on Centerville Road north of Highway 96. Planning/Community Development Director Wall said staff will be attending this meeting. Commissioner Cordes said the City needs to monitor this project to ensure traffic impacts do not occur to Vadnais Heights residents.

Commissioner Carnes inquired about the appeal regarding water levels in White Bear Lake. Planning/Community Development Director said he would have the City Administrator update the Commission on the status and noted that the Council did vote to appeal the DNR process of enforcing the administration rules which are being done as a result of the lawsuit.

Commissioner Bigelbach referred to recent discussions regarding the Council liaison, and asked what is the requirement for a liaison now that we are not having any public hearings. Planning/Community Development Director Wall said staff conveyed the Planning Commission's request for increased partnership and collaboration with the City Council through the Council liaison and he understands that it is status quo. Commissioner

Bigelbach stressed the importance of Council liaison attendance now that there is a requirement that the Planning Commission hold the public hearings. Planning/Community Development Director Wall he did not believe there had been any conclusions made and noted Councilmembers are assigned a number of other committees and suggested when new Council appointments are made that the Commission share again the importance of Council liaison attendance. Commissioner Bigelbach noted the public hearing process has changed placing the burden on the Planning Commission. Wall said he will convey the Commission's input to the City Administrator to raise it with the City Council.

**C. Planning and Engineering Staff**

Planning/Community Development Director Wall summarized past projects stating Midwest ENT was approved and aligned with staff's recommendation but noted the City Council approved the developer's signage requests allowing service signs on the building but did amend some size requirements. He said the applicant changed the building design, not the footprint and said that this will be a nice-looking building.

Planning/Community Development Director Wall said the HealthEast building was progressing quickly and that a majority of the Commission's work has been reviewing City Code.

Planning/Community Development Director Wall recapped that amendments have been made and approved by the Council to the residential and commercial code, City Center District, office and other zoning districts, that will be included in the new online City Code through Municode. He said the Commission will be reviewing the signage code next and that Municode will allow for diagrams for better understanding. He noted the final draft is moving forward and once adopted will allow future code amendments to be implemented much easier.

Planning/Community Development Director Wall said the next Planning Commission meeting will be held on April 24 and will be preceded with the final open house for the 2040 Comprehensive Plan process from 5:00-7:00 p.m. He said they will be sharing the open house notification in the local newspaper and social media and will also be attending some spring time community events. The goal is to have the public hearing in May or June for preliminary approval and then submit it to the Metropolitan Council by year end.

**NEXT MEETING**

The next Planning Commission meeting will be held on April 24, 2018.

**ADJOURN MEETING**

Upon motion by Commissioner Cordes, seconded by Commissioner Carnes, the meeting was adjourned at 8:36 p.m.