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3 **REGULAR MEETING**  
4 **OF THE**  
5 **VADNAIS HEIGHTS PLANNING COMMISSION**  
6 **APRIL 23, 2019**

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11 **OPEN MEETING**

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13 Chairperson Evan Cordes called the Regular Meeting of the Vadnais Heights Planning  
14 Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. on April 23, 2019.

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22 **ROLL CALL**

23 Evan Cordes, Chairperson	Present
24 Dave Anderson	Absent
25 Linda Bigelbach	Present
26 Edward Caillier	Present
27 Brian Carnes	Present
28 Martin Jokinen, Vice Chair	Present
29 Joseph Stumph	Present
30 Curt Cooper, First Alternate	Present (voting member)
31 Jerry Moynagh, Second Alternate	Present

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33 Also present: Patricia Youker, City Council Liaison; Nolan Wall, Planning/Community  
34 Development Director; Jesse Farrell, Public Works Director/City Engineer; Jeff Melcoch,  
35 Cable Producer.

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43 **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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“RESOLVED, to approve the April 23, 2019, Regular Meeting Agenda.”

Ayes – 7                      Nays – 0

The motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

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

“RESOLVED, to approve the minutes of the March 26, 2019, Regular Meeting as presented.”

Ayes – 6                      Nays – 0                      Abstain – 1 (Bigelbach)

The motion carried.

49 **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

50

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

53

54 No one wished to address the Commission. Chairperson Cordes closed the meeting to the  
55 public at 7:05 p.m.

56

57 **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

58

59 A. Case 19-003: Luther Company, LLLP – Preliminary Plat, Site Plan and Variances  
60 at 3494, 3500 and 3516 U.S. Highway 61

61

62 Planning/Community Development Director Wall said the applicant is requesting  
63 preliminary plat and site plan approvals and variances to construct a new automobile  
64 dealership on the subject property. A portion of the proposed development lies within the  
65 City of Gem Lake. Gem Lake is conducting a separate review process of the  
66 development. Chapter 38, Article II, Section 38-39(a) of the City Code requires site plan  
67 approval for new commercial developments. The proposed use is a permitted/accessory  
68 use in the Commercial Three (C-3) District and the application includes variance requests  
69 from certain applicable setback standards. The City is using its quasi-judicial authority  
70 when considering action on zoning requests and has limited discretion; a determination  
71 regarding whether or not the request meets the applicable code standards is required.

72

73 Wall stated that Luther Company, LLLP is proposing to construct a new automobile  
74 dealership on the subject property, which currently contains undeveloped land and a  
75 single-family dwelling. The proposed development includes a 37,375-square-foot  
76 building with a showroom, offices, automobile repair services, wash facility, and off-  
77 street parking lot/storage area. The proposed development site encompasses three  
78 existing properties, two of which are in Vadnais Heights and one in Gem Lake. The site  
79 plan and variance requests in this case only apply to the portion of the proposed  
80 development within the City limits, as Gem Lake will be processing their own zoning  
81 approvals. The preliminary plat contains the entire proposed development site within both  
82 cities and the subject property within Vadnais Heights is vacant/undeveloped and borders  
83 three separate jurisdictions; City of Gem Lake to the north, City of White Bear Lake to  
84 the south, and White Bear Township to the east. Surrounding existing uses include a  
85 single-family residence to the north, an automobile dealership and wetland to the south, a  
86 BNSF Railway line to the east, and U.S. Highway 61 to the west and would have no  
87 significant traffic impacts if constructed.

88

89 Wall explained the site plan includes 613 parking stalls, which exceeds the minimum  
90 required number of spaces but is compliant with drive widths. He noted site circulation  
91 plans would be reviewed as part of the building permit then shared a rendering of the  
92 building. He outlined the landscape plan and said some seeding would be done in areas  
93 due to grading which staff support. He said the landscape plan provides adequate  
94 coverage and includes a variety of trees and the grading plan includes some retaining wall  
95 structures. Wall reviewed the variance requests for building setback, parking lot and

96 circulation drive and said a traffic signal would be installed and a frontage road would be  
97 constructed as part of the project.

98  
99 Commissioner Jokinen asked when Gem Lake’s consideration was scheduled and  
100 inquired about wastewater impacts from the vehicle wash area. Wall said Gem Lake  
101 would consider their item on May 7 and asked that the applicant respond to the  
102 wastewater impacts from the vehicle wash system. Public Works Director Farrell  
103 responded that Luther has very high standards for environmental considerations within  
104 the dealership for items such as oil waste and wastewater impacts.

105  
106 Commissioner Cooper inquired about the actual footage in the right-of-way. Wall said  
107 footage varied throughout the site but meets City requirements.

108  
109 Linda McGinty, Luther Companies, thanked staff for their assistance in this process,  
110 stating that it has been very complicated due to the multiple jurisdictions. She said this  
111 building will be a brand new image for Cadillac with only two others like it in the  
112 country and that they were excited to bring this to the Twin Cities. She confirmed their  
113 requirements regarding environmental impacts and said that they have flammable waste  
114 traps, which are required, and that their buildings are regularly cleaned and maintained.

115  
116 Steve Sabraski, project engineer with Landform, provided further comment on Luther’s  
117 maintenance programs that Luther manages across the state, and said that they have a  
118 dedicated team which manages about 30 dealerships around the state. He said that the  
119 right-of-way is a 50 foot right-of-way from Highway 61 and varies to allow for longer  
120 stacking distance on Highway 61.

121  
122 Commissioner Jokinen commented about similar frontage for other dealerships and  
123 confirmed that the frontage road on this project would not be used for vehicle storage and  
124 asked if the applicant would be willing to include this as a condition of approval. Ms.  
125 McGinty agreed they would not use the frontage road for vehicle storage and said they  
126 would make allowances for transport vehicles and circulation but that it would not occur  
127 in the right-of-way. Mr. Sabraski said they would be open to including vehicle storage in  
128 the frontage road as a condition of approval if the Commission requires it.

129  
130 Chairperson Cordes opened the public hearing at 7:33 p.m.

131  
132 No one wished to address the Commission, Chairperson Cordes closed the public hearing  
133 at 7:33 p.m.

134  
135 Upon motion by Commissioner Jokinen, seconded by Commissioner Carnes, it was

136  
137 “RESOLVED, to recommend approval of the preliminary plat, site plan, and variance  
138 requests, based on the following findings of fact:

- 139  
140 1. The proposed use is permitted within the applicable zoning district and is  
141 compliant with the Comprehensive Plan.

- 142 2. The proposed use is compliant, or conditioned to be compliant as part of the  
143 building permit process, with all other applicable City Code standards not  
144 addressed in the variance request.
- 145 3. The right-of-way dedication and traffic signal installation serves a public purpose,  
146 but substantially reduces the subject property’s developable acreage, and justifies  
147 the proposed reduced building and parking lot setbacks.
- 148 4. The proposed building’s location at the front of the development site provides a  
149 visual barrier from the expansive parking/automobile storage area and creates a  
150 prominent architectural feature.
- 151 5. The proposed development site is within two municipalities and the location of  
152 the boundary line requires a parking lot setback variance to facilitate a functional  
153 site plan.
- 154 6. The surrounding area, and highway corridor, contains numerous automobile  
155 dealerships and the variance requests in this case will not cause any negative  
156 affects to its character.

157  
158 Subject to the following conditions:

- 159 1. The Gem Lake City Council approves the proposed development and any  
160 conditions of approval that require revisions to the applicable plans and/or plat are  
161 reviewed and approved by the Vadnais Heights City Council as part of the  
162 development agreement.
- 163 2. A development agreement between the applicant, and all others with interests in  
164 the subject property, shall be entered into with the City, to be recorded at the  
165 applicant’s cost with the offices of the Ramsey County Recorder and/or Register  
166 of Titles, prior to issuance of a building permit.
- 167 3. A building permit in compliance with all applicable code standards shall be  
168 submitted prior to commencement of any construction activities on the subject  
169 property, to be reviewed/approved administratively.
- 170 4. A sign permit in compliance with all applicable code standards shall be submitted  
171 prior to any sign(s) being installed on the subject property, to be  
172 reviewed/approved administratively.
- 173 5. The applicant shall pay the applicable park dedication fee, in lieu of land  
174 dedication, prior to the issuance of any permits for commencement of  
175 construction activities on the subject property.
- 176 6. The final design and specifications for all exterior building materials shall be  
177 compliant with the applicable code standards, to be reviewed/approved as part the  
178 development agreement.
- 179 7. The off-street parking lot and driveways shall be constructed and operated in  
180 compliance with the applicable code standards, to be reviewed/approved  
181 administratively as part of the building permit.
- 182 8. Retaining walls in excess of four (4) feet in height shall require engineering  
183 design, to be reviewed/approved administratively as part of the building permit.
- 184 9. Landscape plantings, including any existing vegetation proposed to be preserved,  
185 shall comply with all applicable code standards.
- 186 10. Roof-mounted mechanical units shall be of a low-profile variety and ground-  
187 mounted mechanical units/building utility areas shall be adequately screened by  
188 plant material and/or fencing and shall not obstruct fire department connections or  
189 hydrants, to be reviewed/approved administratively as part of the building permit.

- 190 11. Existing wells and/or on-site private sewage facilities on the subject property shall
- 191 be abandoned and or/removed in compliance with all applicable regulatory
- 192 standards and permit procedures.
- 193 12. The location and installation of any on-site gasoline/bulk storage of liquids shall
- 194 require a conditional use permit in compliance with all applicable agency permit
- 195 procedures, standards, and codes.
- 196 13. The location and design of any on-site security fencing and/or system shall be
- 197 constructed in compliance with all applicable zoning and fire code standards, to
- 198 be reviewed/approved administratively.
- 199 14. Drainage and utility easements of ten feet on the front yard and five feet on each
- 200 side yard shall be dedicated to the City, to be filed at the applicant’s cost with the
- 201 offices of the Ramsey County Recorder and/or Register of Titles, prior to issuance
- 202 of a building permit.
- 203 15. A final plat in compliance with all other applicable agency requirements shall be
- 204 submitted for staff review and City Council approval within two (2) years from
- 205 the date of approval of the preliminary plat, to be recorded at the applicant’s cost
- 206 with the offices of the Ramsey County Recorder and/or Register of Titles, prior to
- 207 the issuance of any permits for commencement of construction activities.
- 208 16. Compliance with the conditions included in the MnDOT letters, dated 03/07/2019
- 209 and 04/15/2019, respectively.
- 210 17. Compliance with the conditions included in the Fire Chief’s memorandum, dated
- 211 03/27/2019.
- 212 18. Compliance with the conditions included in the City Engineer/Public Service
- 213 Director’s memorandum, dated 04/18/2019.

214  
 215 Ayes – 7 Nays – 0  
 216

217 The motion carried.

218  
 219 B. Planning Staff Report – Case File 19-002: Planned Unit Development District  
 220 Amendments

221  
 222 Planning/Community Development Director Wall said staff recommend the Planning  
 223 Commission review the proposed amendments contained in Draft Ordinance 733 and  
 224 make a recommendation to the City Council. The proposed ordinance was reviewed in-  
 225 depth at the March meeting and preliminarily reviewed by the City Council. Wall  
 226 summarized the proposed revisions to the Draft Ordinance made following the March  
 227 meeting.

228  
 229 Commissioner Carnes inquired about Line 67 saying “generally consistent” with the  
 230 Comprehensive Plan parameters and said that allowed for too much leeway and asked if  
 231 the term should be changed to read “shall be consistent”. Wall stated the Comprehensive  
 232 Plan is a large document that contains a number of policies related to many scenarios and  
 233 could contain an unrelated policy inconsistent with a development proposal which would  
 234 not be the intent but suggested that the City Attorney review Lines 66-68 prior to final  
 235 approval by the City Council.

236  
 237 Chairperson Cordes opened the public hearing at 7:48 p.m.

238 No one wished to address the Commission, Chairperson Cordes closed the public hearing  
239 at 7:48 p.m.

240  
241 Upon motion by Commissioner Caillier, seconded by Commissioner Cooper, it was  
242

243 “RESOLVED, to recommend approval of Case 19-002, as written, An Ordinance  
244 Amending Chapter 38, Article III, Division 15 of the Zoning Code, Concerning the  
245 Planned Unit Development District.”

246  
247 Ayes – 7 Nays – 0  
248

249 The motion carried.  
250

251 **NEW BUSINESS**

252  
253 None.  
254

255 **OLD BUSINESS**

256  
257 A. Planning Commission Work Plan – 2019  
258

259 Planning/Community Development Director Wall summarized the final proposed 2019  
260 Planning Commission Work Plan that was discussed at a Council Workshop on April 16.  
261 He said that Chairperson Cordes and Commissioner Jokinen attended the Workshop to  
262 discuss the proposed Work Plan. Chairperson Cordes said the Council had a favorable  
263 review of the proposed Work Plan and that while there was no ranking of priorities, they  
264 suggested joint education elements be considered where appropriate.  
265

266 Wall said staff’s intent was to work on tasks over the next year and into 2020 and noted  
267 that the recent goal setting session with City Council led to prioritized tasks related to  
268 economic development, redevelopment and housing initiatives. He said the Planned Unit  
269 Development District goal has already been completed and a discussion was held  
270 regarding potential administrative approval for minor subdivisions of which the Council  
271 was supportive to streamline and make the process more efficient.  
272

273 Commissioner Caillier asked if documentation would be created around whatever action  
274 was taken. Wall said no formal action was needed this evening but the intent is to  
275 summarize the work plan and then work with the Commission on individual items which  
276 might include research, attending Council meetings, to build more of a collaboration.  
277

278 **GARCEAU CORNER TASK FORCE UPDATE**  
279

280 Planning/Community Development Director Wall said that staff are working to schedule  
281 the first meeting for the Garceau Corner Task Force. He said the City has hired a  
282 facilitator and appointed residents and other stakeholders to the Task Force. They hope  
283 to have the first meeting sometime in late May. He said that the first meeting would  
284 include a scope of work, introduction to the site, site tour, background, site  
285 contamination, history, and creation of context moving forward. He said the next two

286 meetings would include a review of potential residential and commercial uses and then a  
287 panel of developers to help understand impacts and obtain feedback on the current market  
288 and reuse of the buildings with the last meeting reserved to identify potential  
289 redevelopment scenarios and prioritize. He said the process would include regular  
290 updates on the webpage and should take approximately 5-6 months to complete.

291

292 **REPORTS**

293

294 A. Council Liaison

295

296 Council Liaison Youker gave an overview of the Council's Goal Setting session and that  
297 the Council is excited about next steps.

298

299 B. Planning Commissioners

300

301 None.

302

303 C. Staff

304

305 Planning/Community Development Director Wall introduced Public Works Director  
306 Jesse Farrell and asked him to share his background.

307

308 Public Works Director Farrell said he started at the City in December and has been busy  
309 working on street improvement projects including Buerkle Road. He shared his  
310 background, which included 10 years in the private sector with the last 10 years in the  
311 public sector at the Cities of St. Paul and White Bear Lake and said he was excited to be  
312 here.

313

314 Chairperson Cordes welcomed Public Works Director Farrell to the team.

315

316 Commissioner Caillier inquired about the status of the recent apartment project at  
317 Centerville Road/County Road F. Planning/Community Development Director Wall said  
318 the project was approved in December but that staff was still waiting on an approved  
319 development agreement which they hope to have sometime in May and that construction  
320 will follow that.

321

322 Planning/Community Development Director Wall updated the Commission on the  
323 Willow Ridge East project approved in 2017. He noted that they will begin construction  
324 this summer. He explained the delay was because the developer was waiting on federal  
325 low-income tax credits.

326

327 **NEXT MEETING**

328

329 The next Planning Commission meeting will be held on May 28, 2019.

330

331 **ADJOURN MEETING**

332

333 Upon motion by Commissioner Stumph, seconded by Commissioner Cooper the meeting  
334 was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

335

336 Respectfully submitted,

337

338 Cathy Sorensen, *TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*

APPROVED