

**REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
VADNAIS HEIGHTS PLANNING COMMISSION
MAY 22, 2018**

OPEN MEETING

Chairperson Joseph Stumph called the Regular Meeting of the Vadnais Heights Planning Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. on May 22, 2018.

ROLL CALL

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

Also present: Nolan Wall, Planning/Community Development Director; Jeff Melcoch, Cable Producer; Mary Matze, Consulting Planner, Landform; Alex Conzemius, Comprehensive Planning Consultant, Bolton & Menk.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

“RESOLVED, to approve the May 22, 2018, Regular Meeting Agenda.”

Ayes – 5 Nays – 0

The motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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

“RESOLVED, to approve the minutes of the April 24, 2018, Regular Meeting.”

Ayes – 5 Nays – 0

The motion carried.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Chairperson Stumph opened the floor to the public at 7:02 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 7:02 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Case 18-008: WD Partners. Conditional Use Permit Amendment and Site Plan Review at 850 County Road E (Walmart)

Planning/Community Development Director Wall introduced Mary Matze, Consulting Planner with Landform, to present the item.

Consulting Planner Matze described this item and provided a presentation with background information. She said the Walmart RE Trust is proposing to install an accessory parking area with a canopy that would allow customers that order goods online, to schedule a pick-up time and to receive their order from an associate who will bring the purchase to their vehicle. The existing Walmart store received approvals for a Special Use Permit and Site Plan in December 1991 and was constructed soon after. Since that time, Walmart has amended its Special Use Permit to accommodate changes in the market. These changes include tire, battery, and oil car maintenance facility expansion, garden center expansion, drive-thru pharmacy expansion, and additional small-vendor retailers within the store.

Consulting Planner Matze said the subject property is guided as “Vadnais Center” in the current Comprehensive Plan, the proposed conditional use is permitted within the applicable zoning district and is consistent with the goals and objectives in the Comprehensive Plan to continue the growth and enhancement of Vadnais Center as an attractive, multiple-use economic and civic hub of the community (LU-32). She said the Vadnais City Center Plan was originally adopted in 1988 and contained the guiding goals and objectives for the center of the City and included a number of development options and “Preferred Land Use Plan.” She stated that a task force developed a report in 2000 that produced a number of City Code amendments and adopted implementation measures, the most recent of which occurred in 2006. Consulting Planner Matze reviewed the proposed development is consistent with the outlined goals and objectives in the plan and said a sign permit would be required for directional signage Walmart is proposing to be installed on the canopy, a development agreement amendment created, and final grading and drainage plans would be reviewed as part of the building permit. She stated that staff recommends approval of the Conditional Use Permit Amendment and Site Plan Amendment at 850 County Road E (Walmart) request, based on the findings of fact, with conditions.

Commissioner Moynagh asked for further information regarding the delivery door. Consulting Planner Matze explained the delivery door would be a standard door and

painted orange along with the pavement paintings and that it will face the large fence and not be seen from the road.

Commissioner Moynagh commented that the south end of the building and proposed door would be seen from the road going into the site. Consulting Planner Matze said the intent was to clearly mark the area for people picking up orders and that the canopy was consistent with development and would cover the entryway and door.

Brian Lorenz, Walmart, said they had no issues with the outlined conditions and stated the orange door would be shaded from the canopy and not visible, adding the color is necessary to help clearly identify the pick-up location.

Chairperson Stumph opened the public hearing at 7:10 p.m. for comments on the Walmart proposal.

No one wished to address the Commission, Chairperson Stumph closed the public hearing at 7:10 p.m.

Commissioner Moynagh shared his appreciation for Walmart in the community but said he was in favor of the door matching the rest of the materials so there was consistency on the colors of the door as well as the canopy.

Chairperson Stumph said he understood the need to identify the door with a different color and that the canopy is a compromise since it was shield the door. He said the color was necessary for this activity and said he had no issue with the proposed color.

Planning/Community Development Director Wall said staff negotiated colors with the applicant and noted the landscape replacement was at a 1:1 ratio and have improved the parking area and landscape islands at the end of the lanes. He said this was clearly an improvement for the site and while staff pushed back on orange branding for other items, but with this proposal staff felt this was enough of a compromise as the door was in a less visible location and included minimal branding compared to the remainder of the site.

Commissioner Moynagh asked for clarification if the door would be seen from the road in between the medical facility and Walmart. Mr. Lorenz said the door should not be visible from off-site.

Commissioner Cooper said he understood the need for pull-up recognition similar to Target's pick-up area and was comfortable with the proposal.

Commissioner Moynagh agreed he was accepting of the proposal.

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

“RESOLVED, to recommend approval of the proposed Conditional Use Permit Amendment and Site Plan Review at 850 County Road E (Walmart) requests, 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.

Subject to the following conditions:

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. Color and architectural treatments on the canopy and new entry shall be consistent with approved plans. No other color changes have been reviewed or approved as part of this application.
3. A Building Permit shall be submitted for administrative review/approval, prior to commencement of any construction activities on the subject property.
4. No signage has been approved as part of the proposed requests in this case. All proposed signage must comply with the applicable sign standards of Chapter 24 and additional standards in Chapter 18 of the City Code. A Sign Permit(s) shall be submitted for administrative review/approval, prior to any signage being installed on the subject property.

Ayes – 5

Nays – 0

The motion carried.

Chairperson Stumph noted the Council would consider this request at their June 5, 2018, Council meeting.

B. Draft 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update

Planning/Community Development Director Wall described this item and provided a presentation with background information stating staff recommends the City Council authorize distribution of the draft 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update to affected jurisdictions and submission to the Metropolitan Council. He reviewed the request stating State Statute requires that the City conduct a public hearing prior to submitting the draft Plan to the Metropolitan Council for review. According to the City Code, public hearings concerning Comprehensive Plan Amendments are held before the Planning Commission, however, in order to promote transparency and awareness of this important process, another public hearing is also scheduled before the City Council.

He explained State law requires all cities, townships and counties in the seven-county metropolitan area update their Comprehensive Plans at least every ten years and that local plans must align with the Metropolitan Council's regional system plans related to highways, transit, airports, wastewater services, parks and open space. He said an updated plan must be submitted for Council review by December 31, 2018. He said that the City began the comprehensive planning process in the spring of 2017 and contracted with Bolton & Menk, Inc. to provide consulting services to prepare portions of the Plan.

Planning/Community Development Director Wall reviewed that the draft Plan contains elements reviewed by the Planning Commission and City Council over the last year and

includes Land Use, Water Resources, Housing, Transportation, Parks and Trails, Implementation, and Economic Competitiveness. He explained that the planning process included public engagement efforts to promote awareness and solicit feedback on the future of the community and included two open houses, a project website, paper and online surveys, and attendance at several community events including a waffle breakfast, Northeast Metro Expo, Heritage Days, and others. He said staff received an overwhelming response from the public on the importance of maintaining and expanding off-street trails in the community and that many ideas centered on this existing asset and opportunities for improvement and were encompassed in the draft Plan. He noted that overall, the response was positive concerning the outlook for the future of the community and as a result no major revisions were being proposed to the Plan. He stated upon adoption of the draft Plan by the City Council, the process requires that affected jurisdictions be provided up to six months to review and comment before submission to the Metropolitan Council. Wall said assuming the draft Plan is distributed for review before July 1, the City does not anticipate any issues meeting the December 31 submittal deadline.

Planning/Community Development Director reviewed the surrounding affected jurisdictions and outlined what a Comprehensive Plan did. He reviewed the process with the Metropolitan Council and said regional planning requires collaboration and outlines how wastewater services, parks, housing, and other elements are provided and explained the need to ensure that the City's Plan is consistent with regional plans. He said Vadnais Heights is a suburban community and stressed the importance of land use in relation to economic competitiveness, transportation, and water resources including supplying surface water and wastewater implementation.

Comprehensive Planning Consultant Conzemius explained how the City was asked to make land use decisions based on forecasts of population, households and employment. He reviewed the City's background data and shared that they are seeing a significant increase in employment in the City. He reviewed community designation, population, age distribution, race/ethnicity, income and employment and outlined significant areas of wetlands, overlay district and undeveloped land into perpetuity. He said housing is a predominate land use in the City and reviewed existing housing conditions, projected housing needs, and a housing implementation plan. Conzemius noted that parks and trails solicited the largest input during public engagement and reviewed regional corridors and community recreational facilities.

Planning/Community Development Director Wall said the City has a robust park and trail system already but adding in the regional system it is a wonderful amenity to the community and the Plan helps define how we can build on that asset to make it an even greater attraction in the City. He reviewed the regional corridors and outlined the inventory of existing and proposed future trail connections based on discussions with Council, Commissions, and community members, noting that the City currently lacks north/south connections and needs a trail on the south side of Vadnais Lake along Vadnais Boulevard that would take coordination and cooperation with Ramsey County. The County has indicated that they are willing to look at this trail connection in the future.

Conzemius reviewed the importance of economic competitiveness which is likely considered an optional element of the Plan. City Council and staff feel it's important to emphasize the economic competitiveness. The Plan identifies existing conditions in the community today and areas of commercial and industrial employment in the land use categories.

Planning/Community Development Director Wall highlighted the mix of employment opportunities which includes a large percentage of manufacturing in the City which is good, adding that the Vadnais Heights Economic Commission helps promotes City businesses.

Conzemius reviewed the transportation section of the Plan that includes existing conditions, roadway system, transit, bikes/pedestrians, autonomous vehicles, aviation, freight, and a healthy environment. In this section of the Plan, they have identified limited connections that could be made and may be desired to be made in the future. He said that the Plan also includes an analysis on autonomous vehicles and freight movement.

Planning/Community Development Director Wall reviewed water resources including public water supply, surface water and wastewater management. He said the City recognizes the balance of water resources and constraints with future development. The City also has another document that is prepared at least every 5 or 10 years on the surface water management plan that works with our watershed and engineering department. This plan is included in the draft Plan.

Planning/Community Development Director Wall reviewed the Plan's implementation program, official controls, housing implementation plan, capital improvements plan, and shared an implementation matrix that identified policies contained in the Plan and a plan of action. He noted that the City Council hearing is scheduled for Monday, June 4, and that following adoption of the draft Plan, affected jurisdictions will have six months to review it before submittal to the Metropolitan Council for review.

Commissioner Jokinen inquired what other cities have submitted their comprehensive plans for review. Planning/Community Development Director Wall said the City has received plans from St. Paul, North Oaks and Maplewood and that we are ahead of schedule and should easily meet the December 31 deadline.

Commissioner Moynagh asked if the Plan was still subject to change between now and the City Council meeting. Planning/Community Development Director Wall said no changes would be made after the Planning Commission's recommendation before being presented to Council.

Commissioner Cooper asked if the City's Plan has been shared with the Metropolitan Council yet. Planning/Community Development Director Wall said the Plan would be submitted to the Metropolitan Council once the six-month review period with the other jurisdictions has lapsed.

Conzemius noted school districts usually take the most time to review due to summer staffing.

Commissioner Moynagh asked when changes would become effective. Planning/Community Development Director Wall explained that while the zoning map has to be consistent with this Plan it would not change any zoning, and with regards to land uses, whatever is in this Plan would become effective upon adoption.

Commissioner Caillier inquired about which Plan elements had the biggest changes. Planning/Community Development Director Wall reviewed proposed future land use designations. Commissioner Cooper noted this review represents that there is approximately 13% left of land in the City available for development.

Planning/Community Development Director Wall said the entire community was notified of the public hearing through the City's official newspaper and that they tried to implement other public notice methods such as the City's website. He said property owners were notified of any proposed changes via letters which identified each property that was proposed to be changed. He said that Area 1 along south end of County Road D contains most of our high density use but was mischaracterized as medium density use.

Planning/Community Development Director Wall said Area 2 is on the south side of Centerville Road and east side of Edgerton Street and is one single property owned by one property owner and guided as a low density property even though its zoned commercial. He said staff was proposing to change this to a commercial use as it is undeveloped and does not lend itself to a residential use as it is boarded by two county roads and near a rail corridor. He said that this parcel may be tied into redevelopment with the Garceau property in the future. The property also has drainage concerns and could be part of future road configurations, adding that the property owners seems supportive of the proposed amendment.

Planning/Community Development Director Wall reviewed Area 3, a City-owned property located on the south side of Vadnais Lake Boulevard, east of the AFSA School Property. He said the parcel is currently guided as a Park and should be low density residential, adding the zoning currently is waterworks and while there are no plans to sell at this time it should be designated R-1 to allow for schools, parks, etc. He said the Council's goal was to remove some constraints for developing currently owned City property, if market dictates, but that currently no plans had been presented except for a possible interest by the County for a future trail around Vadnais Boulevard.

Planning/Community Development Director Wall reviewed Area 4 which has mixed use designations and is north of Vadnais Boulevard and between Rice Street and the Lake. He said the area will take significant site control and acquiring of properties by a single property owner which would allow more flexibility through a mixed-use land designation.

Planning/Community Development Director Wall said Area 5, Clover Inn, is guided as low density residential and currently functions as a commercial use and will continue to do so in the future. Staff propose changing it to commercial which recognizes existing conditions.

Planning/Community Development Director Wall said Area 6 includes a number of different properties within an attached townhouse development and is guided as low density residential now and staff are proposing that it be re-guided as medium density residential in the future. He said these properties were zoned PUD and while no future project was planned in this area, zoning would allow medium density residential uses. This is just a housekeeping change.

Chairperson Stumph thanked Planning/Community Development Director Wall and staff for their hard work with this project.

Chairperson Stumph opened the public hearing at 8:08 p.m.

Danny Kurkiewicz, teacher at the Academy for Sciences and Agriculture (AFSA) High School, shared concerns about Area 3, and the possible re-designation of the land near the school. He thanked the City for keeping the area natural for as long as they have and said the woods are an invaluable resource for hands-on, nature-based learning. He said he has used the area for taking his 9th grade biology classes on bird walks and for identifying animal tracks and tree species.

Alexi Landretti, freshman at AFSA High School, shared that he has attended AFSA for the past four years and has had the pleasure of gaining some unforgettable memories. He presented an 86-signature petition opposing changing the area and said it was an important learning environment for students and for Eagle Scout projects. He outlined environmental implications, destruction of animal habitats, and the need to invest in future generations of children.

Alex Tupper, junior at AFSA High School, said he really enjoys using this area to learn and understands that while changing the land use does not necessarily mean the area will be sold and redeveloped, he has concerns about rezoning the area and possible future development. He referred to his future Eagle Scout project to redevelop the trails, remove dangerous trees and adding plant identification markers.

Jason Lane, freshman at AFSA High School and avid nature lover, shared his concern with the future land use plan that could threaten the area that he cherishes so much. He said he wants to be a wildlife illustrator and conservationist and explained how he uses the area to view and photograph native and undisturbed wildflowers.

Rob Ciaciurt, 777 County Road D, referred to three properties in Area 1 and asked if the land use would allow for apartments and if each parcel individually are large enough for apartments. Planning/Community Development Director Wall said it depends as the parcels now contain small buildings but multi-family residential developers may look for as much land as possible to increase density while also allowing for parking and open space.

Mr. Ciaciurt explained he once wanted to do a commercial/residential in Area 1 but that the Council did not want to set a precedent for C-1 zoning because there were not many C-1 zoning areas then. He said he would like to know if his property is large enough for high-density use. Planning/Community Development Director Wall said 777 County

Road D in an area between Interstate 694 and County Road D and at .47 acres it is a small site on its own, but developments were just approved for the expansion of Willow Ridge East on smaller sites (1.3 acres). But at a half acre, he does not think a multi-family building could be developed on this site. Sikura said that because of the size of the lot, the argument used was that the area around it would support it. He noted the billboard property to the east and the cell phone property and 755 County Road D, could potentially be an opportunity for future combination of sites but constraints with cell tower and those billboards, flexibility within zoning is probably ultimately the way it can be developed with an unconventional zoning method.

Mr. Ciaciurt asked if someone could come in and buy the parcel for high density use. Planning/Community Development Director Wall said there was no action to rezone this property as part of Comprehensive Plan but if the market dictates, a zoning change to high density land use would be consistent to that change.

Peter Amble, AFSA High School, said one purpose for Area 3 not already mentioned is to help students recognize invasive plant species as it provides the best way to learn and this parcel is useful to educate the community in the future.

John Landretti, parent of AFSA students, shared his support of the students and underscored his appreciation for that stretch of the road around the lake near the woods and if rezoned for housing would change the aesthetics of the area and be a loss to the community.

Julie O'Leary, parent of a future student at AFSA, said she was pleased to see the students speaking at the Planning Commission meeting. She said rezoning would create undue stress in the student's minds and she said she would like to see a good faith effort to keep the current zoning in place by removing this change from consideration. She asked if the Planning Commission would consider taking this out of their motion and if the feedback from the community would change anything? Planning/Community Development Director Wall explained that the Plan is a policy document that staff uses to help implement the Plan and while the Planning Commission can make any recommendations to the draft Plan, including removal of this parcel, it ultimately is for the City Council to decide.

Mr. Lane shared a list of native species documented in this area since April, eighty-nine different species not including invasive species, which proves the students really use the tract of woodlands to learn.

As no one else wished to address the Commission, Chairperson Stumph closed the public hearing at 8:34 p.m. and brought it back to the Commission

Commissioner Caillier inquired about the proposed change near the high school and asked what the driving force is for this change. Planning/Community Development Director Wall said the area was discussed with Council and resulted from some housekeeping changes and identified changes to Rice Street. He said he does not recall that the reason is due to any pending project or the desire of the current Council to dispose of the property. While the property is currently zoned waterworks, it is not

utilized as a park. He said that low density residential zoning would still allow for a school, church, or park. He said he could not speak to the Council's original rationale and invited the students to share their concerns with the City Council at their June 4th meeting. Wall said if the Planning Commission feels that this should be discussed or considered by the City Council it should make it part of its recommendation.

Chairperson Stumph noted there is a considerable amount of investment in this property by the school and that it is also a stage for education and awareness and said that while he was not sure if the Council or staff were aware of the school's use of the property as a classroom, in light of this information, he would suggest amending the Plan to have the City Council consider removing this parcel from consideration.

Commissioner Cooper asked about the current land use designation. Planning/Community Development Director Wall said the current future land use designation for this property in the current land use plan, is park, and the existing land use for AFSA is designated as Public Institutional or Utility.

Commissioner Jokinen asked about uses for park land use designation. Planning/Community Development Director Wall said a future low density residential use designation would still allow the school to use the property as they have been.

Commissioner Moynagh asked if the Commission recommended no changes to the land use would that mean an amendment could be made in the future but it would be an amendment going forward, not today. Planning/Community Development Director Wall said if someone wanted to change the parcel it would require a land use and zoning change and public process would be used, adding that a future Council and market factors cannot be envisioned now might not prohibit future development but allow another step in the process.

Commissioner Moynagh congratulated the students and others for their comments, adding he recently attended AFSA's recognition event and complimented the students on their good presentations. He said he has a piece of property that backs up to another proposed change and based on the public feedback would be in favor of putting an amendment for changing this document for Council consideration.

Commissioner Jokinen said he would support keeping the designation of the parcel as park in the Plan moving forward for Council consideration.

Commissioner Caillier agreed with the students' comments and thanked them for attending and sharing the value of private open spaces. He said the change to future land use opens up possibilities of still using the area as a park or remaining as a non-developed area that creates value in reassessing certain properties for potential future use. He suggested any amendments to the proposal strongly encourage the City Council to value the parcel as an asset and recognize that use of the property has a significant impact on AFSA and that he supports the proposed change to the future land use with the caveat that Council value this parcel as a park.

Commissioner Cooper thanked the students and Boy Scouts for adopting this area as their own.

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

“RESOLVED, to recommend approval of Draft 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update request and recommend the City Council authorize distribution of the Draft 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update to affected jurisdictions and submission to the Metropolitan Council, with the consideration that the City-owned property known as Area 3 next to the AFSA remain as its current future land use designation.

Ayes – 4

Nays – 1 (Caillier)

The motion carried.

Chairperson Stumph thanked everyone for participating in the process and said he hoped Area 3 would remain as currently designated.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Public Hearing Guidelines

Planning/Community Development Director Wall said staff drafted revised Public Hearing guidelines after the discussion last month and subsequent discussion with the City Council. He reviewed the proposed guidelines for review and acceptance and noted one change included an introductory statement of the Planning Commission’s roles and duties to provide general guidance on what the Planning Commission is.

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

“RESOLVED, to recommend approval of the Public Hearing Guidelines as presented.”

Ayes – 5

Nays – 0

The motion carried.

REPORTS

A. Council Liaison

Council Liaison Urban was not present.

B. Planning Commissioners

None.

C. Staff

Planning/Community Development Director Wall shared that the Conditional Use Permit and Site Plan review for Bear Roofing and Exteriors at 1208 East County Road E was to go before the City Council but that staff shared concerns about current code enforcement issues and the need to address these issues before any approval occurred. He noted the issues were not addressed before the Council meeting, so the item has been tabled indefinitely until code enforcement issues have been addressed.

Planning/Community Development Director Wall thanked the Planning Commission and Bolton & Menk for their work on the Comprehensive Plan elements incorporated earlier as well as the public hearing guidelines. He said next month's agenda includes review of a 156-unit apartment complex at Centerville Road and County Road F as well as consideration for Planned Unit Development amendments for the Liberty Village development which would like to change the style of the approved dwelling units by including some two-story units. Wall thanked the Planning Commission again for their work on the Comprehensive Plan, noting while the process took a long time, it was a valuable process that involved direction from stakeholders and the Commission.

NEXT MEETING

The next Planning Commission meeting will be held on June 26, 2018.

ADJOURN MEETING

Upon motion by Chairperson Stumph, seconded by Commissioner Anderson, the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Cathy Sorensen
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.