

**REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE  
VADNAIS HEIGHTS PLANNING COMMISSION  
JANUARY 26, 2021**

**OPEN MEETING**

Chairperson Evan Cordes called the Regular Meeting of the Vadnais Heights Planning Commission to order at 7:02 p.m. on January 26, 2021.

**ROLL CALL**

Evan Cordes, Chairperson	Present
Linda Bigelbach	Absent
Edward Caillier	Present
Curt Cooper	Present
Martin Jokinen, Vice Chairperson	Present
Joseph Stumph	Present
Jerry Moynagh	Present
Terri Dresen, First Alternate	Present
VACANT, Second Alternate	N/A

Also present: Nolan Wall, Planning/Community Development Director; Jeff Melcoch, Cable Producer; and Council Liaison Steve Rogers.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

“RESOLVED, to approve the January 26, 2021, Regular Meeting Agenda as presented.”

Ayes – 7                      Nays – 0

The motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

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

Commissioner Moynagh referred to a correction needed on Line 272 that should show Commissioner Cooper made the statement.

“RESOLVED, to approve the minutes of the November 24, 2020, Regular Meeting as corrected.”

Ayes – 7                      Nays – 0

The motion carried.

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Chairperson Cordes opened the floor to the public at 7:06 p.m. for questions and comments on items not on the agenda.

As no one wished to address the Commission, Chairperson Cordes closed the meeting to the public at 7:06 p.m.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

A. Planning Case 20-023 – Five Star Mobile Estates, LP – Zoning Code Amendment for Residence Four District.

Planning/Community Development Director Wall provided a presentation with background information stating the applicant is proposing amendments to City Code Chapter 38, Article III, Division 5, concerning the Residence Four (R-4) District. The applicant owns and operates Five Star Mobile Estates, which is located on 36 acres in the southwest corner of the City, south of Vadnais Boulevard and north of Twin Lake Boulevard. The manufactured home park contains 250 home-sites under a license issued by Ramsey County and is the only property zoned Residence Four (R-4) in the City. Each home is privately-owned and the site is rented. The park is served by a private well, municipal sewer, and private streets. The park was originally developed in 1965 and fully developed by 1970. The applicant has owned the park since 1983. DRAFT Ordinance 748 contains staff's recommended amendments to the existing Code section, which is limited to setback standards. In effect, the ordinance brings local standards largely into conformance with State Statute and existing conditions in the park. The applicant's proposed amendments encompass standards outside of setbacks and address specific setback issues with several home-sites. Staff recommends drafting a Development Agreement that memorializes many of the existing conditions while acknowledging existing non-conformities and allowing certain flexibilities for specific home-sites. The applicable setback standards addressed in this case are as follows. Staff does not recommend the 3-foot separation distance from manufactured homes parked end-to-end, even though it is permitted by State Statute. Local ordinances can be stricter and, in staff's opinion, the 3 feet does not allow adequate fire or maintenance separation. In addition, staff does not recommend codifying the 3-foot setback for only the southern property boundary line. Rather, flexibility can be addressed in the Development Agreement and only applicable to specified home-sites according to a map. This would allow for new homes to replace existing homes without requiring variances, as has been past practice, but not memorialized appropriately. The applicant has expressed concurrence with staff's recommended ordinance amendments, conditioned on a Development Agreement that provides for limited flexibility and additional specific standards applicable to the park's operations.

Commissioner Caillier asked about impacts of not recommending the 3-foot separation. Wall responded this direction would not affect the project and could occur with 10 feet on all sides but any new unit would have to be compliant with the new standards. He said staff does not want to include as part of the Development Agreement as we know these are

existing conditions and are comfortable specifying them specifically in a development agreement, adding other homes were probably not that close.

Commissioner Moynagh asked if the applicant had wanted to arrange something differently and we could not respond because of the current version of code. Wall said we are trying to address existing setbacks within R-4 zoning to make it consistent over time and allow for new units moving in, adding that direction is largely included in State Statute.

Jim Guidry, Five Star Mobile Estates Ltd Partnership, introduced Vicki Wilson, Property Manager, then shared that they have been in existence since 1993 but first acquired the community in 1983. He said they are not seeking to increase the number of homes in the community but that the size of homes have increased over time and old ones are being replaced with newer larger models. He said, if approved, this would better reflect existing conditions and the City’s approval of placement of newer homes in the complex, preserve affordable housing, and continue reinvestment in Five Star.

Chairperson Cordes opened the public hearing at 7:18 p.m. and reviewed the public comment process.

As no one wished to address the Commission, Chairperson Cordes closed the public hearing at 7:18 p.m.

Upon motion by Commissioner Caillier, seconded by Commissioner Stumph, it was

“RESOLVED to recommend approval of staff’s recommendation for approval of DRAFT Ordinance 748, as proposed with any additional revisions recommended by the Planning Commission, with the condition that a Development Agreement is established and approved by the City Council as presented.”

Commissioner Dresen noted she lived near this community and that providing this affordable housing option is very important to the City.

Commissioner Cooper said the proposed amendment reflected current conditions and needs to be current with City Code.

Ayes – 7                      Nays – 0

The motion carried.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Planning/Community Development Director Wall said staff recommended the Commission take action on the following items as required by City Code to elect/appoint members to the following positions: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and two EDA Representatives as well as accept the 2021 Expense Allowance. He noted per Code that Commissioner Cordes has served as Chairperson from 2019-2020 and cannot be elected to another term. Commissioner Jokinen has served as Vice Chairperson from 2019-2020 and could assume the role of Chairperson in 2021, if interested and elected, as has been past practice. He then outlined the Vadnais Heights Economic Development Authority (EDA)

was comprised of all City Council members, Vadnais Heights Economic Development Corporation representative, and one representative and alternate from the Planning Commission. He said the EDA meets on an as-needed basis but has not met in a while. He shared that, the Planning Commission has passed a motion accepting the annual expense allowance at the first meeting of the year and any recommended changes to the expenses would require a City Code amendment to be approved by the City Council. Wall referred to the Commission’s duties and rules contained in City Code and shared an executive summary of the Minnesota Open Meeting Law and an article on ethics for commissioners.

Chairperson Cordes called for nominations for Chairperson. Nominations closed.

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

“RESOLVED, to appoint Commissioner Jokinen as Chair for 2021.”

Ayes – 7                      Nays – 0

The motion carried.

Chairperson Cordes called for nominations for Vice Chair. Nominations closed.

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

“RESOLVED, to appoint Commissioner Cooper as Vice Chair for 2021.”

Ayes – 7                      Nays – 0

The motion carried.

Chairperson called for volunteers to be representation and alternate representative to the EDA.

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

“RESOLVED, to appoint Commissioner Moynagh as EDA representative and Commissioner Stumph as alternate for 2021.”

Ayes – 7                      Nays – 0

The motion carried.

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

“RESOLVED, to accept the 2021 annual expense as presented.”

Ayes – 7                      Nays – 0

The motion carried.

Chairperson Dresen suggested moving the December 28 meeting to December 14 due to the holidays.

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

“RESOLVED, to accept the 2021 meeting calendar as amended.”

Ayes – 7

Nays – 0

The motion carried.

**OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**REPORTS**

A. Council Liaison

Council Liaison Rogers shared his background and reasons for service that included contributing to democracy and thanked the Commission for their work. He said this was a very important Commission and that he looks forward to working with Commission members.

B. Planning Commissioners

Chairperson Cordes stated Commissioner Carnes did not seek reappointment and thanked Carnes for his service and guidance, adding a vacancy for second alternate was available as Commissioner Moynagh moved up to full member. Planning/Community Development Director Wall said the City was advertising the vacancy on the website and social media and applications are due February 7.

C. Staff

None.

**NEXT MEETING**

The next Planning Commission meeting will be held on February 23, 2021.

**ADJOURN MEETING**

Upon motion by Commissioner Carnes, seconded by Commissioner Jokinen, the meeting was adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Sorensen  
*TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*

Approved