REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
VADNAIS HEIGHTS PLANNING COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 24, 2020

OPEN MEETING AND WELCOME

Chairperson Evan Cordes called the Regular Meeting of the Vadnais Heights Planning Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. on February 24, 2020.

ROLL CALL

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

Also present: Nolan Wall, Planning/Community Development Director; Jeff Melcoch, Cable Producer; Council Member Patricia Youker.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

“RESOLVED, to approve the February 24, 2020, Regular Meeting Agenda as presented.”

Ayes – 6  Nays – 0

The motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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

“RESOLVED, to approve the minutes of the January 28, 2020, Regular Meeting as corrected.”

Commissioner Moynagh referred to minor corrections submitted to staff to be incorporated as necessary.

Ayes – 6  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. Case 20-001: The Luther Group, LLLP – Comprehensive Plan Amendment, Rezoning, Planned Unit Development Amendment

Planning/Community Development Director Wall shared that the applicant is requesting to incorporate the undeveloped subject property into the existing automobile dealership through a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to re-guide from Industrial to Highway Commercial, rezoning from Industrial to Planned Unit Development (PUD), and Planned Unit Development Amendment. He said in 2015, the applicant received approval to re-guide and rezone portions of the existing dealership properties to Highway Commercial and PUD, respectively, to facilitate another expansion project. The undeveloped subject property was not included and is guided/zoned Industrial, which is inconsistent with the adjacent dealership properties. In September 2019, the applicant received approval for an interim use permit (IUP) and site plan to construct a parking lot expansion to the existing Acura/Subaru dealership onto the subject property. At the time, the 2040 Comprehensive Plan had not yet been adopted and could not be amended without restarting the already-completed adjacent review period.

The applicant originally intended to begin the parking lot expansion project last year, but construction has not commenced due to delays on the Luther Cadillac project on the east side of U.S. Highway 61. A condition of approval for the IUP was that the applicant submit the appropriate land use and zoning applications within nine months. The proposed project is consistent with the following goals/policies of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan: complete the build-out and build-up of the community by planning for growth that accommodates local goals, including housing choice, commercial-industrial growth and open space protection, all within the context of the regional planning framework; achieve new investment on sites where the existing land use is no longer consistent with the intent of the Comprehensive Plan in terms of use, economic viability or physical quality; maintain and enhance commercial/industrial property values; and continue to improve facilities for walking and bicycling.

Wall said that the subject property is undeveloped and the proposed parking lot expansion project will increase the viability of the existing automobile dealership while encouraging investment in the community. The existing sidewalk along Willow Lake Boulevard is proposed to be extended to connect to International Drive, completing the missing segment on the north side of the road. He said all three requests would bring the site into conformance with the existing dealership with regard to zoning and guidance.
and that staff recommend approval. He noted that the request has to go through Metropolitan Council review but is qualified to be reviewed administratively instead of the 60-day notice period which should fast-track the process.

Sean Murphy, LandForm Professional Services, said they were memorializing the process last summer and were excited to get the project underway as well as the Cadillac project as the parking area was needed for inventory.

Chairperson Cordes opened the public hearing at 7:10 p.m.

As no one wished to address the Commission, Chairperson Cordes closed the public hearing at 7:10 p.m.

Upon motion by Commissioner Carnes, seconded by Commissioner Cooper, it was “RESOLVED to approve the proposed comprehensive plan amendment, rezoning, and planned unit development amendment requests, based on the following findings of fact:

1. The proposed amendments and rezoning allow for expansion of an adjacent, existing use by bringing the undeveloped subject property into conformance with the entire development.
2. The site plan for the proposed parking lot expansion has already been reviewed and approved as part of a separate review process.

Subject to the condition that the proposed comprehensive plan amendment shall be reviewed and approved by the Metropolitan Council, in accordance with the required procedures.”

Ayes – 6  Nays – 0

The motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Elect Chairperson;
B. Elect Vice Chairperson;
C. Appoint Economic Development Authority Representative and Alternate; and
D. Accept Annual Expense Allowance

Chairperson Cordes expressed his desire to continue to serve as Chairperson and turned the meeting over to Vice Chair Jokinen. Vice Chair Jokinen asked for further nominations for Chairperson but there were none offered.

Upon motion it was “RESOLVED, to appoint Chairperson Cordes as Chairperson for 2020.”

Ayes – 6  Nays – 0

The motion carried.
Commissioner Carnes suggested changing the bylaws for Chair and Vice Chair to two-year terms. Planning/Community Development Director Wall said the bylaws implied the roles of Chair or Vice Chair could continue as long as the individuals wished to serve in that role but staff could review for streamlining in the ordinance.

Commissioner Dresen asked if it was typical for Planning Commissions to have two-year terms. Planning/Community Development Director Wall said it was a similar process at his previous city but there was no established way to operate, adding providing the roles to change allows more people to be involved in facilitating a meeting and could be valuable.

Chairperson Cordes opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chair. Commissioner Jokinen offered to continue as Vice Chair.

Upon motion it was

“RESOLVED, to appoint Commissioner Jokinen as Vice Chair for 2020.”

Ayes – 6 Nays – 0

The motion carried.

Chairperson Cordes opened the floor for nominations for EDA representative and alternate, adding they have not met in the past six years. Current Commissioners Cooper and Moynagh indicated their interest in reappointment.

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

“RESOLVED, to appoint Commissioner Cooper as EDA representative and Commissioner Moynagh as EDA alternate.”

Ayes – 6 Nays – 0

The motion carried.

Chairperson Cordes outlined the 2020 expense allowance of $20 per meeting for Chair/Secretary and $15 for others including the additional allowance of $10 per month for members to attend other meetings as requested.

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

“RESOLVED, to approve the 2020 expense allowance as outlined.”

Ayes – 6 Nays – 0

The motion carried.
Commissioner Dresen asked if the allowance could be donated back to the City. Planning/Community Development Director Wall said the allowance is typically paid at the end of the year rather than monthly and would inquire if donation of the allowance back to the City is possible.

**OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**REPORTS**

A. **Council Liaison**

Council Member Patricia Youker had nothing to report at this time.

B. **Planning Commissioners**

None.

C. **Staff**

Planning/Community Development Director Wall shared items before the Planning Commission last month that were approved by the City Council which included the Creekview subdivision, variances and building addition at Jaycon on Labore Road, the 42-lot Frattalone subdivision on Centerville Road, and the Ramsey County indoor turf facility. He said the March meeting would include an application for At Home apartments with their final PUD plan and an application from Vadnais Square to subdivide Experience Fitness suites into three separate suites with one to include Foss Swim School and the others would likely be retail or restaurant-oriented.

Commissioner Dresen asked about the rebranding of the Ramsey County sports center as TCO because there is already a TCO rink in Stillwater. Planning/Community Development Director Wall said staff was not informed of any timelines and was unaware of the rebranding launch and there has been no discussion of signage.

Commissioner Dresen asked how City Council addressed the watershed concerns from the Frattalone site. Planning/Community Development Director Wall said the main issue for that project was stormwater management and the residents were concerned with the project’s proximity to Twin Lake and that water issues at the Lake. He said the Watershed’s jurisdiction is multi-city/county and he is confident the Watershed will hold the applicant to all requirements as part of their approval process which included an outlet pipe through other property also owned by the applicant to provide some relief from high-water levels. He noted more rainfall has been occurring naturally but that high standards were already in place and the Watershed would do as much as possible to provide best management practices on site.

**NEXT MEETING**

Planning/Community Development Director Wall said the next meeting would be held March 24, 2020.
ADJOURN MEETING

Upon motion by Commissioner Jokinen, seconded by Commissioner Moynagh, the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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