

CITY OF MEDINA PLANNING COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 10, 2007

1. Call to Order: Chair Verbick called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Present: Planning Commissioners Mary Verbick, Jeff Pederson, Mark Bryant, Doug Dickerson, Charles Nolan, Robin Reid, and Sharon Johnson (arrived at 7:20 p.m.).

Absent: None

Also Present: City Planning Consultant Jennifer Haskamp; Assistant to Planning Dusty Finke.

2. Public Comments:

Loren Kohnen (Metrowest Inspection Services) read a statement regarding a community event planting trees in City Parks. The event would follow Clean-up Day and Park Commissioners, Planning Commissioners, and City Council members were all welcome to take part. Kohnen stated that Metrowest would be donating the trees.

Pederson stated that Highway 55 Rental would like to take part in donating the trees as well.

3. Update from City Council Proceedings:

Weir read a brief report on City Council actions since the last Planning Commission meeting. She noted that the Council had tabled final plat for Willow Hill and would review it at a future meeting. She stated that the Council had directed staff to prepare resolutions to approve the Lane preliminary plat and Hopper CUP as well as the Burke/Miller plat following some legal clarification on the issue of park dedication. Weir noted that the City is working with Corcoran on perhaps extending water services to the border of the City. She also noted that Public Works is planning an Open House at the new water treatment plant on May 23rd from 4p.m. – 8 p.m.

4. City Planner Report

Haskamp stated that she did not have much to report. The Planning Commission would be discussing the Comp Plan progress later in the meeting. She stated that the Commission most likely will only have one application to review in May.

5. Approval of the March 13, 2007 Planning Commission Minutes:

Motion by Pederson, seconded by Bryant to approve the March 13, 2007 minutes as presented.

Motion passes unanimously (Absent: Johnson).

6. Michael Leuer – Concept Plan for a residential development on property located in the Business Park (BP) zoning district – (PIDs 04-118-23-43-0003 and 04-118-23-34-0001).
Public Hearing

Haskamp delivered a brief staff report that covered both the residential concept plan and the commercial concept plan (agenda items 6 and 7). She stated that doing them together may make sense because they are relating to the same parcels.

She noted that each concept plan would need to have its own public hearing, but that the comments are almost certainly going to run together throughout the conversation. She stated that this should not be a concern as long as everyone get the chance to speak.

Haskamp discussed general background on the parcels. Combined, the parcels are approximately 111 acres in size and are all currently guided for commercial and zoned Business Park. There are some areas of wetlands on the site (approximately 30 acres). Haskamp stated that the residential development would be inconsistent with the zoning and guiding for the property. The City is currently updating its Comprehensive Plan. If it is not changed during the update, this development would require a Comp Plan amendment. Haskamp stated that the concept includes a range of housing from large estate lots, to more dense single family homes, to a large apartment complex. The overall net density is approximately 3.8 units/acre. Haskamp stated that staff, especially the City Engineer, raised major concerns over number of lots being served off of Willow Drive and Pioneer Trail. Additionally, there was concern if an apartment complex fits into the area and also a concern that the densest residential was located deepest within the development. She stated that the density is within the minimum range allowed by the Met Council, and does show diversity of housing types.

Haskamp stated that the commercial concept is consistent with the current zoning and guiding. The concept did not show driveways and accesses to properties. Staff believed that the site design could easily be improved to place more importance on natural amenities on site. The concept does not include any information potential tenants or building size or layout which made it difficult to guess the scale of the development, and difficult to determine parking needs.

Tom Goodrum (Schoell Madson, 15050 23rd Avenue North, Plymouth) stated that he had been contacted by the applicant to review their concepts and speak about them at the public hearing. He stated the applicant wanted to find out if commercial was the correct use, or if there is a better use for the property. The developer looked at the property for pros and cons for both residential and commercial. He stated that the residential development allows for easier integration of neighborhoods into the natural features, especially with the wetlands and the topography of the site. The large lot residential in the southern portion backs residential up on the rural residential lots in the area. The apartment building is located on the northwest corner, which makes sense closer to the tracks, and closer to the existing business park. He stated that the types of structures are not set in stone and can be adjusted. The roads can easily be reconfigured to lessen the accesses onto Willow and Pioneer. Goodrum stated that the Business Park design generally needs to be flatter for parking lots, larger building, etc. so

there would have to be a lot more grading. There is no way to guarantee what type of tenant would move in. He stated that they had not created the designs, but were asked for opinions. He stated they both work, but he believed the residential works better for the site.

Haskamp inquired about the timing. Because the residential would require a rezoning, it seems like it would fit into the Comp Plan update. She inquired if there was any reason to hurry it along outside the Comp Plan update process.

Goodrum stated that in development, time is money. The applicant seems willing to work with the City during the update, but if it were to happen earlier, there are interested buyers.

Dickerson inquired if there was a wetland delineation completed and if the floodplains have been investigated. He also inquired about the price of the homes.

Goodrum stated that the delineation was completed but was unsure about floodplain impacts.

Mark Metzger (one of the owners of the subject property, resident at 4065 Shorewood Trail) stated the homes would probably range from \$400,000 to \$750,000.

Public hearing for agenda item 6 opened at 7:34 p.m.

Paul Chamberlain (1907 Wayzata Blvd.) stated that he is representing Richard Burke (3962 Tomahawk Trail). Mr. Burke is strongly opposed to the residential use. It is not consistent with the guide plan. It is very urban next to rural residential. The Business Park zoning district zoning ordinance is designed in a way to transition between rural residential and more commercial. Chamberlain stated that the rezoning ordinance is written so as to restrict the amount of rezonings. It is only to be used to achieve the overall goals over the City.

Bryant inquired if Mr. Burke would look at the commercial development as the lesser of two evils, rather than the ideal.

Chamberlain concurred.

Tim Swanson (GL Contracting, 4300 Willow Drive) stated that he is opposed to the residential. It creates a large liability to his business because kids see piles and equipment as an attractive place to get into mischief. He would have to build a fence or something along those lines. He would love to see more businesses in the area because it is the correct place for more commercial activity. Additionally, the electrical substation is attractive to children, it is a great liability concern.

Todd Thullen (4005 Apache Drive) stated that he gets to his home through existing private road, and with as many cars and people as the residential concept would bring, he would have difficulty even accessing his property.

Tim and Laurie Hannan (4007 Apache Drive) stated that the residential concept seems much too dense. He is opposed to the apartment building in his backyard. It makes no sense all of the

way inside the development. All of the vehicles have to go all of the way through. The residential is not in Medina's character. He stated that he is opposed to both until they are farther refined.

Jay Braegelmann (4003 Apache) stated that the residential would lead to a huge increase in traffic on Pioneer and Willow. The improvements would be a large tax burden for the existing homes. He does not agree with the number of residences and is worried about the liability and safety concerns.

Wayne Bauernschmitt (Wright/Hennepin Electric, 6800 Electric Drive, Rockford) stated that both concepts work for WH. Their main concern is stormwater runoff. With the topography, runoff could have a major impacting on their property.

Reid inquired into the safety concerns over dense residential.

Bauernschmitt replied that they are located in dense residential areas and commercial areas so neither concept is that concerning.

Michael Botnan (2522 Pioneer Trail) stated that he had lived in the area since 1951. It is all wetland and the stormwater must be addressed if there is development.

Swanson stated they had been told not to send trucks out on Willow Drive. He stated that his drivers do not drive south on Willow, but rather head up to Highway 55. However, if it is this much residential development, there would surely be a lot more traffic down Willow.

Ron Musich (2715 Pioneer Trail) stated that \$400,000 home is not much of a home these days. To sell the development with the railroad tracks would seem very difficult. He stated that the residential would be a large disservice to the City.

Bryant inquired if the commercial zoning is ideal, or the lesser of two evils.

Musich replied that it is the lesser of two evils.

A gallery member asked what the next steps were.

Verbick replied that there will be no motions or action by the Planning Commission. It is a chance for public feedback to the Planning Commission and City Council and also to the developer. The developer can then take the information and perhaps make changes to their plans. Before any development actually would occur, there would have to be a number of other applications that would also have public hearings.

A gallery member inquired about the timing of the Comprehensive Plan update.

Haskamp replied that the land use plan is being currently being discussed. The draft plan would be finished up by the City by the fall.

Weir stated that the City Council is not likely to support a Comprehensive Plan amendment during the middle of the process of updating.

Public hearing for agenda item 6 closed at 8:01 p.m.

7. Michael Leuer – Concept Plan for a commercial development on property located in the Business Park (BP) zoning district – (PIDs 04-118-23-43-0003 and 04-118-23-34-0001).

Public Hearing

Public hearing for agenda item 7 opened at 8:02 p.m.

Goodrum stated that they were here to get feedback. The density and location of the residential is not set in stone, it can be adjusted. The stormwater concerns will be taken care of when a site plan is closer to application. In terms of the commercial development, they do not have builders or tenants in place at this point. He noted that commercial development would bring in traffic for employees and also bring more truck traffic. He stated that the parking will be directed more internal to the site away from residential areas.

Reid inquired if there was a market for the commercial business park now.

Metzger stated that they have heard from people interested in the land.

Bryant inquired if they had run numbers on the total amount of cutting that would have to be done in order to do a business park.

Goodrum stated that they didn't have good numbers at this time, but it would be a lot.

Swanson stated that if the City wants business, this is a perfect location. He also stated that trucks would head up Willow to Highway 55.

Goodrum did note that car traffic could be an issue along Pioneer.

Finke noted that the Business Park allows for a maximum impervious surface of 50%. What was shown on the concept plan seems to be about half of each lot. He inquired if the intent was to show the total area of building and parking lots with the shapes.

Metzger replied that that is true.

Swanson stated that he is a grading contractor and believes that with the 50% impervious maximum, it would be possible to do a business park that does not have to flatten the whole site.

Nolan noted that he had just come out of a Comp Plan meeting the previous night. He stated that the Comp Plan group seems like the more logical place for this conversation. The Comp Plan is looking at the global impacts of regarding property, rather than each project

specifically. He noted that from the information presented this evening, there is nothing compelling to show that this is a much better residential site than a commercial site. He stated that sitting here tonight, it seems like Business Park is the much better use. Traffic patterns for the commercial use would seem to gravitate towards Highway 55. As far as having to flatten the whole area and having trucks coming in from everywhere, it should be noted that it is a business park, not an industrial park. There are beautiful business parks out there. They can be worked with grade changes to provide screening and parking lots can be at different levels. He urged the applicant to work within the Comp Plan update.

Dickerson stated that he certainly respects the desire to get as much money as possible out of property and understands how the numbers can be crunched. He stated that he lives just to the south, and moved in knowing that this property was commercial. He stated that he is opposed to the residential. The City is considering taking a lot of property out of commercial, and this should be studied carefully. Dickerson stated that infrastructure and maintenance costs for every acre of residential are 4 to 5 times as expensive for a City as is commercial. Commercial taxes often subsidize the residential. This property is located within the Rockford school district, Loretto Fire district. He stated that the amount of hardcover with the residential would greatly impact stormwater. He stated that there is a large area of floodplain on the east of Willow Drive. Dickerson stated that with commercial, the City can do better with stormwater. They can use berming to minimize the impact on neighboring properties. He stated that there is a noise issue with Temroc and Rockler, which would be a concern for residential development. Additionally, there is cement grinding going on during the day. Dickerson stated that sound and train vibration will have an impact, especially on an apartment complex. He stated that he really wants to speak to the environmental issues. Because the water flows through Burke's property into Lake Independence, which is an impaired water body, the City should be careful. Commercial development could more easily be monitored for how they are impacting the water. He stated that it was a good idea to keep all internal roads onto Willow, and prevent it from going out on Pioneer.

Bryant stated that south, west and east of the property is all very rolling. To the north flattens out to industrial. He stated that the concept does not show residential backing up to residential. It shows high density residential backing up to rural residential. Bryant stated that he would suggest to the neighboring properties to be working on the City Council to rezone the property rural residential, perhaps with large lots and \$2 million homes. It would require a comprehensive plan amendment, but it's the best way to save the beautiful area. He stated that it may be difficult, but the City should do what is right.

Johnson stated that the residential concept does not appear to be supported. Johnson thanked the homeowners for sharing their comments. It is extremely important for people to share their views. As a relative newcomer, moving to the City in the 1990's, it is extremely important to get the experience from people who have been around longer. She stated that it seems like there would be ways to work any development more like Wild Meadows, how best to work with the existing land.

Reid stated that ultimately this decision should be made by Comp Plan committee. She stated that density will have to be placed someplace. The City has talked about placing density nearer Highway 55. From that perspective, perhaps the residential makes sense. However, the Comp Plan committee is looking at the broader scope. If it does go residential, it should be noted that Medina will not stand for cookie cutter houses like Plymouth.

Pederson stated that the driveways cannot come off Pioneer and Willow. The apartment does not seem to work on the very inside of the development. He stated that maybe half/half makes the most sense, with residential along Pioneer and business park farther to the north. Perhaps some transition with some townhomes. He stated that some sort of split seems to make the most sense.

Verbick stated that she is absolutely opposed to making a recommendation for a Comp Plan amendment at this time in the process. Regardless of what ends up on this property, traffic has come up continuously. Additionally, stormwater runoff must be considered. Considerations should be made to the topography of the area. Although it seems contradictory, a business park seems to support the more rural residential surroundings. She concurred that there is potential for a mix of uses on this property. This would also allow the developer to build some portions of the site now, and wait to see if residential may be a possibility.

Verbick stated that although it would be great if someone would buy it up and turn it into a 93 acre park, it is almost certainly not going to happen. Also, although the neighbors would love to divide it into just a few residential lots, this would be difficult as well.

Nolan stated that the Comp Plan committee has been trying to avoid placing different types of guiding onto a single parcel. It is difficult to make this division of uses on an imaginary line.

Metzger thanked everyone for their feedback. They are at a Y in the road, and were looking for information on what direction to head. He stated that they can take the comments back. They need to decide what works for them, and then they will need to move forward. He stated that he knows it is a difficult time to bring forward a proposal, but they wanted direction. He appreciates everyone taking their time to look at the concepts.

Public hearing closed at 8:52 p.m.

8. Update regarding the progress of the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Panel

Haskamp delivered a short presentation regarding the progress made by the Comp Plan Panel. She described the phases of the Comp Plan Update. Phase I was background and kick-off. She noted that a background report was included in the Planning Commission packet. Phase II, is the goals and strategies. Haskamp stated that she believed this is the heart of the Plan. Although the land use guide plan can be adjusted, a City can always rely on its goals and strategies. Phase III is alternatives development, including land use and growth. The Panel is currently working on this Phase. Phase IV is review and approval.

Haskamp stated that the City Council hopes to approve of the Plan in the early fall. From there, it will be submitted to neighboring jurisdictions for a review that may take up to six months. Finally, it will be submitted to the Met Council for review. There may then be some recommended changes from the Met Council and the City will need to decide how to react.

Haskamp stated that the Panel has spent time and effort discussing how the City's Plan will interact with the Met Council. Although they understand the Met Council has forecasts and demands, the Plan has to work best for the City.

Haskamp noted that the Panel's Goals and Strategies were included in the packet. She described the categories (community character and livability, land use and growth, neighborhood pattern and housing goals, intergovernmental coordination goals). She stated that one of the overarching strategies appears to be concentrating density and growth along Highway 55 in order to preserve more of the rural heart of the City. She stated that Jean Coleman from the Open Space planning effort spoke with the group. The Open Space plan will be incorporated into the Comp Plan. It has to be decided how this would be done, and Coleman helped start this discussion.

Haskamp stated that the Panel undertook a visual preference survey, rating various photographs of commercial and residential properties. She noted that the highest rated photographs were actually examples of fairly dense development. This was not to say that the Panel wants to see this all over the City. The point is to see what aspects the high ranking photographs share. Mature vegetation, sidewalks, high quality architecture, diversity in style, community gathering spaces all rated high, even if the density were high.

Haskamp stated that the group has agreed to a few principles: Compact growth should occur along key transportation corridors. Density isn't necessarily bad, but bad development is bad. The City needs to make sure implementation tools are in place following the plan to make sure good development occurs. The Panel would rather see increased density in specific locations in an effort to save more of the rural area of the City.

Haskamp stated that the Guide Plan focuses primarily on opportunity areas for increased density along Highway 55 and within proximity of Uptown Hamel and Loretto. The panel agreed to the following density ranges within the sewered districts: Low 2-3.49 units/net acre; Medium 3.5-6.9 units/net acre; High 7+ units/net acre.

Haskamp stated that the Panel is half-way through the land use discussions. The Open Space Task Force will be incorporated. Once the land use plan is in place, the plan will get handed to Bonestroo to look at the infrastructure implications. This may lead to some updates to the land use plan in order to more efficiently utilize infrastructure. A public open house will then be held to present the draft, to get feedback, and to answer questions. The document will be drafted and then presented to the Planning Commission and Council.

9. Adjourn:

Motion by Reid, seconded by Pederson to adjourn at 9:37 p.m. Motion passes unanimously.