

**MINNETONKA PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

**MARCH 4, 2010**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Cheleen called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Commissioners Sjeklocha, A. Thomas, Walker, Adams, Lehman, and Cheleen were present.

Staff members present: Community Development Director Julie Wischnack, City Planner Loren Gordon, Principal Planner Susan Thomas, Planner Jeff Thomson, Williston Fitness Center Manager Kelly O'Dea, and Facilities Manager Mike Pavelka.

**3. ELECTIONS**

**A. Election of Commission Chair and Vice Chair**

*Lehman moved, second by Sjeklocha, to elect Cheleen to act as chair and Adams to act as vice chair of the planning commission for 2010.*

*Sjeklocha, A. Thomas, Walker, Adams, Lehman, and Cheleen voted yes. Motion carried.*

**4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** The agenda was approved as submitted with a correction provided in the March 4, 2010 change memo.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** February 4, 2010

*Adams moved, second by A. Thomas, to approve the February 4, 2010, meeting minutes as submitted.*

*Sjeklocha, A. Thomas, Walker, Adams, Lehman, and Cheleen voted yes. Motion carried.*

**6. REPORT FROM STAFF**

Gordon briefed the commission on land use applications considered by the city council at its meeting of February 22, 2010:

- Adopted a resolution approving an outdoor seating area for Scoreboard Bar and Grill at 5765 Sanibel Drive with the condition to require the south patio close at 10 p.m.

Gordon noted that the next planning commission meeting will be March 18, 2010 at 6:30 p.m.

**7. REPORT FROM PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS**

Sjeklocha and Cheleen attended a workshop for communities in the Minnehaha Creek and Nine Mile Creek watershed district at the science museum. It was called *Revitalizing Your Community with Green Infrastructure*. Sjeklocha highly recommends commissioners attend and that it be a workshop for boards and commissions members. She increased her knowledge regarding the watershed districts in Minnetonka and the importance of the creeks for the western suburbs. She gained an appreciation of 3-D maps. It would help with issue identification, resolution, and recommendations. She received a book of best practices to deal with storm water. She provided commissioners with a brochure that defines "green speak" for local officials.

Gordon provided that a Randall Arndt series is currently broadcasting on public television for anyone interested.

**8. PUBLIC HEARINGS: CONSENT AGENDA: None**

**9. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**A. Items concerning the Williston Center at 14509 Minnetonka Drive (10003.10a).**

Chair Cheleen introduced the proposal and called for the staff report.

Thomson reported. He recommended approval of the application based on the findings and subject to the conditions listed in the staff report.

O'Dea reported. He explained the proposed improvements and floor plan.

Adams asked for the current membership. O'Dea stated that in 2009, 1,985 memberships were sold which equates to roughly 3,500 to 4,000 members. A membership package could provide for a family with an average of 4 or 5 members.

Adams noted that the amount of parking is less than what would be recommended by some standards. He asked how many patrons visit the site at its busiest time. O'Dea explained that January and February are the peak months at the center. Up to 700 to 800 people will be throughout the facility. Mornings and evenings from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. are the peak times. During those times, the parking lot becomes pretty full. Some of the new changes will increase the number of people in the facility, but at some different times, too.

Chair Cheleen thanked O'Dea and Pavelka. He was participating in the Citizen's Academy and got to see the Williston Center first hand. He asked if the new entry would have handicap access. O'Dea answered affirmatively. The facility would be handicap accessible.

Chair Cheleen asked if the ceiling would be painted or upgraded. O'Dea explained that would be an alternate on this bid. If it would not be done with this project, using the operational budget would be an option. He agreed the ceilings need work.

Chair Cheleen questioned how the proposal would be funded. O'Dea believed 3.4 million would be funded by the Community Investment Fund. The other \$700,000 would be paid by the Williston Center fund. Chair Cheleen understood that the Community Investment Fund is excess money from a sewer project many years ago. No new tax money would be spent and membership rates would not increase.

Lehman previously used meeting space that the proposal would no longer provide. O'Dea explained that a multi-purpose room would be created that could be used as meeting space.

Chair Cheleen noted that access to the birthday party room would no longer require passage through the pool area. O'Dea agreed.

A. Thomas asked if the east drive would cut into the hill. O'Dea answered that there would be enough room to fit the drive without cutting into the hill. The playground area would be cut into a small amount.

A. Thomas asked if the east hill causes erosion problems. Thomson explained that the engineer did not find a significant amount of runoff from the hill. The slope is steep, but well vegetated. A. Thomas asked why trees are not being planted on the hill to help prevent erosion. Thomson stated that staff could research what vegetation could survive on the slope. A. Thomas favored adding trees to make it look better as well as prevent erosion.

A. Thomas asked if the facility would end up looking like a hodgepodge of separate buildings put together. That is what it looks like to him. Glenn Waguespack, BKV Group, senior project architect, stated that the biggest design challenge for the project is to find a unified aesthetic. It is a very ad hoc collection of buildings. Even the most recent addition is another type of architectural expression. His charge is to take what is in the existing building and start to see it in the images. The exposed structure is a design starting point. The metal panels on the new additions relate directly to the existing tennis building. Only the new pallet of materials would be visible from the entry around to the new pool addition. The plans do include a bid alternate to repaint the tennis building.

A. Thomas asked if the buildings would have the silhouette painted on it. Mr. Waguespack stated that would be an alternate part of the bid. Sign ordinances also have to be taken into consideration.

A. Thomas asked if drainage would be coordinated with the pond at the northeast end of property. Thomson explained that the pond is a private storm water pond for the assisted-living facility north of the site. All of the storm water from the site would have to be kept on the site and travel into the bioswales on the north side.

Walker asked for the peak days and times. O'Dea responded Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. and Monday through Thursday evenings from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Walker asked for the number of vehicles at the site during those times. O'Dea said that there has not been a time when a patron was unable to find a spot within the parking lot.

Walker asked if the proposal was intended to increase membership. O'Dea stated that the proposal would fill a void for missing services including ones for children. He predicted a membership increase of up to 10 percent.

Walker questioned if there is a back-up plan for parking overflow if it becomes a problem. O'Dea stated that a few areas near the site have been discussed.

Walker asked if the super graphic is under consideration. O'Dea personally liked the graphic, but supported the proposed improvements with or without it. Thomson explained that public art is exempt from the sign ordinance. It would be similar to the Great Harvest graphic on the side of the building. Walker noted that it would not have letters or words. That would be a fair consideration.

Walker asked if maxing out the site in the future was discussed with the architect. O'Dea's main concern now is the locker rooms. The size and condition of the

locker rooms prohibits the number of patrons who can use the facility. Expanding the locker rooms would take care of immediate needs. O'Dea would welcome discussing future options. Walker felt that relocating to a new site once the capacity needs to be increased in the future should be discussed.

A. Thomas asked if any part of the building could handle a second story. Mr. Waguespack answered in the negative.

Chair Cheleen did not think the facility was close to capacity. O'Dea agreed. The capacity of the locker rooms causes a restriction, but the proposal would fix that. Chair Cheleen said if the proposal did increase the number of memberships that would be a good problem to have.

The public hearing was opened. No testimony was submitted and the hearing was closed.

***A. Thomas moved, second by Walker, to recommend that the city council adopt the resolution on pages A12-A19 of the staff report. This resolution approves a conditional use permit and site and building plan review for an expansion of the fitness and recreation center located at 14509 Minnetonka Drive, with the following variance:***

- Parking lot setback variance from 20 feet to 10 feet from the north property line.

Approval is based on the following findings:

- 1) The proposal meets the required conditional use permit standards.
- 2) The proposal meets all ordinance and standards for site and building plan review.
- 3) The proposal meets the required standards for a variance, because:
  - a. **UNDUE HARDSHIP:** There is an undue hardship due to the conditions of the site. The location of the existing building and parking lot and the steep slope on the east side of the property present a hardship in expanding the parking lot to provide the required number of parking stalls and to meet parking demands.

- b. **UNIQUE CIRCUMSTANCE:** The location of the existing building and parking lot, the steep slope, and existing vegetation and buffering are circumstances that are not common to every property.
- c. **INTENT OF THE ORDINANCE:** The setback variance would meet the intent of the ordinance to provide adequate separation between properties. The proposed parking lot would be adjacent to the parking lot on the property to the north. The variance would still provide 40 feet of green space and landscaping between the two parking lots. Furthermore the parking lot would be located 100 feet from the building to the north.
- d. **NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER:** The parking lot would not adversely impact the character of the neighborhood. A significant distance would remain to the parking lot and building on the property to the north. Furthermore, the parking lot would be visually buffered from by the rain garden plantings and existing berm and landscaping.

Approval is subject to the following conditions:

- 1) Subject to staff approval, the site must be developed and maintained in substantial conformance with the following plans, unless modified by the conditions below:
  - Site plan date-stamped February 26, 2010
  - Grading plan date-stamped February 19, 2010
  - Building elevations date-stamped February 19, 2010
- 2) Prior to issuance of a building permit:
  - a. Submit the following items for staff review and approval:
    - (1) Submit electronic PDF copy and two full size final site, grading, drainage, utility and erosion control plans. The grading and drainage plans must incorporate bioswales and rain gardens along the north and west sides of the parking lot. Pervious surfaces may also be incorporated to meet the requirements of the city's water resources management plan.

- (2) A construction management plan. This plan must be in a city approved format and outline minimum site management practices and penalties for non-compliance. If the builder is the same entity doing grading work on the site, the construction management plan submitted at the time of grading permit may fulfill this requirement.
- (3) A landscaping and tree mitigation plan. The plan must meet minimum landscaping and mitigation requirements as outlined in the ordinance. However, at the sole discretion of natural resources staff, mitigation may be decreased based on any of the following: the health of trees removed; the ability to appropriately install trees and other shrubbery given existing vegetation and/or topography.
- (4) An illumination plan.
  - b. This resolution must be recorded with Hennepin County.
  - c. Submit all required administration and engineering fees.
  - d. All required hook-up fees must be paid.
  - e. Submit a SWPPP.
  - f. Install a temporary rock driveway, erosion control, tree and wetland protection fencing for staff inspection. These items must be maintained throughout the course of construction.
  - g. Permits may be required from other outside agencies including, but not limited to Hennepin County, the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, and the MPCA. It is the applicant's responsibility to obtain any necessary permits.
- 3) Once site and grading work is completed, an electronic CAD file or certified as-built drawings in microstation or DXF and PDF format must be submitted to the city.
- 4) All rooftop and ground-mounted mechanical equipment, and exterior trash and recycling storage areas, must be enclosed with materials compatible with the principal structure, subject to staff approval. Low profile, self-

contained mechanical units that blend in with the building architecture are exempt from the screening requirement.

- 5) The property owner is responsible for replacing any required landscaping that dies.
- 6) Construction must begin by December 31, 2011 unless the planning commission grants a time extension.
- 7) The city council may reasonably add or revise conditions to address any future unforeseen problems.
- 8) Any change to the approved use that results in a significant increase in traffic or a significant change in character would require a revised conditional use permit.
- 9) The applicant must agree to these conditions in writing.

***Sjeklocha, A. Thomas, Walker, Adams, Lehman, and Cheleen voted yes.  
Motion carried.***

Chair Cheleen stated that the item is tentatively scheduled to be reviewed by the city council March 22, 2010.

## 10. OTHER BUSINESS

### A. Review of the planning commission's bylaws and policies

Gordon reported.

Sjeklocha noted that a quorum and two thirds of the commission would both be four out of six members. Gordon agreed.

***A. Thomas moved, second by Sjeklocha, to approve the bylaws and policies as presented.***

***Sjeklocha, A. Thomas, Walker, Adams, Lehman, and Cheleen voted yes.  
Motion carried.***

## 11. ADJOURNMENT

***Adams moved, second by A. Thomas, to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 p.m.  
Motion carried unanimously.***

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Lois T. Mason  
Planning Secretary