

**Minnetonka Planning Commission
Minutes**

Nov. 18, 2021

1. Call to Order

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

2. Roll Call

Commissioners Banks, Henry, Maxwell, Powers, Waterman and Sewall were present. Hanson was absent.

Staff members present: City Planner Loren Gordon and Assistant City Planner Susan Thomas.

3. Approval of Agenda

Waterman moved, second by Henry, to approve the agenda as submitted with an additional comment provided in the change memo dated Nov. 18, 2021.

Banks, Henry, Maxwell, Powers, Waterman, and Sewall voted yes. Hanson was absent. Motion carried.

4. Approval of Minutes: Oct. 28, 2021

Maxwell moved, second by Banks, to approve the Oct. 28, 2021 meeting minutes as submitted.

Banks, Henry, Maxwell, Powers, Waterman and Sewall voted yes. Hanson was absent. Motion carried.

5. Report from Staff

Gordon briefed the commission on land use applications considered by the city council at its meeting of Nov. 8, 2021:

- Adopted a resolution approving a shoreland setback variance, bluff setback variance, and bluff impact zone conditional use permit for recreational items at 5724 Seven Oaks Court.
- Adopted a resolution approving the conditional use permit for Top Ten Liquors at 1641 Plymouth Road.
- Adopted a resolution approving the preliminary plat of Monson Meadows, a two-lot subdivision with front yard setback variances, at 5500 Rowland Road and an adjacent unaddressed parcel.

The next planning commission meeting is scheduled to be held on Dec. 2, 2021.

6. Report from Planning Commission Members

Maxwell encouraged residents to take a look at the natural resources master plan posted on the city's website and provide input regarding Minnetonka matters.

Powers noticed illegal signs located in boulevards that seemed out of place.

Chair Sewall appreciated the work done to provide him with a smooth voting experience and a successful indoor farmer's market event.

7. Public Hearings: Consent Agenda: None

8. Public Hearings

A. Items concerning Dick's House of Sport at 12437 Wayzata Blvd.

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

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

In response to Waterman's question, Gordon explained that the sign elevation did not change. Staff is comfortable with the proposal.

Maxwell confirmed with Gordon that vehicles would travel in the designated pedestrian crosswalk area.

Matt Lesh, Director of Development for Brookfield Properties Retail, owner of Ridgedale Center, applicant, thanked Gordon for his great presentation. Mr. Lesh appreciates staff's help and guidance throughout the whole process. He stated that:

- The project would create a community hub that welcomes everyone and enhances the ties between the community and commerce.
- The underground stormwater system would treat and move stormwater to the south pond on the other side of Ridgedale Drive.
- The angled parking, sidewalk and pedestrian connections in and around the loading dock and southwest corner to the trail provide more opportunities to connect pedestrians visiting the mall.
- He appreciated everyone's time and consideration.

Shannon Yeakel, Dick's House of Sports, stated that:

- The new Dick's House of Sports is going to elevate the experience and services that everyone has come to expect from Dick's Sporting Goods.
- Ridgedale Center will be home to the third Dick's House of Sports. The store focuses on providing innovative ways to engage with athletes.

- Cauley and Gordon did a great job summarizing the proposal in the staff report.
- She was available for questions.

In response to Powers' question, Ms. Yeakel pointed out the emergency exits.

In response to Henry's question, Ms. Yeakel explained that the field would be used for customers to test equipment; open play if nothing is scheduled; clinics during which vendors would teach customers how to use the equipment; scheduled team practices; structured programming such as yoga or cross-fit classes; and helping local business owners to promote services. Dick's Sporting Goods has a community integration team to work with non-profit organizations to become part of the community itself.

Henry asked if the field would remain open in the winter. Ms. Yeakel stated that an ice rink would be located on top of the field in the winter. There would be open ice skating times.

In response to Banks' question, Mr. Lesh answered that the number of parking stalls would be reduced by 200, but there would be flexibility on the site to provide ample parking.

Chair Sewall asked if the field would follow the same hours as the retail store. Ms. Yeakel answered affirmatively. There may be minor exceptions for a special event, but those would be approved by city staff. Dick's House of Sports store would follow the hours of the mall. She explained where restrooms and a storeroom would be located on the exterior along the building. The fence would be 45 feet tall. The fence would not be taller than the building.

In response to Henry's question, Mr. Lesh stated that solar panels are not in the current plan. LED lights and other sustainable features would be utilized.

Waterman confirmed with Ms. Yeakel that the field is only accessible from the interior of the store. This is for safety reasons and to be able to supervise the field area. The field could be used for open playtime when it is not scheduled for use.

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

Henry confirmed with Gordon that the added stormwater treatment features would help decrease the amount of standing water, but it could still occur in some low areas of the parking lot. In 2019, the city contracted drone flights over Ridgedale Center to take pictures of the parking lot on black Friday and showed that the parking lot was 82 percent full. Staff is comfortable with the amount of parking. Visible features such as signs, striping areas and extending aisle widths would be used to identify pedestrian walkways in the parking lot.

Waterman appreciated the work done to create a good site plan. He really likes the changes. He supports the proposal. It is a unique concept. It is helpful to hear how it would be used. It would be a benefit to the community. The landscaping and pedestrian connections are a benefit. He looks forward to it moving forward. He supports staff's recommendation.

Banks supports staff's recommendation. The site plan changes, including adding the pedestrian walkway from the mall to the new park, are a benefit. He likes the field. He suggested adding landscaping or planters on the outside of the fence. Adding benches outside the fence for parents or spectators to rest on might be beneficial. The proposal would be a great addition to the Dick's Sporting Goods retail store.

Powers is fine with the signs. He was concerned that the field would not be accessible to disabled individuals. The proposal is an opportunity for Ridgedale Center to be a destination and create vitality. It would fit nicely with the new park. He supports the idea and applauds Dick's House of Sports and Brookfield Management for working together.

Henry felt the proposal would be good for Ridgedale Center, the city and the community. Having a free, outdoor ice-skating rink located near new housing would be great. He applauds Dick's Sporting Goods for that philosophy. He supports staff's recommendation.

Maxwell supports the proposal. She was a little concerned with lighting disturbing the nearby apartment residents, but the lighting would be directed down and only operate during store hours. She was glad to hear that the amount of parking would be sufficient except for a couple of times during the year. The changes to the site plan and signs are an improvement. She supports staff's recommendation.

Chair Sewall supports the proposal breathing some life into a stale part of the mall. He is excited to see the changes. The signs are reasonable. He loves the idea of the sporting field. It is something different and exciting. He thought the fence was unattractive, but no complaint was received. He supports staff's recommendation.

Powers moved, second by Banks, to recommend that the city council adopt the ordinance approving an amendment to the Ridgedale Center master development plan and resolution approving final site and building plans and a sign plan amendment for Dick's House of Sport at 12437 Wayzata Blvd.

Banks, Henry, Maxwell, Powers, Waterman, and Sewall voted yes. Hanson was absent. Motion carried.

Chair Sewall stated that the city council is scheduled to review this item at its meeting on Dec. 6, 2021.

B. Items concerning Mister Car Wash at 17600 Hwy. 7.

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

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

Arik Lokensgard, representing the applicant, stated that Gordon did a great presentation. He was excited to work with staff, commissioners and councilmembers regarding the proposal. He was available for questions.

Henry asked if there would be enough spaces for vehicle cueing. Mr. Lokensgard confirmed that there would be room for three lines of vehicles to stack for two vehicle lengths where it would narrow to two vehicles in width until it would reach the property line. The site could stack 20 vehicles comfortably. Five or six additional vehicles could wait on the site.

Sam Glenn, part of the Mister Car Wash team, stated that he saw no problem with traffic backing up to the road. The height of the tower is an architectural feature. The site would have a water reclaim system underneath the building. The water would travel through three tanks. The salt and sand would settle in the first two tanks and be dumped from time to time. The clean water would be reused in the car wash. A third of the amount of water used to wash a vehicle at home would be used for one car wash. All soaps and waxes are phosphorous-free and environmentally friendly. Drivers would stay inside the vehicle. The hours would be 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

In response to Banks' question, Mr. Lokensgard explained the traffic flow of the site. There is ample room to stack one vehicle at the car wash exit to allow for a vehicle to bypass the vacuum area and exit the site.

In response to Maxwell's question, Mr. Lokensgard pointed out the location of the pedestrian access which was dependent on the grade of the site. The pedestrian access would be striped and have a sign if that would be acceptable to staff.

Henry asked if the dumpster would be located behind the building. Mr. Lokensgard answered affirmatively. He explained that the dumpster would be located on the island behind the front wall of the car wash.

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

Maxwell noted that the site already has a lot of impervious surfaces, so there would not be a large increase. She likes that the water would be reused. The proposal is reasonable. The location on the corner of Co. Rd. 101 and Hwy. 7 is a good use for the space. She supports staff's recommendation.

Waterman concurred with Maxwell. It would be a great use for the site. The variances and conditional use permit are logical. He was glad the height was reduced. He supports staff's recommendation.

Henry felt it would be a valid use of the space and add a lot to the community. He supports staff's recommendation.

Powers supports the proposal.

Banks felt it would be a great use of the space and great addition to the neighborhood. He supports staff's recommendation.

Chair Sewall felt the location would be fantastic. He has no doubt that business would be good at this location. He agreed that going to a car wash is greener than doing it at home. He supports staff's recommendation.

Henry moved, second by Waterman, to recommend that the city council adopt the resolution approving the final site and building plans with variance and expansion permit and conditional use permit for Mister Car Wash at 17600 Hwy. 7.

Banks, Henry, Maxwell, Powers, Waterman and Sewall voted yes. Hanson was absent. Motion carried.

Chair Sewall stated that the city council is scheduled to review this item at its meeting on Dec. 6, 2021.

C. Concept plan for the redevelopment of the property at 14317 Excelsior Blvd.

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

Thomas reported. Staff recommends that commissioners provide feedback on the key topics identified by staff and any other land-use-related items that commissioners deem appropriate. This discussion is intended to assist the applicant in the preparation of more detailed development plans.

Dean Dovolis, DJR Architecture, representing the applicant, stated that:

- Comments at the neighborhood meeting were generally helpful. The applicant would be willing to add the development of a sidewalk on Stewart Lane that would connect to Excelsior Blvd.
- The building may be able to be moved closer to Excelsior Blvd., but that would not be determined until a tree survey is completed.
- The building would be four stories on the Excelsior Blvd. side and four-and-a-half on the garage side because of the slope.
- The building materials would primarily be brick and stucco. There would be a lot of glaze and windows incorporated on the faces of the structure and articulation.
- The building and parking footprints were compacted to allow more room for trees.

- There would be 36 units with a combination of one-bedroom, two-bedroom, two-bedroom and den, and penthouse units. The main floor would have direct access outside for dog lovers.
- The trees give the site quality and screen the building.
- He was available for questions.

Henry asked what would be done to reduce the proposal's greenhouse gas emissions. Mr. Dovolis answered that the building design, insulation and appliances would reduce greenhouse gas emissions. LEED standards would be utilized as a guide, but it would not be a LEED-certified building because there is a high overhead cost with the application and approval. The roof would be flat because it would be analyzed to see if solar panels would work on the roof. He believes the height would be above the tree shadow. There would be a staged stormwater system to increase infiltration. The area has a lot of services. The proposal would connect the sidewalks in the area. Preserving as many trees as possible is the easiest and most obvious thing to do. The site has a good number of trees to be maintained and managed. Being able to add second garage access on the east side would depend on the tree survey and final grades. A variety of unit types is more accommodating to renters.

Powers was concerned a flat roof would leak. Mr. Dovolis explained that a tapered flat roof would still have a slope so it would not hold water. A tapered flat roof would allow the roof to accommodate future solar panels and to reduce the height of the building.

Banks confirmed with Mr. Dovolis that sidewalk connections would be added to the site.

In response to Banks' question, Paul Abdo, representing the applicant, stated that the size of the units has not yet been determined. He estimated somewhere between 900 square feet to 1,100 square feet in size for the smaller units. The largest unit would be between 1,500 square feet to 1,800 square feet in size. That would depend on how the floor plans come together.

Banks asked if the proposal would contain affordable-housing units. Mr. Dovolis stated that the proposal would possibly contain three or four units of affordable housing.

Waterman confirmed with Mr. Dovolis that there would be enough room for a driver to back out of a parking stall and exit onto Stewart Lane traveling forward. Mr. Dovolis explained how ADA access would be provided inside the building for the slope and side entry.

Maxwell confirmed with Mr. Dovolis that the grade determines the location of the accesses to Stewart Lane. The proposal would widen Stewart Lane to provide more street parking. Creating an area for delivery trucks to make quick deliveries without causing congestion would be a priority.

In response to Henry's question, Mr. Dovolis explained that a decorative fence would designate the patios for the first-floor units as private areas. In other similar buildings done in St. Louis Park, Minneapolis, and many other cities, the first-floor units are the

first to be rented. The building would be too small to provide guest units. There would be amenities including a party room, bay for car washing and bike storage area.

The public was invited to comment.

David Wangenstein, 5440 Dickson Road, stated that:

- He was concerned with the road and access. Delivery vehicles block traffic and make it very difficult to drive.
- He was concerned with a lack of visitor parking. He likes the visitor off-street parking stalls but was concerned that would not be sufficient.

The public comment portion of the meeting was concluded.

Powers stated that:

- He likes the proposal.
- It would fit well into the neighborhood and Stewart Lane. He did not expect the neighbors to support any multi-family use on the site. He felt 36 units would be reasonable. He would be fine with 38 units.
- He supports adding more parking stalls on Stewart Lane. He would favor removing trees to provide more parking stalls and make the site a safer property in the long run, a more viable project and a more rational development for the neighborhood. He did not want to preserve trees to the fault of causing safety issues. In this situation, some trees may need to be removed to give the development more parking space.
- He likes the idea of long-term rentals. The proposal would not have a lot of tenant turnover. The building is being designed accordingly for long-term rentals.
- He applauds the developer for being willing to include three or four affordable units.
- He supports the concept plan.

Waterman stated that:

- He likes the concept plan.
- He likes the reduction in the number of units. The mass could be an issue. He thought 36 units could be about the right number. He was looking forward to seeing visual renderings to show the height of the building on the site.
- He likes the look of the building. He likes the brick, use of different materials and big windows.
- He appreciates the applicant working with the neighbors.
- The sidewalk makes a lot of sense.
- He likes the direct, exterior access to the first-floor units.
- The proposal has a lot of potential.

- Saving as many of the trees as possible would be incredible.
- He likes the concept plan.

Banks stated that:

- He likes this concept plan a lot better than the last one the commission reviewed.
- He thought three stories would be better, but the reduction in the footprint of the building and the number of units is an improvement.
- The parking is a work in progress. He would prefer more than one access to the garage.
- He recommends doing as many affordable units as possible.
- He appreciates the priority of saving mature trees, but does not want to prevent the creation of common spaces in the building for tenants. He suggests working with the city to determine the number of trees to be preserved while providing adequate guest parking and amenities.

Maxwell stated that:

- She likes this concept plan better than the previous ones.
- She likes the preservation of a lot of green space on the north side to keep the building invisible from Excelsior Blvd. in the summer and provide a walkability connection to Excelsior Blvd. along Stewart Lane.
- The sidewalk is a good idea.
- She would like to find out the height of the surrounding buildings compared to the proposed building.
- She likes the street-parking cutouts on the south side for deliveries and short-term parking.
- She likes the look of the building being more condensed with a greater number of windows. It looks like a beautiful building from the black and white renderings.

Henry stated that:

- He would prefer two points of ingress and egress to the underground parking area if the grade would allow it.
- He would like underground guest parking available in the winter. He was comfortable with five above-ground visitor spaces.
- He likes the preservation of the mature trees on the north side. He favors keeping the trees rather than moving the building further north. The trees would be a big asset to those renting on the north side and provide privacy.
- He favored keeping the building to the south as close to Stewart Lane as possible while keeping the area safe for pedestrians to walk around.
- He would like to see some variation in the mass of the building. He suggested using more glass and stone.

- He appreciated the applicant considering solar panels.

Chair Sewall stated that:

- He agrees that this is the best proposal commissioners have reviewed for this site.
- The concept plan would be an appropriate use for the site.
- There should be a sign indicating that delivery trucks could park in the guest parking on the street.
- He loves the idea of a sidewalk that would travel north/south on the east side of the building. The neighbors want a connection to reach Excelsior Blvd.
- He worried about motorists turning left being able to see pedestrians exiting the staircase.
- The building is attractive.
- He supports keeping as many trees as possible.
- He prefers three stories to four stories but understands the trade-off to save trees.
- The concept plan is a great starting point.

Powers clarified that he wants to keep all of the underground parking stalls as well as the visitor parking. While visiting the site, he thought the building height would fit next to the surrounding buildings, but understood the desire to see renderings.

9. Adjournment

Waterman moved, second by Henry, to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

By: _____
Lois T. Mason
Planning Secretary