

**Minnetonka Planning Commission  
Virtual Meeting  
Minutes**

**Feb. 17, 2022**

**1. Call to Order**

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

**2. Roll Call**

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

Staff members present: Community Development Director Julie Wischnack, City Planner Loren Gordon and Assistant City Planner Susan Thomas.

**3. Approval of Agenda**

***Powers moved, second by Hanson, to adopt the agenda as submitted with additions included in the change memo dated Feb. 17, 2022.***

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

**4. Approval of Minutes: Feb. 3, 2022**

***Waterman moved, second by Banks, to approve the Feb. 3, 2022 minutes as submitted.***

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

**5. Report from Staff**

The next planning commission meeting, which was previously canceled, will be held on March 3, 2022 virtually.

**6. Report from Planning Commission Members: None**

**7. Public Hearings: Consent Agenda: None**

**8. Public Hearings**

**A. Items concerning Minnetonka Vantage and Momentum building at 5735 Co. Rd. 101.**

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.

Dave Maroney, the architect with ATSR Architects representing the applicant, stated that:

- Gordon did a great job summarizing the project and incorporating the updates.
- He met with school district administrators, teachers and students to discuss the plans that include 68 parking spaces and the preservation of trees.
- The applicant is dedicated to using a high-quality material for the building. Elements would coordinate the buildings and continue a signature while setting the building apart.
- There would be large areas of glass on the exterior to maximize what is going on inside the building. The detail would be shown in how the stone exterior would be put together. There would be no major changes from the current plan.
- Under normal conditions, it would take 15 months to construct the building. The applicant plans to have three contractors working simultaneously. He hopes the building will be ready for operation in September of 2023.

Paul Bourgeois, Minnetonka Schools Finance Officer, stated that:

- The school district is under contract to be 100 percent sustainable for electricity and is an anchor tenant in multiple community solar gardens.
- The energy for this building would be completely solar sourced.
- The school district uses natural gas instead of coal.
- In 2013, the district earned an energy-star rating.
- The current programs are underway in a rented space and could provide a fallback option if there is a delay in constructing the proposed building.

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

Waterman stated that:

- He appreciated the presentations. He liked the detailed concept plan and likes the current plan.
- The proposal would be a good use of the land.
- It was good to see the results of the traffic study. He was concerned about parking, but felt better after seeing areas identified that could handle the overflow.
- He likes the façade and exterior materials changes. It looks really good.

- He appreciates the preservation of trees. The amount of tree removal would be well below tree preservation ordinance requirements.
- He likes the placement of the building.
- He supports the proposal.

Maxwell stated that:

- She agrees with Waterman. She appreciates the additional parking spaces which exceed code requirements to accommodate the high school use.
- She likes the thoughtful traffic-flow pattern that uses the existing intersection and appreciates the results of the traffic study.
- She likes the building placement with respect to the trees and grading on the existing site.
- She appreciates the applicant keeping the building smaller and trusts the applicant to know what it needs.
- She likes the sidewalk connected to the lower level.
- The main entrance façade looks like a high-quality building.
- She supports the proposal.

Hanson stated that:

- He looks forward to supporting the proposal.
- He agreed with Waterman and Maxwell.
- He appreciated Mr. Maroney working with the students and teachers to gain their input.

Henry stated that:

- He suggested that the sign have a dark color in the background and the letters be white to be more visible.
- He agreed with commissioners.
- He likes the amount of natural light that would reach inside the building and the exterior similarities to the high school.
- He was proud that this would help prepare the students for the business world.

Powers stated that:

- He thought the proposal was a wonderful idea.
- He looks forward to seeing how some buildings would be repurposed as they become vacant.
- He wished the applicant luck in being able to obtain needed materials.
- He supports staff's recommendation.
- The building would be very handsome.

Banks stated that:

- He agrees with commissioners.
- He was impressed with the adjustments made to the concept plan. He was glad more trees would be preserved.
- It is a good project that would serve a good purpose.
- He hopes supply chain issues would not slow down construction. He looks forward to its completion.

Chair Sewall stated that:

- He concurs with commissioners.
- The concept review was one of the most thorough ones he has ever seen.
- He appreciated the modifications completed since the concept plan review.
- His only concern was parking, but there are contingency plans in place to deal with a parking issue if one arises.
- He supports staff's recommendation.

***Maxwell moved, second by Henry, to recommend that the city council adopt the resolutions approving the site and building plan review, conditional use permit and comprehensive guide plan amendment for a new Minnetonka Public Schools Vantage and Momentum facility at 5735 Co. Rd. 101.***

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

Mr. Maroney thanked commissioners for helping the applicant improve the project.

This item is scheduled to be heard by the city council at its meeting scheduled on Feb. 28, 2022.

## **9. Other Business**

### **A. Concept plan for Gatehouse Properties at 3928 and 3930 Shady Oak Road.**

Chair Sewall introduced the concept plan 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.

In response to Chair Sewall's question, Thomas stated that the tree protection ordinance would apply to the proposed concept plan.

In response to Henry's question, Thomas explained that, since the neighborhood meeting, she has explained to neighbors who contacted her that Shady Oak Road is a county road and if a formal application would be submitted, then Hennepin County would need to approve driveway locations and density related to the number of trips that would be generated.

David Carlson, president of Gatehouse Properties, stated that:

- He has constructed 60 single-family houses and townhouses in Minnetonka including Eldorado Villas located across from Big Willow Park.
- He appreciates the opportunity to present a concept plan before paying to complete items required for an application.

Jonathon Blaseg, a landscape designer with PLA representing the applicant, gave a presentation and explained the elevations. He stated that:

- Most of the driveways would slope down to the garages.
- The entry sequence creates an attractive pedestrian experience.
- There would be a trail leading to the water for casual recreational purposes.

Waterman confirmed with Mr. Blaseg that the top of the buildings would be below the top edge of the steep slope on the west side.

Powers asked if there would be enough buildable space for the concept plan. John Hink, the owner of Solution Blue, representing the applicant, stated that only a minor variance would be needed to meet all setback requirements. His civil engineering firm specializes in sustainable-stormwater management and completed the Gopher football stadium and Twins stadium and has brought housing sites back to pre-settlement conditions. He was confident the project would meet all stormwater rate and quality requirements set by Minnetonka and the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District.

In response to Banks' question, Mr. Hink explained that buildings one, two, seven, eight, and nine would be at the same elevation. The buildings south of those buildings would drop ten feet in elevation.

Maxwell asked if it would be possible to locate a street access on Willmatt Hill or North Service Drive instead of Shady Oak Road. Mr. Hink answered that the topography, and in consideration of the neighbors, made Shady Oak Road the best location. Maxwell suggested looking at utilizing an access road for the two houses on the northeast that could potentially reduce the amount of impervious surface.

In response to Maxwell's question, Mr. Hink identified the overflow parking area by the courtyard. Mr. Blaseg said that the site was designed to meet the city's parking requirements and be as conservative in its use of impervious surfaces as possible. He would reduce or remove the size of the auxiliary parking area if the city agreed. The concept was designed to meet city ordinances.

Maxwell thought creating a street between the six buildings would reduce the amount of impervious surface. Mr. Blaseg said that could be taken into consideration.

Maxwell noted that it could sometimes be tough for a motor vehicle driver to see a street access from Shady Oak Road during rush hour.

In response to Henry's question, Mr. Carlson explained the floor plans. Mr. Carlson stated that:

- There is a great need for this type of housing. Minnetonka has had only two condominiums and no one-level townhouses on the market for the past week. There is a large demand created by people 55 years of age and older who would make their single-family residences available to younger buyers if condominiums or one-level townhouses were available.
- The concept plan would include two of the condominiums meeting the affordable housing guidelines by being priced at \$316,000. The concept plan would meet the two conditions to allow approval of a zoning change to a planned unit development (PUD) by providing affordable housing and a type of housing needed in the city.
- All of the units would very likely be purchased by owners of single-family residences in Minnetonka and would make those houses available.
- All of the driveway slopes in the concept plan are less than ten percent.
- All of the units would have private elevators and windows on all four sides.
- The location of the dock was chosen to give everyone in the community access to the area.

Chair Sewall invited the public to provide input.

John Hobday, 3917 Willmatt Hill, stated that:

- The proposed access to Shady Oak Road is located on a blind curve. He hit a flock of geese with his vehicle in that location. He worried about drivers turning left.
- Drivers exceed the speed limit traveling in both directions on Shady Oak Road.
- He would prefer the access be located on North Service Drive. There is a left turn lane already in place to turn left onto North Service Drive.

- He suggested extending the sidewalk up to Willmatt Hill and Cottage so that residents of the proposal could safely walk up Shady Oak Road. There is a bike lane, but that is used by bicycles.
- The site would go from having two single-family residences to nine buildings with two stories and underground garages. He appreciates that the garages would be lowered to the greatest extent possible. The site is approximately three acres. He thought 18 units would not be considered low density.
- He was “not absolutely opposed” to the concept plan. The renderings are very nice. He might consider living there himself. He would support up to seven units with a little more green space and off-street parking.
- He worried about the environment. He was thrilled to hear the city has a tree ordinance.
- Building number eight would cut into the steep slope of the hill. He would encourage building eight to be removed.
- He was not opposed to someone making a profit, but he wanted to balance that with the existing homeowners’ property values. He thought his property value would “take a hit.” This would be higher-priced real estate.
- He would like to see a comparison of the total roof height with the elevation of Willmatt Hill.
- The development would be very attractive.
- He likes the green space between the lower levels.

John Walker, 4001 Auburn Drive, stated that:

- He was not opposed to the development, although the density seemed too high.
- He thought the elevation would have to be raised for the four units located closest to the lake.
- He asked when the protections for the lake and floodplain would be reviewed.
- He was skeptical of how much of the site would be buildable.

Chair Sewall noted that this is a concept plan review, not an actual application.

Mr. Hink clarified that the title shows that the site is six acres in size, not three acres.

Mr. Blaseg stated that there would be no fill added. The garages would be located as low as possible relative to the preliminary analysis of the water table. FEMA and floodplain regulations would be followed.

Maxwell stated that:

- A low-density-residential use makes sense for the site. Having several two-unit structures could meet low-density zoning requirements.
- If the concept plan would be a little too dense, then she suggested removing two units in the middle and moving the other units away from the lake.
- She would like to see consideration of the entrance and traffic flow in the area.

Henry stated that:

- He agreed with Maxwell.
- He felt that the density would be too high.
- He appreciated the need for single-level living.
- The site's proximity to trails and parks is great.
- He would like to see more of a connection with nature and a reduction in the amount of impervious surface.

Banks stated that:

- He would prefer fewer buildings. Six or seven buildings would allow more room for common areas and create more public parking spaces.
- He was concerned with the traffic on Shady Oak Road and the site having only one access point. He thought North Service Drive could be used for a second access point.
- He appreciates the affordable housing aspect. He would like that to remain long term.
- The design is great and single-level living is a necessity.
- He likes the elevators which allows for a reduction of the footprint.
- The site looks crowded.

Waterman stated that:

- The proposal is very attractive.
- There is a need for this type of housing.
- It makes sense to change the zoning from R-1 to a PUD, but the proposed density would be a little too much.
- He appreciates the preservation of the wooded tree area and wetlands.
- He likes the grading ideas.
- The site is unique due to the steep slope. The slope would lend itself well to the two-story concept with a sunken garage.
- He was concerned with the left turn onto Shady Oak Road. The North Service Road could be an interesting option.
- He thought overflow parking should be a consideration.
- He likes the green space and landscaping.



- He would like to see more of the proposal with a little less density.

Powers stated that:

- He was interested to find out how much buildable land the site has.
- David Carlson is a wonderful builder who has hired a wonderful engineer. He looks forward to seeing what would be developed.
- He did not think Hennepin County would allow a curb cut onto North Service Drive.
- He wants the proposal to look like Minnetonka from Hwy. 7 and Shady Oak Road.
- It will be fascinating to watch the proposal unfold.

Chair Sewall stated that:

- He supports the idea of low-density housing. It would be denser than what is there now, but the site has six acres. He supports the mild change in density.
- He loves the concept of single-level living with condominiums and townhouses meeting affordable housing standards.
- The proposal is done beautifully.
- Nine units would be too dense. Eight would be better. Seven would look pretty good.
- He recommended setbacks be followed as closely as possible, especially the wetland floodplain setbacks.
- The public speakers made very valid points.
- He wished the applicant luck on the project.

This item is scheduled to be heard by the city council at its meeting scheduled on Feb. 28, 2022.

**B. Concept plan for Eagle Brook Church at 15407 and 15409 Wayzata Blvd.**

Chair Sewall introduced the concept plan and called for the staff report.

Gordon 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.

Deb Hauber, the expansion director for Eagle Brook Church and applicant, gave a presentation. She stated that:

- She is excited to hear commissioners' feedback on the proposal.
- She described Eagle Brook Church's previous and current locations.

- The design of their buildings is intentional.
- The applicant's existing buildings and landscapes are cared for well. She provided photos of existing buildings at other locations.
- She was happy and confident that the proposed use would fit on the site. The site has a lot of green space and wetlands.
- The building size would be between 55,000 and 60,000 square feet. The auditorium would have 1,200 seats. There would be up to 550 parking stalls.
- There would be no fill of wetlands and the wetland setback buffer would be maintained.
- The proposal would stay very close to the existing footprint on the site in regard to the building and parking area.
- A parking deck would be built to provide ample parking and protect the wetland. The building and parking structure would have modest sightlines and elevations.
- The traffic pattern for an assembly use is different than the current use's traffic pattern. Successful traffic management is important to the applicant. If people have to wait in long cue lines, then they will not return.
- This would be the church's eighth site build. The applicant has had great experiences and success managing on-site traffic by working with local police departments.
- The applicant values the community and is a great neighbor. People matter to them and they want to be an asset to the community.
- She appreciated their time and welcomed feedback from commissioners.

Chair Sewall invited the public to comment on the concept plan.

Helen Friedlieb, 10451 Greenbrier Road, stated that:

- The proposal would encroach on her neighborhood and create pollution and neighborhood disruption.
- She is against the proposal.
- She appreciated their time.

Flannery Daley, 1431 Clarendon Drive, stated that:

- The applicant declined to attend a meeting the neighbors invited them to and organized.
- She had a negative response to the proposed 550-stall-parking garage. The proposed parking structure would have two levels which would be one level less than the parking structure at Hopkins Crossroads and I-394. The Hopkins municipal ramp has 380 stalls.
- She did not see how the concept plan would balance the impact of new uses and development on the surrounding neighborhood and

transportation systems in accordance with the 2030 comprehensive guide plan.

- The proposal would not protect her property value or capitalize natural resources protection.
- The concept plan would not preserve the integrity of the neighborhood.
- It would not be a one-story design since there would be different roof levels.
- The existing structure on the site is built into the land, does not appear "garish" or large from the freeway and fits into the neighborhood.

Alex Topousis, 15320 Holdridge Drive, stated that:

- A church moving onto the site would probably be the best thing for the neighbors. It would be better than an apartment building or other uses.
- He thought seating for 1,200 and a two-story parking garage would be excessive.
- His biggest concern is for wildlife. There are a lot of deer running through his backyard.
- He was concerned for the watershed.
- He was concerned with vehicle lights from the second level of the parking garage reaching his house.
- The problems with the proposal would be solved if the occupancy would be lowered to not need a 500-stall-parking structure.
- He thought there would be more events than just Wednesday nights and a couple of services on Sunday.
- It would be excessive for the property to have a two-story parking garage.
- He did not know if parking garages felt like Minnetonka.

James Rowe, 1533 Clare Lane, stated that:

- There is a church in the neighborhood already. The traffic could overload the infrastructure now and as the church continues growing.
- There is a fire station that could be impacted on Sunday.
- He opposes the parking ramp. It would have a tremendous impact on the nearby property values.
- It would be the only church that would have a parking ramp in a suburban area outside of Minneapolis and St. Paul.
- He appreciated everyone's time.

Laura Keith, a Wayzata resident, asked, "What about the Wayzata residents?" She stated that:

- Minnetonka staff should connect with Wayzata residents to help them understand the concept plan.

- She was concerned with traffic west of the church at the frontage road and Co. Rd. 101 which currently is not ideal when turning left.
- She was concerned with increased traffic on Crosby Road. She requested that the traffic study include Crosby Road in Wayzata.
- She requested an environmental assessment be completed. She was concerned about what impact the increase in light pollution and vehicle emissions would have on the wetland.
- The project would be too large and not fit the area.

Stephen Wangstad, 15509 Post Road, stated that:

- The proposal would not fit in Minnetonka.
- The runoff and salt from Interstate 394 currently prevent a pond from freezing. Something bigger than Hillcrest would make the situation worse.
- He would like to use independent contractors Minnetonka has not used before to do the environmental review process.
- It would not be attractive.
- He prefers other options.
- He appreciated being able to speak.

Kristen Gildemeister, 1504 Clarendon Drive, stated that:

- She appreciated everyone's time.
- She agreed with the previous statements.
- Other proposals have been approved for the area, including a senior living facility and hotel, which will impact traffic.
- Firefighters may not be able to access the fire station.
- She opposed the proposal.

Catherine Friedrich, 15424 Holdridge Drive, stated that:

- She would like to see a rendering of what the proposal would look like from Holdridge Drive.
- She was concerned with a two-story parking garage.
- There is no traffic currently on the south or west side of Hillcrest. She did not want vehicles turning around in the cul-de-sac.
- Crosby Road, McGinty Road West, Co. Rd. 101 and Wayzata Blvd. cannot handle additional traffic, especially in the summer and on the weekends. That is a huge concern.
- The wetland, wildlife and tree protection ordinance are very important.
- She wants to see detailed renderings of the proposal.

Sandy Sykfo, 15510 Court Road, stated that:

- She has visited existing Eagle Brook Churches and they are gorgeous buildings.
- The proposed footprint would match the existing footprint.
- The zoning of the site allows high-density residential and commercial uses since it is in the I-394 District.
- Better visual renderings would help people visualize the proposal.
- People need to think about the alternatives that the city would not be able to stop. She would not want a Walmart on the site.
- There are volunteers who handle traffic and safety on Sundays. She would not go if entering and exiting the site would be difficult.
- She did not want the land ruined. She trusts the current applicant and felt better renderings would help people become more comfortable with the proposal.
- She appreciated being able to share her comments.

Jonathon Coots, Corcoran resident, stated that:

- The concept plan would "shoehorn" something into a space that would not fit.
- The facility could be built somewhere else.

Cindy Britain, 1527 Clarendon Drive, stated that:

- She agreed with the previous concerns.
- She supports completing a traffic study and environmental impact study.
- She was concerned with concentrated traffic occurring at the same time as the traffic from the church across the street.
- Drivers from Hillcrest would travel on Clarendon Drive to get around traffic and impact the neighborhood.
- She wants the traffic to stay out of the neighborhood area and be funneled onto Wayzata Blvd. which already has a lot of traffic.
- She appreciated her comments being heard.

Kim Kallerup, 1419 Clarendon Drive, stated that:

- She agreed with the previous comments.
- She opposes the concept plan.
- The proposal conflicts with the 2030 comprehensive guide plan.
- Clarendon Drive is very narrow and has no sidewalks or lights.
- The proposal would not fit in the area.
- She opposes the proposal.
- She appreciated being given time to voice her opinion.

Sarah Schwabel, 15704 White Pine Drive, stated that:

- She was concerned with pedestrian safety on Wayzata Blvd. and Crosby Road from an increase in traffic.
- She was concerned with traffic.
- She opposed the concept plan.
- She appreciated the time to speak.

Flannery Daley, 1431 Clarendon Drive, asked if the site's current zoning allows commercial uses.

Greg Greffin, 1539 Clare Lane, stated that:

- He opposed construction occurring 30 feet from his dining room window for weeks or months.
- He heard that the parking lot was built on a landfill and 100 steel pilings would be needed to construct a parking ramp.
- He opposes a parking ramp being built in a residential area.

Jenny Greffin, 1539 Clare Lane, stated that:

- The concept plan has 550 parking stalls. If one parking spot is needed for every 1.5 attendees, then 800 parking spots would be needed, so up to 250 vehicles would not fit in the parking garage.
- She opposes the proposal because of the out-of-proportion, large scale of the building and the traffic that it would create.
- There is another church on the service road left of Clare Lane.

Chair Sewall thanked the speakers for being brief, not being repetitive and being respectful.

Gordon clarified that the site is guided by the comprehensive guide plan for institutional use and is zoned part of the I-394 PID District which allows office, retail, residential and institutional uses.

Powers stated that:

- The site is a reasonable location for a church.
- It was reasonable for neighbors to be concerned about traffic created by a church of this size.
- The size of the use needs to shrink in order to become viable. It appears that the buildings in other locations were not adjacent to single-family residential housing.
- The applicant has a lot of work to do with the neighbors.
- A two-story parking ramp would not fit the site. He would like to see a rendering.

- Clare Lane is a small street to accommodate the proposal's level of increase in activity this quickly.

Hanson stated that:

- He agreed with Powers.
- A church use would fit the site, but he was concerned that the two-story parking ramp would not fit into the neighborhood.

Maxwell stated that:

- She agreed that a church would be a reasonable use for the site.
- She appreciated that the footprint of the proposed structures would match the existing footprint, would not require fill and would not encroach into the wetland setback buffer. The footprint is reasonable.
- The amount of traffic and size of the parking structure are issues.
- She appreciated that the buildings and landscapes were customized for each of the other locations. She was comfortable that an attractive aesthetic would be created to make the proposal feel like Minnetonka.
- She encouraged the applicant to work with the neighbors to answer their questions.

Banks stated that:

- He agreed with the proposed use of the site.
- He looks forward to seeing renderings to answer some of the questions.

Waterman stated that:

- He concurs with commissioners.
- The property would be an appropriate site for a church and is guided and zoned appropriately.
- The size of the facility and parking would need to be scaled back because of the number of drivers who would be there at concentrated times.
- A parking ramp so close to a residential neighborhood would be hard to find reasonable. A rendering may show a creative way to diminish its appearance.
- Neighborhood engagement is essential for the proposal to move forward.
- He would welcome learning the results from a traffic study if the proposal moves forward.

Henry stated that:

- It is difficult to evaluate a concept plan without details. When change happens, it is easy to fear the worst.

- He appreciated the concept plan presentation.
- A church would be an appropriate use of the site.
- The building size could work.
- He struggled with adding a two-level parking ramp to the area. It would stick out. Mitigation of the appearance of the ramp would have to be done.
- The amount of traffic may be too much for the area.
- He encouraged more interaction between the applicant and neighbors.

Chair Sewall stated that:

- He supports staff discussing the concept plan with the city of Wayzata staff.
- He visited the site and walked around the building. It is a perfect location for a church.
- He felt the building capacity and amount of parking need to be more modest and get the traffic level to a more palatable level.

This item is scheduled to be heard by the city council at its meeting scheduled on March 7, 2022.

## 10. Adjournment

***Maxwell moved, second by Banks, to adjourn the meeting at 10:20 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.***

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