

**Minnetonka Planning Commission
Minutes**

Aug. 18, 2022

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: Community Development Director Julie Wischnack, Assistant City Planner Susan Thomas and Planner Bria Raines.

3. Approval of Agenda: The agenda was approved as submitted.

4. Approval of Minutes: Aug. 4, 2022

Maxwell moved, second by Powers, to approve the Aug. 4, 2022 meeting minutes as submitted.

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

5. Report from Staff

Thomas briefed commissioners on upcoming meetings:

- A joint meeting and bus tour with the EDAC and council members is scheduled to be held on July 25, 2022. Participants will meet at 4:30 p.m. at the Ridgedale Shopping Center west entrance.
- The next regular planning commission meeting is scheduled to be held on Sept. 1, 2022.
- A study session to look at amending the parking ordinance will be held in October 2022.

6. Report from Planning Commission Members: None

7. Public Hearings: Consent Agenda

No item was removed from the consent agenda for discussion or separate action.

Powers moved, second by Waterman, to approve the item listed on the consent agenda as recommended in the staff report as follows:

- A. Amendment to the Minnetonka Corporate Center Sign Plan for King Technology at 6000 Clearwater Drive.**

Adopt the attached resolution approving an amendment to the Minnetonka Corporate Center sign plan for King Technology at 6000 Clearwater Drive.

Banks, Henry, Maxwell, Powers, Waterman and Sewall voted yes. Hanson was absent. Motion carried and the item on the consent agenda was approved as submitted.

8. Public Hearings

A. Conditional use permit and parking variance for a fast-food restaurant at 11301 Hwy. 7.

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

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

Powers confirmed with staff that the parking ordinance refers to the entire parking area for all of the businesses in a shopping area and does not refer to just the stalls located near one business.

In response to Chair Sewall's question, Raines answered that the floral business has an interim use permit which could be modified if there would be a parking shortage in the area.

In response to Henry's question, Thomas stated that staff could look into the possibility of providing historical photos of the parking lot for the shopping center in the winter to determine what amount of space has been utilized for snow storage in the past. Staff had never before received a parking complaint for this shopping center.

Matt Riggs, the applicant, stated that:

- Nautical Bowls is primarily a grab-and-go-type restaurant and there would only be two tables for patrons inside.
- He has always found 50 percent of the 11 or 12 parking spaces in front of the proposed location empty. The rest of the parking lot, even during the busiest times of the day, has plenty of empty parking stalls.
- The current Nautical Bowls location in Minnetonka has ten parking stalls shared with Caribou and a gym next door. He has never seen double parking. He would not allow it.
- He would like to host a bike event to attract bicyclists from the trail.
- He hopes to provide an online ordering option. Door Dash would be the only delivery service if it would be utilized.
- Most customers place the order ahead of time, walk in, grab it and leave.
- Business peaks at lunchtime.

- He estimated that it would be open every day from 9 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

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

Maxwell asked if a different type of use could occupy the site without needing a parking variance. Raines answered that any use would need a parking variance.

Powers was concerned about how to navigate this area of the shopping center. The route is challenging. He thought it could use more study. He likes the business.

Waterman agreed that the traffic flow in that area of the shopping center is sometimes concentrated. There is plenty of parking. He liked the idea of relocating the flower mart. Nautical Bowls is a great project. He supports the proposal, but the traffic flow worries him.

Henry liked the idea of turning the flower market 90 degrees or one aisle over to provide more parking stalls for the five businesses on that side. He would like more than one handicap stall in front of the businesses.

Banks agreed that parking would be a challenge in that area. He understood that there are studies that show parking would be sufficient and the parking ordinance needs to be modified. The location of the business in that part of the shopping center may cause congestion. He likes Mr. Riggs' ambition and hopes the business is successful. The parking situation could be worked out with some adjustments.

Maxwell noted that a variance to the parking ordinance would be required for any type of business use at the proposed tenant location. This type of restaurant would have less of a parking demand than a restaurant that would have more dine-in customers. There would be times when there would not be enough parking in that vicinity of the northeast corner and customers would have to park further away. That is something that the tenants would have to deal with. She would rather grant the parking variance than not have a business utilize the space.

Powers thought customers driving to a sit-down restaurant would be more inclined to park further away. He was worried that customers with to-go orders would park right outside instead of utilizing a parking stall.

Maxwell suggested that each business dedicate two stalls near the door of each business. Raines explained that the property owner could work that out with the tenants. She noted that the flower mart does not take up as many parking stalls as the parking plan, Exhibit A, shows. There would be 15 to 18 additional parking stalls north of the flower market.

Thomas noted that the property owner and tenants enter into agreements to designate dedicated parking spaces. The city parking ordinance includes the entire property when calculating the mandatory amount of parking for each site.

Henry confirmed with Raines the location of the proof of parking area.

Chair Sewall stated that the property as a whole has more than adequate parking, but he agreed that the area nearest the proposed tenant space is difficult to navigate sometimes. Some modifications could be made with dedicated parking spaces, proof of parking and the location of the flower mart. The parking plan is outdated and does not show 15 additional existing spaces which makes the parking sufficient. There may be some offset with the timing of the peak hours of the hair salon. Customers may have to walk a little farther, but he did not think it would be a huge ordeal to get there. The property owner could look at adding pedestrian signage. The flower mart is an interim use which could be moved next year if parking becomes a problem.

Banks moved, second by Waterman, to recommend that the city council adopt the resolution approving a conditional use permit and variance for Nautical Bowls at 11301 Hwy. 7.

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

Chair Sewall stated that this item is scheduled to be reviewed by the city council on Sept. 12, 2022.

B. Conditional use permit with location variance for Advanced Oral Surgery and Periodontics at 110 Cheshire Lane.

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

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

Peter Hind, the architect for the project, stated that:

- He was thankful for staff's help and presentation.
- Advanced Oral Surgery and Periodontics has a current location in Lakeville, MN.
- The use would perform conscious sedation and operate like a typical dental office. There would be no major reconstructive surgery.
- He requested the application be approved.
- There would be two doctors, four staff and two to four nurses present during working hours and 12 to 15 patients visiting the site each day.
- The proposal would not create more traffic than the previous use.

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

Waterman supports the proposal. It would be a reasonable use.

Maxwell supports staff's recommendation. Traffic would access the site from the other side and the use would be separated by a pond from the surrounding residential neighborhood.

Henry noted that no neighbor complained. The building is already there. He would have no problem with it if he lived in the area. He supports staff's recommendation.

Powers and Banks support staff's recommendation.

Chair Sewall confirmed with Thomas that there is no sign proposed. He supports staff's recommendation.

Powers moved, second by Maxwell, to recommend that the city council adopt the resolution approving a conditional use permit and location variance for Advanced Oral Surgery and Periodontics at 110 Cheshire Lane.

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

Chair Sewall stated that this item is scheduled to be reviewed by the city council on Sept. 12, 2022.

9. Other Business

A. Concept plan review for a 275-unit apartment building at 10701 Bren Road East.

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

Thomas reported. She recommended commissioners provide feedback.

Chair Sewall asked what percentage of Opus has been redeveloped. Thomas answered that of Opus' 648 acres, 30 acres have been redeveloped in the last eight years which equals about five percent. About 30 percent of the 648 acres is not developable due to wetlands, steep slopes and wooded areas.

Wischnack noted that Opus has six miles of recreational trails, 140 businesses, 4.2 million square feet of office and industrial uses and 36 percent consists of parks.

Ned Dodington, Greystar Development, representing the applicant, stated that:

- Greystar has been operating in the twin cities for ten years.
- He provided a presentation showing that Greystar is the largest development and investment management company of rental apartments globally.

- Greystar has a proven track record.
- Greystar just completed The Bower in Edina. He provided slides of additional projects done in the twin cities.
- He loves the proposed location and its connectivity to the light rail, employment and walking trails. He is excited by the opportunity.

Burt Coffin, the architect with ESG Architecture and Design in Minneapolis, representing the applicant, stated that:

- The site is well connected to the greater metropolitan area and has a network to existing pedestrian trails.
- There are several other residential projects going on in the area.
- The existing curb cut would be utilized.
- Thomas did a good job explaining the project.
- The parking would be a six-story, above-grade structure that would be wrapped so it would not be visible from the street.
- The courtyard would be 90 feet by 175 feet. It would get nice daylight.
- The exterior of the building would have scalloped edges around the curve and a light-colored exterior. The interior courtyard walls would be a little darker.
- The entrance would have a lot of glass and be transparent from Red Circle Drive.
- The building would have 35 feet to 38 feet of setback to provide a generous space for landscaping.
- There would be ground-floor, walk-up units with porches.
- There would be a connection between the trail system and Shady Oak Road.

Ryan Herm, the landscape architect with Urban Eco Systems, representing the applicant, stated that:

- He is a Minnetonka resident. He thanked commissioners for their service.
- He provided a presentation on the landscape design.
- The proposal would continue a connection to the pedestrian-friendly campus and introduce stormwater conveyance around the site.
- There would be pollinator gardens.
- The courtyard would have a pool, seating, lounge areas, grills and fire pits.
- The proposal would have a sustainable plant scheme to meet the goals of the watershed district and the city and emphasize human activity and recreation.

Mr. Coffin explained that:

- A benefit of not having an underground parking structure would allow large, over-story trees and incredibly rich landscaping to thrive.

- He reviewed the floor plans for each level.
- The site would be sustainably designed.
- There would be a bicycle-maintenance room.
- Stormwater management would be important. He will have more information on that in the near future.
- Best practices would be used for insulation and appliances.
- The courtyard would have full landscaping and could support solar panels.
- He looks forward to meeting with the city council on Sept. 12, 2022.

Powers appreciated the excellent presentation. He questioned why a pool would be included in the proposal. Mr. Dodington stated that the market is competitive and a pool is a market standard for a large, multi-family residential product. Whether the pool would be used or not, it is seen as a market requirement. His kids were out in the pool every day the summer they lived in an apartment.

Powers would like the pool size reduced to allow more areas with tables for people to sit and visit. Mr. Dodington agreed that the pool is often used as a place to congregate and visit. The exact size and location of the pool may change. He appreciated the comment.

Banks appreciated the presentation and details provided. He asked how the proposal would compare to Greystone's other projects in terms of the number of affordable housing units. Mr. Dodington explained that Greystone follows the inclusionary housing policies of each city. In Minneapolis, eight percent of the units are required to meet affordable housing requirements. This proposal would have 28 affordable units to equal 10 percent of the units. The applicant is also paying attention to the range of affordability requested by the city and offering a competitive market set compared to what others are already providing in the area.

In response to Henry's question, Mr. Dodington answered that the affordable units would be fully integrated and be no different than market-rate units. Wischnack explained that Minnetonka designates the number of unit types to be utilized for affordable units, but any unit of that type may be rented as an affordable unit.

Henry appreciated the detailed concept plan. In response to Henry's question, Mr. Dodington stated that the number of accesses would be adequate for the site. The dedicated service entrance is key and a real benefit to the residents. That would be the move-in and move-out location separate from residents accessing the parking structure.

Maxwell noted the proposal's proximity to the SWLRT and asked how the number of parking stalls was determined. Mr. Dodington explained that the concept plan includes 1.3 parking spaces per unit which is the typical standard for a residential, multi-family use. The market does look for a certain number of spaces per unit. An analysis was done that compared how similar buildings operate.

Maxwell asked if parking could be located underneath the apartments. Mr. Dodington explained that the site has a fairly high water table which would make it difficult to accommodate an underground parking structure. He stated that there are benefits to the above-ground parking structure which would go up fairly easily, the building could wrap around it and it would allow the pool to be deeper.

Chair Sewall asked how snow removal would occur on the top level of the parking structure. Wischnack explained how a snow chute might be utilized to move snow.

Chair Sewall asked where guest parking would be located. Mr. Dodington stated that there would be designated guest parking spaces in the ramp on the ground floor close to the leasing office in front of the secure entrance. It would be contained in the parking structure.

Mr. Coffin added that residents like being able to park on the floor that they live on.

In response to Waterman's questions, Mr. Dodington stated that the proposal would be the best fit for the site in today's market. Mr. Coffin stated that a light-colored exterior would make the landscaping more noticeable. The scalloped edges would work better with a light color. It is subjective in a way. He was open to suggestions.

Ryan Sams, the design architect representing the applicant, agreed with everything Mr. Coffin said. He was open to suggestions.

Waterman stated that the detailed illustrations in the presentation are beautiful. He would like a view from the street level. He questioned if it would be good to break up the color of the building exterior. Mr. Sams explained that the scalloped edges subdivide the street wall without changing material and color. Manipulating the massing was used to break up the scale of the building. Masonry at the base of the building could be used to complement the landscaping. The trend is to use restraint in the number of materials and maintain the same high-quality materials throughout.

Wischnack noted that the exterior of the Avidor building is similar to the proposal.

Mr. Sams noted that the topography of the site and slope to the north would eventually create an area that goes from walk-out units to a half-story that would not be occupied where there would have to be some type of base. That would probably have more complexity as the proposal fully forms.

Waterman asked how courtyards like this are utilized. Mr. Dodington explained that the courtyard would be large enough to have sunny areas and some shady areas. Some residents really like to live on the courtyard side of a property to engage with others and be active. The ability to execute a landscape theme at grade would be a stand-out feature for this product in the marketplace.

Wischnak noted that The Rize has a similar courtyard.

In response to Powers' questions, Mr. Dodington stated that there would be three elevators and it has not yet been determined whether to have electric or gas stoves. Powers suggested including sound-dampening features for residents who work from home and chargers for electric vehicles.

Mr. Dodington noted that the proposal would not have cable t.v. hookups. Tenants would utilize the managed wifi network. Electric vehicle charging stations are standard for Greystone properties. Soundproofing is very important. The management team makes sure that there is enough soundproofing.

Banks asked if retail would be included. Mr. Dodington said that it has been very difficult to lease retail space in residential buildings and it has not been considered for this proposal since there is retail located close by on Shady Oak Road.

Chair Sewall asked if a coffee shop or grocery store would be an asset for the area. Mr. Dodington answered absolutely. Residents always want to know the location of the closest grocery store. A coffee shop or grocery store would be great.

Henry asked if something would be put on the roof. Mr. Dodington stated that adding solar panels would be explored. Research is being done to see what sustainable features and classifications may be utilized.

Henry suggested including a car wash. Mr. Dodington agreed that it is a common amenity now.

Henry suggested planting oak trees that would last many years. Mr. Herm said that an upright oak could be considered.

Powers stated that:

- He likes the entire project.
- He likes the idea of the parking. It would be much more cost effective to build it above ground.
- He loves the scalloping idea for the curve.
- He loves the intense interest in landscaping.
- He supports integrating the project into the walkability of the area.
- The passageway idea is brilliant. People like to have a shortcut.
- He likes that washers and dryers would be in each unit.

Maxwell stated that:

- The concept plan is fine.
- She likes the scalloping which is a unique way to match the shape of the site.
- She likes the above-ground parking that would suit this site very well.

- She would like to have the proposed private courtyard as a resident who lives there, but she would prefer the courtyard to be slightly smaller and more visible to allow non-residents to feel more connected when running, walking or bicycling past.

Banks stated that:

- He likes the concept plan overall.
- He would like 15 percent of the units to be affordable.
- He likes the scalloping and angles on the outside.
- He thought more material elements or colors on the inside would help break up the inside.
- The sky lounge is a great feature. He would like it to be a little bigger.
- He likes the unique orientation of the building.
- The landscaping plan is very thoughtful at this stage. The landscaping reduces the appearance of the mass of the building.
- He likes the dedicated area for moving in and moving out.
- He suggested having charging stations for electric vehicles on every floor.
- The proposal is well thought out. The presentation was great.
- He wished them the best of luck moving forward.

Henry stated that:

- He appreciated the presentations.
- He looked forward to working with the applicant in the future.
- The proposal's scalloping is wonderful, the architecture is good, and the landscaping is great, but the building would be too massive.
- He would like more unique elements.
- He favors reducing the height by one or two levels and adding more visual interest.
- He supports balconies on all of the units.
- He would be o.k. with the massing if the roof would be used as a resource for grilling, green space, lawn bowling or solar panels.
- The building has a pretty good, timeless design.
- It is a well-thought-out proposal.

Waterman stated that:

- He appreciated the presentations.
- The site is meant to be used for multi-family residential housing.
- Seeing a rendering of the proposal from the street view may help him feel more comfortable with the mass of the building.
- He likes the wrap-around with the garage, but it creates a big structure and is somewhat unoriginal.
- He is not in love with the courtyard, but he loves the 25-foot passageway.

- He would like to see changes in elevation or what could be done to break up the view.
- He thought the window placement and sizing were a little jarring.
- There is a lot to like about the proposal. He likes the turnaround and emphasis on the landscape.
- He appreciated setting the building further back and the trail connection.
- The interior courtyard color is a little drab.
- The mass is large, but that does not mean it would be a no-go. He was interested to see how it develops.

Chair Sewall stated that:

- The residential use would be fine for the area.
- He still hopes to see other types of uses in the area in the near future.
- He likes the vehicular and pedestrian connections.
- He likes the dedicated move-in and out space.
- The parking ramp makes sense in a lot of ways. He likes the idea of parking on the same level where one lives.
- He supports having electric-vehicle charging stations on each level.
- He agreed that the building has a fair amount of mass. The farther it could be set back and leave more room for landscaping, the better.
- He was fine with the lighter exterior color. He agreed that six colors would be too much.
- He trusts that Greystar is a professional team. He looks forward to seeing them return.

Chair Sewall stated that this item is scheduled to be reviewed by the city council on Sept. 12, 2022.

10. Adjournment

Waterman moved, second by Henry, to adjourn the meeting at 9:03 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

By: _____
Lois T. Mason
Planning Secretary