

**Minnetonka Planning Commission  
Minutes**

**Oct. 20, 2022**

**1. Call to Order**

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

**2. Roll Call**

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

Staff members present: Community Development Director Julie Wischnack.

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

**4. Approval of Minutes:** Oct. 6, 2022

***Powers moved, second by Waterman, to approve the Oct. 6, 2022 meeting minutes as submitted.***

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

**5. Report from Staff**

Wischnack announced that:

- A Spooktacular event will be held at the Burwell House on Oct. 28, 2022, from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.
- The Marsh will be closing at the end of December.

**6. Report from Planning Commission Members**

Powers encouraged people to vote.

Chair Sewall appreciated the work put into the fire department and city hall open house.

**7. Public Hearings: Consent Agenda**

No item was removed from the consent agenda for discussion.

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

- A. Conditional use permit for a restaurant with an outdoor eating area at 12411 Wayzata Blvd.**

Recommend that the city council adopt the resolution approving a conditional use permit with an outdoor eating area at 12411 Wayzata Blvd.

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

## 8. Public Hearings

### A. Parking Ordinance

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

Wischnack reported. She recommended approval of the application based on the findings listed in the staff report.

Wischnack tabulated the results of an electronic survey that shows commissioners ranked their first parking concern to be having adequate parking space; next, design of the parking area; then reducing the amount of underutilized parking space; and, lastly, non-auto related issues.

Another electronic survey of planning commissioners found that most commissioners agree on the importance of parking requirements ensuring that there would be adequate spaces for proposed uses; that parking ordinances will change drastically in the next ten years; and the current ordinance requires too many parking spaces. Commissioners disagreed with the statement that parking requirements should be a formula that should not be adjusted once adopted.

Wischnack asked commissioners to discuss what areas of the proposed parking ordinance they would like to receive more information on and provide feedback on the language used in the draft ordinance.

In response to Banks' question, Wischnack explained how a proposal could utilize reduced parking or travel demand management to receive a reduction in the required number of parking stalls. Banks confirmed with Wischnack that a variance to the parking ordinance would not be needed if a condition of approval outlined requirements to allow a reduction in parking.

Maxwell asked if the proposal would trigger a reduction in the number of required handicapped parking spaces outlined in the state building code. Wischnack answered affirmatively. She will provide the language from the state building code at the next meeting.

Waterman would like more information on what trends are expected to take place in the future. Wischnack will provide commissioners with a presentation done by Dr. Tom Fisher of the UMN who noted how quickly people moved from using horses to

automobiles for transportation. He predicts that when a change in the type of transportation utilized occurs in the future, the transition will happen quickly. He also identifies the need to plan for an increase in the use of curb space for drop-offs and pickups in the future.

Waterman wants to make sure that the amount of employee parking for uses such as barbershops would not be underestimated. He agrees with the need to reduce the current amount of required parking and make the ordinance more flexible. He would like information on how sites operating with approved variances to the parking ordinance are operating now and if the amount of parking is sufficient. He provided Duke's and Taco Theresa's as examples to find out if the sites have an adequate amount of parking.

Waterman noted that c) 1) on page 10 of the proposed ordinance amendment requires as many bike parking spaces as automobile parking spaces. Wischnack agreed that would be excessive and will do further research into that requirement.

Waterman noted that the proposal would change the current ordinance that requires two parking stalls for every multi-family residential unit to one that would require one parking stall for each unit. He asked how comfortable staff would be with decreasing the amount by half. Wischnack explained that the existing multi-family residential buildings had shown an underutilization of existing parking. When the southwest-light-rail-transit (SWLRT) line is completed, the need for parking will decrease further for multi-residential buildings located near SWLRT stations. The change may cause some initial congestion, but the proposed ordinance focuses on what will occur long-term.

Waterman thought it would be helpful to look at areas that surround a site being proposed for development or a new use if the area already experiences parking difficulties. Wischnack agreed that certain sites could create a joint parking phenomenon for an entire area already experiencing parking-shortage issues.

Chair Sewall agrees that certain sites have ample parking adjacent to the site that could be utilized, but others do not have that ability and may even cause more of an already existing parking-shortage problem.

Chair Sewall noted that the parking demand for a new restaurant is different during the first few weeks it is open than the parking demand that occurs after it has been open for two years. He asked what could be done to address the first few weeks of increased parking demand. He agreed that the amount of parking for the long term has been found to be adequate, but the initial opening of a business can cause parking shortages. Wischnack agreed that a contingency plan for the first few months could be beneficial.

Chair Sewall would like parking areas to be greener. He thought that providing an incentive for a pervious surface to be utilized for parking areas could be beneficial. Wischnack noted that landscape requirements are located in a different ordinance, but it could be helpful to include the landscaping for parking areas in the parking ordinance.

The city providing an incentive for a property owner to reduce the amount of existing impervious surface could be looked into.

Chair Sewall noted that commissioners have recently heard about the need for parking in residential areas. Wischnack confirmed with Chair Sewall that he referred to situations where a single-family residence routinely has more than four vehicles in the driveway and a resident utilizes the street for parking.

Powers felt that the city's first responsibility with parking is to create as safe a condition as possible for people to travel. He agreed that different uses have different needs. He wants to have a bias toward growing healthy, small businesses. He wants restaurants to succeed. There needs to be an opportunity for a resident to build a small house with a one-car garage in the future near SWLRT. He would like some flexibility in the ordinance to allow a small house and a one-car garage.

Chair Sewall suggested that the parking ordinance be reviewed by staff every five years. The Ridgedale Shopping Center parking lot was underutilized for years and is now being used for an apartment building and city park. Wischnack agreed.

Maxwell thought a blanket prohibition of parking lots being used for repair, storage and rental of vehicles would be too strict. She would like to allow parking areas that have excess parking and constantly sit empty to be utilized with conditions of approval.

Banks confirmed with Wischnack that the proposed ordinance would require a residential house to have two parking spaces, but the spaces do not have to be located indoors. Wischnack stated that she would provide clarification on the nuisance ordinance that restricts the number of vehicles stored outside of a residence on a driveway to four vehicles and the zoning ordinance that requires a residential house to have two off-street-parking spaces.

Waterman likes the idea of reclaiming underutilized parking areas for small businesses. Wischnack explained that a resilient community project was completed years ago that looked at Opus and found that a large amount of parking space could be utilized for other uses. She will provide commissioners with that report.

Chair Sewall suggested the city provide an incentive for a property owner to turn unused parking space into natural green space. Wischnack would like to hear ideas on how that could work.

Powers noted that the city has taken a position as an environmental city by utilizing solar power.

Chair Sewall suggested that providing free trees or an award to a property owner could be utilized as an incentive to turn an unneeded impervious parking surface into a green surface.

Waterman noted that it might be in the best interests of a property owner to have less area to plow, salt and insure. He likes the idea of providing an incentive for a property owner to change an impervious surface to a pervious surface and informing property owners of a decrease in the amount of required parking. Wischnack agreed that the city providing a tree sale or landscape design services to businesses could be beneficial. For example, reducing the amount of parking could eliminate a water runoff issue for a site.

Banks asked if the parameters regarding when to require the installation of an electric vehicle charging station (EVCS) have been discussed. Wischnack explained that there is a legal issue yet to be determined to decide whether a city may require an EVCS to be provided. Wischnack will look into options.

Chair Sewall suggested that more be included in the proposed ordinance to increase safety in parking areas.

Powers likes the idea of commercial property owners being made aware that unused parking surfaces could be changed to green space to decrease runoff from the site entering the sewer system. There could be a tax incentive. Chair Sewall agreed.

Wischnack explained that the next draft of the proposed parking ordinance would incorporate commissioners' suggestions and be posted on **minnetonkamattersmn.com**. Staff will request comments from developers, property owners and people who have a vested interest in the parking ordinance. The draft will be updated and brought back to planning commissioners for a second review. Changes can still be made at that time before it is reviewed by the city council.

The public hearing was opened.

***Powers moved, second by Maxwell, to continue the public hearing and table action on the proposed parking ordinance to the planning commission meeting scheduled to be held on Dec. 1, 2022.***

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

## 9. Adjournment

***Waterman moved, second by Banks, to adjourn the meeting at 8 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.***

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