

**Minnetonka Planning Commission  
Minutes**

**Feb. 2, 2023**

**1. Call to Order**

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

**2. Roll Call**

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

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

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

**4. Approval of Minutes:** Jan. 19, 2023

***Waterman moved, second by Powers, to approve the Jan. 19, 2023 meeting minutes as submitted.***

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

**5. Report from Staff**

Gordon briefed the commission on land use applications considered by the city council at its meeting on Jan. 30, 2023:

- Adopted a resolution approving a conditional use permit and site plan review with a variance and expansion permit for a drop-off and pick-up loop at Groveland Elementary at 17310 Minnetonka Blvd.
- Introduced an ordinance and referred it to the planning commission for items concerning Greystar at 10701 Bren Road East.
- Reviewed the concept plan for Marsh Run II at 11816 Wayzata Blvd.
- Reviewed a concept plan for Ridgewood Road Villas located at 18116 Ridgewood Road.

Minnetonka held its first Contractor's Expo earlier today to provide educational presentations and materials to help contractors and homeowners with all aspects of the building-permit-review process.

The next planning commission meeting is scheduled to be held on Feb. 16, 2023.

**6. Report from Planning Commission Members**

Powers attended the Minnetonka Contractor's Expo and found it very informative. He hopes it will be held every year. One visual aid showed how water runoff impacts the earth. The event was very well done.

**7. Public Hearings: Consent Agenda**

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

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

**A. Conditional use permit for a 2,100-square-foot detached-accessory structure at 14730 Stone Road.**

Recommend that the city council adopt the resolution approving a conditional use permit for a 2,100-square-foot-detached-accessory structure at 14730 Stone Road.

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

Thomas and Raines reported. Staff recommends approval of the application based on the findings listed in the staff report.

Hanson was concerned that fewer parking stalls for an apartment building might decrease its affordability by an additional charge being added for a resident to utilize a parking space. He would appreciate staff researching the possibility of that unintended consequence. Thomas noted that there is a correlation between requiring an apartment building to have a higher number of parking stalls and an increase in rent. Staff will research how a decrease in the number of available "free parking stalls" may impact affordable housing goals.

Hanson felt that a community that provides free parking has a competitive advantage over one that does not. He finds it easier to frequent establishments in Hopkins because it has ample free parking.

Banks noted that most of the requests for parking variances he has seen as a planning commissioner have been submitted by businesses. He asked what prompted the change to parking requirements for apartments. Thomas explained that no apartment building had been required to adhere to the two-parking-stalls-per-unit-ordinance requirement in

the last six years due to the city's ordinance requiring more parking than the standards set by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE).

Gordon noted that Applewood Pointe might meet the parking ordinance requirements because it provides more surface parking.

Chair Sewall noted that the proposal would fix an issue with the ordinance repeatedly not matching the requirements of the ITE.

Thomas noted that the proposal meets two of three conditions that may indicate that it is time to change an ordinance: to match a change to state or federal law; if a city is constantly issuing the same variance; or if the ordinance is older than the staff members enforcing it.

Raines continued the staff report.

Waterman confirmed with Raines and Thomas that the requirement for visitor parking to be easily accessible did stem from observing that visitors do not utilize the underground visitor parking stalls provided at the Birke.

Chair Sewall noted that underground visitor parking might not be intuitive. He thought a large "visitor parking" directional sign may be helpful.

Powers did not think visitors would drive underground to park.

Thomas and Raines continued with the staff report.

Chair Sewall confirmed with staff that multi-family residences that receive city funds would be required to provide electric-vehicle-charging stations. Hanson and Chair Sewall agreed that the vehicle market would create the need for electric-vehicle-charging stations.

Maxwell supports the requirement to provide a bike-parking area, but was concerned about the safety of some of the locations which may not be safe to travel to by bicycle.

Powers felt that the requirement should not apply to locations that would not be safe to travel to by bicycle.

Thomas noted that the uniqueness of a property could justify a variance to the requirement if, for example, the only road access to the site is Hwy. 7.

In response to Hanson's question, Thomas explained that safety features such as lighting for parking areas are regulated by the building code. A city staff member has recently received training on crime prevention through site design and reviews building permits for items such as lighting and landscaping relative to safety.

Raines continued the staff report.

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

Powers suggested including apartment-building tenants in the parking survey as well as the property owners.

Hanson was comfortable with staff providing additional information to the city council prior to their meeting regarding the items commissioners discussed. He agreed that surveying renters for input on parking would be beneficial.

***Banks moved, second by Waterman, to recommend that the city council adopt the ordinance amending city code 300.28, subdivision 12, regarding parking and loading requirements and adding a new section 315.***

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

This item is tentatively scheduled to be reviewed by the city council on Feb. 27, 2023.

Chair Sewall appreciated staff's work on the parking ordinance amendment.

## 9. Adjournment

***Waterman moved, second by Maxwell, to adjourn the meeting at 7:18 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.***

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