

**Addenda
Minnetonka City Council Meeting
Meeting of December 04, 2023**

ITEM 14A – Items concerning Walser Kia at 15700 and 15724 Wayzata Blvd

Public comment was received after the packet was published. The comments are attached.

ITEM 14B – Items relating to the 2024 operating budget and property tax levies

Public comment was received after the packet was published. That anonymous comment is attached.

ITEM 14B and 14C – Ordinance establishing a rental property registration program

Public comment was received after the packet was published. That comment is attached and relates to item 14B as well as item 14C.



14600 Minnetonka Blvd. | Minnetonka, MN 55345 | 952-939-8200 | minnetonkamn.gov

TO: City Council
FROM: Loren Gordon, AICP, City Planner
DATE: Dec. 4, 2023
SUBJECT: Change Memo for Dec. 4, 2023, City Council Meeting

Item 14A: Items concerning Walser Kia at 15700 and 15724 Wayzata Blvd

The attached comments were received after publication of the report.

325 Townes Rd
Minnetonka, MN 55391

October 18th, 2023

Andrew Walser
Walser Automotive Group
7700 France Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55435

Dear Mr. Walser,

My name is Jessica Yudchitz and I live at 325 Townes Rd. Like many other neighbors, I have concerns about your proposed development and thought I would reach out directly.

To give you some background, I moved here two years ago with my husband and two small children after becoming a victim of violent crime in St. Paul. We stayed in our neighborhood advocating for public safety and change only to be called “part of the gentrification problem,” (even though I had lived almost my entire life in St. Paul). The day before my daughter was born, we packed everything up in a moving van and stayed with family. After putting in 15 offers on homes, we heard one was approved in Minnetonka, a place we knew very little about but understood it was safe and had highly-rated schools. There was a pond with ducks and a pristine wetland in our backyard which drew us to this home – I can still remember hearing the calls of our trumpeter swans and asking our realtor what that majestic sound was. We felt comfortable purchasing the home because we did research on the Wetland Conservation Act – of course we assumed the City of Minnetonka would want to continue to protect this incredible wetland.

In fact, according to the many agencies I spoke with, The City of Minnetonka has a rich history of environmentalism and promoting programs that encourage sustainability and conservation. A quick look on their website confirms this: “We earnestly commit to a beautiful, sustainable, and healthy environment as a vital part of a stable, prosperous, and thriving community.” The city goes on to say “The city’s natural surroundings including trees, **wetlands**, prairies, and diverse bodies of water give it a distinct character.” The Walser Group also appears to hold high standards when the environment is involved. “Caring about the environment extends beyond the dealership. We are involved in community programs focused on preserving and

protecting the environment,” Per the Walser of St. Paul website. I would imagine Walser would want to pay to have an environmental impact study done on the wetland, since your company clearly values the environment. As a social worker, I especially appreciated the incredible work that your foundation has done in the community. Your tremendous generosity to Minnesota and Adult Teen Challenge is inspiring - It reminds me that Minnesota businesses are part of the solution in helping charitable endeavors, as well as protecting the environment.

This is why I am reaching out to you today, Mr. Walser. I believe there is a solution here and I would like to support your business and proposed developments. I support business ventures, especially one with such strong Minnesota roots, and I understand new developments will be to the benefit of this great city. *I would ask that you keep your development within city ordinances and without variances for wetland buffer impact.* The majority of car dealerships stretching on the 394 corridor are not large – they have a small footprint compared to a couple of larger dealerships. Given the innovation and creativity of your business, I feel confident that you could make this front lot work for your purposes, just as the majority of dealerships have made use of their buildable space. If this is not the case, perhaps you could find another site where a pristine wetland full of rare and incredible wildlife will not need to be displaced. My husband and I would love to expand our deck off the back of our home because we also own part of the wetland. However, we respect the rules from the city and the Wetland Conservation Act, as all the other neighbors need to follow. Do you feel it would be fair for your company to be granted a variance, but none of the home owners here would ever be granted an ordinance for wetland buffer impact?

To be candid, Mr. Walser, I feel this project is being pushed through without an unacceptable level of community engagement by Walser and the City of Minnetonka. Are you aware that there is an assisted living facility next to this wetland? They specialize in serving residents with dementia-based disorders. Can you imagine being a family member going through the incredibly difficult process of placing your loved one in long-term care and then finding out there is a massive development project that would change the beautiful landscape you thought your loved one would be able to enjoy? The construction noise alone would be enough to dysregulate anyone with a mild or moderate form of dementia. The renderings showcasing the four-story open air parking ramp should help the neighbors understand what the ramp will look like. Instead, respectfully, they do not appear accurate and look like a 6th grader with a photo shop app completed them. This is a far cry from the renderings showcasing the front-facing building that will be visible to

travelers on 394. Please give neighbors the same respect. The city recently has changed their resolution to mandate Walser put sprinklers **OR** a road completely around the parking ramp. Your company has not even responded to our valid concerns about fire safety. Walser Automotive Group has not incorporated any of our feedback into the proposal, so perhaps you can understand why we are upset. City staff at the city council meeting shared that you postponed a second time, (literally right before the meeting) because your company wanted to take neighborhood feedback into consideration. We have not seen that yet after several months, but would certainly welcome it. The mayor also wondered out loud at the meeting if you withdrew because you were possibly made aware that one council member would not be in attendance and your proposal needs 5 votes to pass.

I remember sitting in a business class at Cretin-Derham Hall lead by Brother Martell. He taught several of us at Cretin-Derham Hall, which has a strong alumni association and emphasizes curriculum surrounding environmental conservation. Two of those graduates also have families who own dealerships in the Twin Cities, and I am glad they had Brother Martel as a teacher and values mentor. I was inspired to become a social worker because of my education there, and went on to participate in many international advocacy campaigns inspired by my CDH education. If you are unaware of the environmental impact that is inevitable here and would like to learn more, please contact Clean Water MN and Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy. If you have not yet been to the neighborhoods surrounding the wetlands, I would encourage you to visit them. There is a gazebo at Legacy Oaks and a trail that leads to the border of the wetland. After speaking with some of the neighbors in that area, it is clear that they have been misinformed about the project. One resident telling me "It is over a mile away and you won't be able to even see the parking ramp." Try to visualize how your development would change the "character of the neighborhood," despite what the city declares in their resolution. How would potential car buyers feel knowing their dealership had to break environmental protections in place? Many consumers care about the environment and will not want to purchase a car where the supplier is going against their own values, especially the type of consumer who wants to purchase an electric vehicle. How will you explain this decision to them? To your employees? Your family?

In an interview with Dignital Dealer in 2018, you said, "We promote and live by these four core values: display a positive attitude, lead by example, be open-minded, and do the right thing." I admire these values and feel encouraged to connect with you directly, given your demonstrated positive impact on the community and your stated values. Walser Automotive Group could demonstrate these values by:

- Submitting a new plan without variances that maximizes the potential of the front buildable lot. This plan would have abundant berming and screening. The process will show that neighbors will be engaged in the design and building process to minimize impact. Neighbors would be shown professional and accurate renderings of what to expect.
- Hold community engagement meetings surrounding the process.
- Pay for a third party to complete an environmental impact assessment.
- Have a fire protection expert review plans, given the fact the MN fire code has not incorporated electric vehicle considerations.
- Perhaps you could even ask the city in the future to put your agenda item towards the beginning of the city council meeting under “items needing 5 votes to pass,” (because that is the section it belongs in, not at the end under “other business”). We feel frustrated that older neighbors, families with children, and people with disabilities have all voiced difficulty in going to a meeting where our agenda item is dead last and not often heard until late in the evening. It feels like suppressing public comment and I am sure this is not your intent.

Thank you for your time. I truly thank you for the incredible work your foundation has done and will continue to do. I hope you can understand that we are not anti-business and welcome your company to join our community, if you play by the rules, we all must adhere to. This would be a great way for Walser Automotive Group to “Lead the way,” and demonstrate Minnesota businesses can and should be good neighbors.

Sincerely,

Jessica Yudchitz (Markland)
markland.jessica@gmail.com
651-207-9999









From:
To: [Bradley Schaeppi](#); [Brad Wiersum](#); [Susan Thomas](#)
Subject: Walser Kia proposal objections
Date: Sunday, December 3, 2023 5:27:54 PM

Dear Mayor Wiersum and Council Member Schaeppi,

I am writing to express my ongoing objection to the Walser Kia proposal. My husband and I live at 101 Ranchview Lane South and are the immediate neighbors to the north.

I am unfortunately unable to attend the meeting either in person or virtually tomorrow as I am on call at the hospital, but hope my opinions will still be taken under consideration and added to the agenda under public comments on the proposal.

The Minnetonka city logo is an "M" with cattails in it. This representation of wetlands in our city logo should merit a strong respect for the few remaining wetlands within our city.

This proposal, through its many iterations, has always relied on receiving wetland/floodplain variances from the city. Walser Kia had full knowledge of what was considered buildable land when they purchased these lots and have shown only perfunctory regard for the wetlands/floodplains. I am concerned that building a 4 story parking structure on floodplains will have unpredictable but irreversible effects on the extensive wildlife that nest in this area, including cranes, owls, trumpeter swans, and countless other species of birds. I am also concerned about the effect of filling in permeable floodplains with impermeable concrete and how this might significantly alter water levels in surrounding areas, such as our neighboring backyard. Our backyard in the spring/after rainstorms currently has soggy areas that drain towards the wetlands, but if the nearby floodplains no longer can help hold water, how much of that water will instead drain into the neighbor's yards? This would have a negative effect on our property values, despite our property taxes increasing each year.

Walser Kia has not shown adequate community engagement during this process. My understanding is that there was one zoom meeting in November 2022 (my husband moved here in January 2023). Since then, despite increasing neighbor awareness and objection, there has not been additional communication from them. It is also frustrating that they have made multiple last minute postponements with no respect for the city's or the community's time, but now suddenly we as neighbors are given one week's notice to review and respond to this complex proposal before it comes to a vote. At the virtual city council office hours on 10/26, I had requested consideration for another planning commission meeting given the many changes over time to this proposal. Despite this not happening, I hope the council will take into account that the project has NOT received a recommendation to proceed from the planning commission for its past iterations.

This newest proposal still does not address the objections that were previously raised to the 4 story nature of this parking garage. The size/scale of this parking ramp is out of character with surrounding dealerships that set the standard for the area. Additionally, although Kia has slightly decreased the number of parking spaces from 642 to 515, it is still a very significant increase from the original proposal that only included 285 spots. This shows that there is not a need or hardship to request variances for a 4 story garage that will largely be used for inventory. Taking away 36' of the structure is merely distracting us from the fact that nothing is being changed about the number of stories the structure has.

I welcome Walser Kia to re-develop the south side/buildable area of their lots. But I strongly object to the city granting wetland variances for Walser to build a metro-transit size parking structure for inventory in floodplains that are inherently not suited for this type of structure.

Thank you for your time. Again, I apologize for not being able to attend the meeting tomorrow and appreciate your consideration of my email.

Sincerely,
Melinda Zhang
101 Ranchview Lane South

From: [Kelsey Engelen](#) on behalf of [Public Comment](#)
To: [Loren Gordon](#); [Susan Thomas](#)
Subject: FW: Walser - City of Minnetonka Horrific Building Proposals
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 9:44:05 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image003.png](#)

2 of 3

Kelsey Engelen | She/Her
Senior Election Specialist
City of Minnetonka | minnetonkamn.gov

14600 Minnetonka Blvd. | Minnetonka, MN 55345
Office: 952-939-8218

From: Bradley Schaeppi <bschaepi@minnetonkamn.gov>
Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 9:05 AM
To: Julie Haltom <juliehaltom7@gmail.com>
Cc: Public Comment <publiccomment@minnetonkamn.gov>; Mike Funk <mfunk@minnetonkamn.gov>
Subject: Re: Walser - City of Minnetonka Horrific Building Proposals

Julie.

Good morning. I have copied your email so that it will be in the public record for tonight's meeting.

Please understand I live on this same wetlands and fully understand the perspective of residents impacted.

You are free to call prior to the meeting to my cell at 612.770.7447.

Best.
Bradley

Bradley Schaeppi
City of Minnetonka Ward 3 Councilmember
My home: 315 Townes Lane (NW Corner of Ward 3)
612.770.7447
bschaepi@minnetonkamn.gov

From: Julie Haltom
Sent: Sunday, December 3, 2023 9:40:28 PM
To: awalser@walser.com; Brian Kirk; Bradley Schaeppi; Brad Wiersum; Deborah Calvert; Kissy

Coakley; Kimberly Wilburn; rschack@minnetonka.gov

Subject: Walser - City of Minnetonka Horrific Building Proposals

I am writing about the horrific building proposal of a parking ramp for Walser's Kia's on our beloved wetlands in Minnetonka. It is apparent that it would cause damage to the wetlands, nature in general, and our views.

I have lived at Wyldewood since 2012 in a unit with a full view of the wetlands and witnessed Ron Clark's Legacy Oaks' negative impact on the wetlands. Now, the city of Minnetonka wants more money to yield to additional damage to the wetlands and the beautiful creatures that live on the land.

This all comes down to money versus nature, and I can not help but think of Joni Mitchell's song "They paved paradise and put up a parking lot."

This is all negative, the construction, noise, and pollution. Light pollution disrupts the natural patterns of wildlife, contributes to the increase in carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, disrupts human sleep, and obscures the stars in the night sky. We do not want you here. In addition, your project will have a negative monetary impact on the Wyldewood, Legacy Oaks, and independent homeowners' values.

Walser and the City of Minnetonka, I ask you to please be innovative and find another location to store these cars where you will not impact nature and will be doing the right thing.

Thank you for your consideration.

Julie Haltom
Cheryl Commers

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

From: [Kelsey Engelen](#) on behalf of [Public Comment](#)
To: [Loren Gordon](#); [Susan Thomas](#)
Subject: FW: WALSER/MINNETONKA BUILDING PROJECT
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 9:43:47 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image003.png](#)

Fyi (1 of 3)

Kelsey Engelen | She/Her
Senior Election Specialist
City of Minnetonka | minnetonkamn.gov

14600 Minnetonka Blvd. | Minnetonka, MN 55345
Office: 952-939-8218

From: Bradley Schaeppi <bschaepi@minnetonkamn.gov>
Sent: Sunday, December 3, 2023 10:53 AM
To: Public Comment <publiccomment@minnetonkamn.gov>; Mike Funk <mfunk@minnetonkamn.gov>
Subject: Fw: WALSER/MINNETONKA BUILDING PROJECT

Bradley Schaeppi
City of Minnetonka Ward 3 Councilmember
My home: 315 Townes Lane (NW Corner of Ward 3)
612.770.7447
bschaepi@minnetonkamn.gov

From: Janice Muir
Sent: Saturday, December 2, 2023 5:34 PM
To: awalser@walser.com; Brian Kirk; Bradley Schaeppi; Brad Wiersum; Deborah Calvert; Kissy Coakley; Kimberly Wilburn; rschack@minnetonka.gov
Cc: Beverly Kieffer; ED & IRENE RADSACK; Julie Haltom; Julie Trones; Karen Lawrie; Mark Moilanen; Matt McCarty; Mike Broberg; PATRICIA COLDWELL; Patricia Kaufenberg; Paula McDougall; bill.foley1
Subject: WALSER/MINNETONKA BUILDING PROJECT

Andrew Walser and the Council for the City of Minnetonka

I reside in the City of Minnetonka and I am a member of the Wyldewood Condominium Association.

Our area is embraced by highways 394, 494, 169, 694, 55 and many more. We are affected by

the activity of multiple cities and developments. These elements bring noise and light in an extraordinary degree.

Walsler Automotive Group has been in business for 67 years.

Instead of discussing adaptations of this hideous project to make it more palatable.

I would like to see Walsler and the Mtna city council take "the high road" and just DON'T BUILD IT!.

How is that for a concept?

Janice Muir

408 Parkers Lake Rd, Wayzata MN 55391



14600 Minnetonka Blvd. | Minnetonka, MN 55345 | 952-939-8200 | minnetonkamn.gov

TO: City Council
FROM: Darin Nelson, Finance Director
DATE: Dec. 4, 2022
SUBJECT: Change Memo for Dec. 4, 2023

Two public comments were received since the agenda was distributed late last week. Both comments are attached.

ITEM 14B – Items relating to the 2024 operating budget and property tax levies

Attachment #1 – Anonymous feedback received via Minnetonka Matters on Nov. 29 at 4:11 pm.

ITEM 14B and 14C – Ordinance establishing a rental property registration program

Attachment #2 – Sally Bressler, 2465 Crowne Hill Rd; email received Dec. 4 at 11:00 am. Comments pertaining to both rental registration and the 2024 operating budget and property tax levies.

**Respondent No:** 19**Login:** Anonymous**Email:** n/a**Responded At:** Nov 29, 2023 16:11:33 pm**Last Seen:** Nov 29, 2023 16:11:33 pm**IP Address:** n/a

Q1. What feedback would you like to provide the city council as it prepares Minnetonka's 2024 budget.

The information distributed by the City of Minnetonka is misleading. It says the increase will be \$10.50 per month. Our increase as retired senior citizens will be almost \$300 or 15% for city of Minnetonka taxes alone. Time to move. Mayor doesn't care!

Darin Nelson

From: Kelsey Engelen
Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 1:32 PM
To: Darin Nelson; Julie Wischnack
Cc: Kendyl Larson
Subject: FW: *NEW SUBMISSION* City council and EDA email comments

Fyi, public comment received which applies to both the 2024 operating budget & ordinance establishing a rental property registry program

Thank you,



Kelsey Engelen | She/Her
Senior Election Specialist
City of Minnetonka | minnetonkamn.gov
14600 Minnetonka Blvd. | Minnetonka, MN 55345
Office: 952-939-8218

From: City of Minnetonka, MN <minnetonkamn@minnetonkamn.gov>
Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 11:10 AM
To: Kelsey Engelen <kengelen@minnetonkamn.gov>; Becky Koosman <bkoosman@minnetonkamn.gov>
Subject: *NEW SUBMISSION* City council and EDA email comments

City council and EDA email comments

Submission #: 2859123
IP Address: [REDACTED]
Submission Date: 12/04/2023 11:09
Survey Time: 18 minutes, 19 seconds

You have a new online form submission.
Note: all answers displaying "*****" are marked as sensitive and must be viewed after your login.

Name

Sally Bressler


Full Address

2465 Crowne Hill Rd
Minnetonka, MN 55305
USA

Phone



Email


City Council, EDA or LBAE

City Council

Meeting date

December 4, 2023

Agenda item

2024 operating budget and ordinance establishing a rental property registry program

Comment

The Minnetonka Community Housing Team agrees with the city that the 2024 levy and budget must be consistent with our community values. Our team is dedicated to the vision that everyone in Minnetonka has the right to safe and secure housing. We have established the following as our priorities for this year: affordable homeownership and rental licensing. We have already met with city council members, mayor, and city staff to outline our case for these priorities. We see the ordinance establishing a rental property registration program as movement toward a rental licensing system that can benefit tenants and landlords in our city. Rental licensing, more than a rental registry, empowers renters to address their housing circumstances and feel confident in reaching out to the city when they are experiencing safety or livability issues. A well-designed rental licensing program also helps to foster relationships between tenants and landlords to alleviate housing issues without displacing residents. Fundamentally, rental licensing will do more than rental property registry to balance the power between tenants and landlords more equitably. From our research into rental licensing programs in other cities, we have come to understand that effective rental licensing requires commitment to funding. The number of rental housing units in Minnetonka is increasing as naturally occurring affordable single-family housing opportunities are becoming scarcer. While the rental property registration program can be a first step, the tenants in Minnetonka's 10,000 plus rental units deserve an ambitious timeline for the adoption of a true licensing system. Our team will continue to advocate on their behalf. We wholeheartedly support tax increases that work to improve the crucial services the city provides and that support those most in need. We look forward to budget iterations in the future that prioritize affordable home ownership opportunities and tenant protections.

Thank you,

City of Minnetonka, MN

This is an automated message generated by Granicus. Please do not reply directly to this email.