

**Minnetonka Planning Commission
Minutes**

January 21, 2016

1. Call to Order

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

2. Roll Call

Commissioners Powers, Calvert, Knight, Odland and Kirk were present. Magney and O'Connell were absent.

Staff members present: City Planner Loren Gordon, Principal Planner Susan Thomas, Senior Planner Ashley Cauley, and Natural Resource Manager Jo Colleran.

3. Approval of Agenda: The agenda was approved as submitted with additional comments provided in the change memo dated January 21, 2016.

Odland moved, second by Knight, to approve the agenda with additional comments provided in the change memo dated January 21, 2016.

Powers, Calvert, Knight, Odland, and Kirk voted yes. Magney and O'Connell were absent. Motion carried.

4. Approval of Minutes: January 7, 2016

Odland moved, second by Powers, to approve the January 7, 2016 meeting minutes as submitted.

Powers, Calvert, Knight, Odland, and Kirk voted yes. Magney and O'Connell were absent. Motion carried.

5. Report from Staff

Gordon briefed the commission on the Glen Lake neighborhood meeting.

The next planning commission meeting will be held February 4, 2016.

6. Report from Planning Commission Members: None

7. Public Hearings: Consent Agenda: None

8. Public Hearings

A. Wetland setback and buffer variances for a retaining wall generally located at 315, 319, 323, and 327 Bellwether Path.

Chair Kirk 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.

In response to Calvert's question, Thomas explained that there would be a wetland buffer in place. Collieran added that a wetland buffer protects the wetland by requiring lawn care practices a greater distance from a wetland and helps water filtration. There would still be an 11-foot buffer. The required buffer is 16.5 feet. Thomas explained that the proposal meets the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District requirements.

Mike Roebuck, of Ron Clark Construction, applicant, explained that the private drive accesses four houses. The retaining wall at the end of the public cul-de-sac was part of the original development. A public trail is located on the west edge of the property. There is a steep grade from the wetland to the road. It made good sense to continue the wall to support the road and prevent erosion of the slope and road.

Odland asked if something would be done to prevent someone from falling off the retaining wall. Mr. Roebuck believed that a railing or fence would be added.

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

Odland moved, second by Knight, to adopt the resolution approving wetland setback and buffer variances for a private drive retaining wall generally located at 315, 319, 323, and 327 Bellwether Path (see pages A7-A9 of the staff report).

Powers, Calvert, Knight, Odland, and Kirk voted yes. Magney and O'Connell were absent. Motion carried.

Chair Kirk stated that an appeal of the planning commission's decision must be made in writing to the planning division within 10 days.

B. Preliminary and final plat for Wilson Ridge.

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

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

Cauley clarified that there are 155 high priority trees. The proposal would remove 52 trees.

Odland asked how many additional trees could be saved if the grading area would be limited. Cauley estimated 14 trees.

Bill Coffman, of Gonyea Homes, applicant, concurred with staff's recommendation. He would attempt to shrink the grading area. The homes would be custom fit onto each lot. The proposed houses would be as far back as the existing houses.

The public hearing was opened.

Jeff Detloff, 4301 Wilson Street, stated that he was concerned that the drainage would run through his yard. There is a lot of water now that travels through his property. He asked how a rain garden would handle the increased hard-surface coverage.

No testimony was submitted and the hearing was closed.

Cauley explained the topography of the site. Engineering staff would review drainage mitigation plans that would require one-inch of infiltration of run off for the increase in impervious surface. The stormwater requirements take into consideration what is part of the proposal. It would look at the existing site, but not mitigate for current conditions.

Calvert understood why the houses would be setback from the street, but was concerned that it would increase the amount of impervious surface from the long driveways. She was glad that the older, high-priority trees would be saved.

Chair Kirk noted that grading would be reviewed during the building permit process. The current application is for the lot split. Cauley agreed.

In response to Calvert's question, Colleran explained that tree regulations do not differentiate between a tree that was planted for landscaping and one that grew naturally.

In response to Calvert's question, Colleran explained that decreasing the grading area to save trees is a requirement in the resolution. Mitigation would require planting 87, 6-foot evergreen trees and 13 deciduous trees on 2 lots.

Odland asked if the houses could be moved closer to Wilson to reduce the driveway length. Cauley said that would be an option to reduce the mitigation requirements.

Chair Kirk visited the site and understands the reasoning for the layout. The site is large enough to be subdivided. It would make a lot of sense.

Powers moved, second by Odland, to recommend that the city council adopt the resolution approving the preliminary and final plats of Wilson Ridge (see pages A22-A27 of the staff report).

Powers, Calvert, Knight, Odland, and Kirk voted yes. Magney and O'Connell were absent. Motion carried.

C. Items concerning a licensed daycare facility at 10401 Bren Road East.

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

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

Odland asked if there would be a safety concern with the close proximity to lite rail. Cauley explained that the outdoor play area would be fenced.

Kristy Couture, of Yellow Brick Road Preschool, applicant, stated that there has been a facility operating in Plymouth for over 10 years. She was available for questions. The program believes that all children should have the right to learn and grow in a safe, nurturing environment. The Bren location would be perfect. The goal is to open in September 2016. The aim is to be a great place to work, be kind to the environment, and be supportive of local schools.

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

Knight thought it looked good. There is a need for more daycare.

Odland moved, second by Knight, to recommend that the city council adopt the resolution on pages A18-A25 of the staff report. This resolution approves a conditional use permit and site and building plans for a licensed daycare facility at 10401 Bren Road East.

Powers, Calvert, Knight, Odland, and Kirk voted yes. Magney and O'Connell were absent. Motion carried.

9. Other Business

A. Concept plan review for Villa West at 16913 State Highway 7.

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

Thomas reported. Staff recommended that commissioners provide comments, feedback, and direction that may lead to the preparation of more detailed development plans.

Kirk noted that the proposal has changed to only include 16913 State Highway 7.

David Carlson, real estate developer with Gatehouse Properties, applicant, stated that the design would be for empty nesters. The houses would be one level with master bedroom, second bedroom, two bathrooms, and sunroom or loft within the roof line. There is little new construction at a reasonable price for empty nesters. The property owner of the adjacent property declined to sell, but a plan was created to show what could be done on the Anderson property. The proposal is at the minimum number of units per acre. The base price would be \$489,900 for 1,500 square feet and a 12 x 12-foot sunroom or 700-square-foot loft. Three of the lots could have a basement. A loft is a lot less expensive than a basement.

Knight asked about the different plans. Mr. Carlson explained that six units on the Carlson piece would be done if the Anderson property would not be included. The other plan is an example of what could be done if the Anderson property was included in the proposal.

Scott Dahlke, applicant's engineer, explained that a small modification could be done to keep the extension if the Anderson property would be included in the project.

Odland asked what would be done to make the site blend in with the neighborhood. Mr. Carlson said that the minimum number of units per acre would

blend in nicely. He provided a clearer rendering to commissioners. The mass would be kept to one level or within the roof line for units with a loft.

Odland asked if there would be a yard. Mr. Carlson answered in the affirmative. All of the units would be end units. The windows would be staggered to provide private backyards.

Calvert said that the proposal feels like it would be part of the neighborhood.

Mr. Carlson said that he received no objections from the neighbors to the south.

Chair Kirk invited those present to provide comments.

David Devins, 17100 Sandy Lane, stated that he objected to the last proposal and favored something like the current proposal. The current proposal would fit into the neighborhood. He preferred one entrance and one exit.

Calvert thought the other concept plan was too dense, but this transitions from the surrounding neighborhood and fits the space better. The homes are attractive. The price point is right. This fits all of the criteria for a down-sizing demographic.

Powers likes the proposal.

Chair Kirk appreciated the proposal taking bicyclists into account and the applicant including an example of what could happen with the Anderson property.

Chair Kirk noted that there would have to be another entrance and exit on Highway 7 if the three parcels to the east would be developed.

Odland asked if it would be possible to add a bridge to mirror what is proposed on the west side and provide safety for bicyclists and pedestrians if all of the parcels would be developed at one time.

The city council will review the concept plan February 8, 2016.

B. Concept plan for Highview Villas, a residential development of properties at 4301 Highview Place and an adjacent, unaddressed parcel.

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

Cauley reported. Staff recommended that commissioners provide comments, feedback, and direction related to the contemplated density and general site design of the previous concepts and the current nine-lot concept.

Robert Eldridge, applicant, said that:

- The cul-de-sac lots would meet all R-1A requirements. The three lots on the north end would not meet the lot-width requirement.
- The mayor favored the cul-de-sac, but thought the lots felt tight in the previous proposal. One lot was removed from the previous proposal. He reviewed the increased setbacks.
- The proposal strives to bring “affordable” new construction in Minnetonka. He hopes to keep the prices in the \$500,000s.
- Less than half of the single-family residential properties in Minnetonka meet the 22,000 square-foot lot-size requirement.
- Six lots might be tough to sell due to the site’s proximity to Highway 7 and Interstate 494. Woods of Fairview and Williston Glen took over 10 years to sell out.
- He appreciated the commission’s feedback and time.

Powers asked for the sizes of houses. Mr. Eldridge estimated from 1,800 square feet to 2,700 square feet. He has buyers interested in the proposed houses. Adding upscale features could increase the price from the \$500,000s.

Chair Kirk asked for the benefits of PUD zoning. Mr. Eldridge stated that the building pad width would be limited to 40 feet to keep the units affordable, more trees could be saved on the east and south to keep more of the buffer, and there would be more control of storm water management. Vehicles would fit easily on the wide street. Each of the driveways would hold two to four vehicles and the garages would hold two to three vehicles.

Mr. Eldridge differentiated his proposal from Williston Glen with its price point over \$700,000. An R-1 in this location would not make sense. The 80-foot cul-de-sac would be huge.

Rene Fine, 13900 Lake Street, asked if the proposal is within standard guidelines. She is pretty excited to see something developed. A lot of the houses have been sold in the last 15 years. She supports revitalization.

Greg Carson, 4222 Maple Lane, preferred the zoning to stay the same. The conceptual turn-around looks smaller than one that is the minimum size allowed for a turn around.

Tony Fernandes, 4232 Highview Place, saw no reason why the proposal should not be accepted. Apartments could be constructed. The proposal would increase property values.

Bob Anderson, 4316 Highview Place, objected to the proposal because it would be too many houses. The houses would be too close together. Six houses would be allowed without a zoning change. The builder said gigantic houses would have to be built then. Average-size houses could be built. The property has been zoned R-1 for years. Someone's desire to maximize financial gain needs to be balanced with the effect that would have on the neighbors. He objects to the proposal because it would damage the character of the neighborhood and quality of life to the neighbors. It would be too many houses.

Leif Swenson, 4214 Maple Lane, stated that it is not the problem of current residents if the houses would not sell right away. Christy Lane is a good mirror of the site and would be reasonable. Twelve houses would not fit with the aesthetic and cause more vehicle trips.

Chad Colsch, 4320 Highview Place, questioned the differences between R-1 and PUD zoning for the site and requested an example of a similar situation and the impact that PUD zoning had on the neighborhood. He asked who would pay for a sound barrier if the neighbors would want one constructed.

Daniel Swanson, 4301 Highview Place, stated that a big cul-de-sac is not needed. He prefers a 6-lot plan that follows R-1 zoning regulations, but he could not find a builder. He has a builder now who wants to do the 9-lot plan. He wants to retire and not live there 10 more years.

Greg Lewis, 4230 Maple Lane, stated that he agrees with Dan and Tony. It would be nice to have some change in the neighborhood. He agrees with staff's recommendation for Villa West. He wants to agree on something. Nine houses would not be a good fit. There would be too many houses, vehicles, and trees removed. He has 13 oak trees and has lost 4 to oak blight. A bus would not be able to turn around. Snow removal would be an issue. A lot of vehicles use the road. Six lots would be better. He lost a buyer for his house because the buyer did not want to see construction.

Ms. Fine stated that it seems that there would be no developer interested in a plan with six lots. She wondered if there would be a compromise. Change is hard. She is planning to stay and raise her small children. The developer widened the lots on Highway 7 and maintained the natural beauty of the trees. A compromise would be beneficial to the neighborhood.

Sherry Bloom, 4328 Highview Place, was concerned with the change in zoning. She favored R-1 zoning regulations. She wants the look of the neighborhood preserved.

Chair Kirk asked if the cul-de-sac would meet requirements. Cauley answered that the cul-de-sac would be reviewed when a formal application is received.

Chair Kirk asked staff to address the sound-barrier question. Gordon stated that a developer may construct a wall or fence as part of a development. MNDOT maintains a list of requests for sound barriers on highways and freeways and would be the authority for a barrier constructed in the right-of-way.

Knight asked if one of the lots on the street would be removed, then would R-1A zoning requirements be met. Cauley answered affirmatively. The lot widths would then meet R-1A standards.

Knight noted that the view would not change from Maple Lane or Highview Place if one lot would be removed. Knight favored 8 lots.

Calvert noted that the proposal would create new construction at a price-point for a demographic that does not have new construction, but it does seem dense. She does see a benefit to new construction. She did not see a lot of space to store snow in the cul-de-sac.

Powers thought the neighborhood does not need revitalization. He did not want to tell a developer how big a house could be. Going from 9 lots to 8 lots would cause a fairly significant change in the cost per square foot. He prefers the current concept plan to the one with 10 lots. Relative to Legacy Oaks, the proposal would not be dense at all. The concept plan is headed in the right direction. He likes 8 lots. Change is not always that difficult. It is healthy to have new houses built in a neighborhood. Engineering staff would figure out the subtleties.

Chair Kirk noted how the site would be connected to the surrounding neighborhood. The character is not isolated.

Odland asked if 7 lots would meet R-1 zoning requirements. Cauley estimated that if the existing house would be removed, then 8 lots would be possible based on the total area of the site.

Calvert asked for the zoning for the area. Gordon answered single-family residential of up to 4 units per acre.

Chair Kirk noted that diversified housing stock is a city goal. The property owner has the right to develop the land. The concept plan is still too dense. These comments go to the city council.

Powers did not see anything healthy about vacant property sitting empty. Lots need to sell within a reasonable amount of time. It is better for the health of a neighborhood.

Calvert was conflicted. She agreed that diversified housing is needed and a vital development that sells in a reasonable amount of time is positive. On the other hand, she had some concern that eight might fit better than nine, but then the price point would go up and the housing stock reverts back to large houses on large lots.

Knight was concerned that decreasing the number of lots would create something similar to the Williston Road project which was an absolute disaster for a long time. Neighbors did not like having empty lots adjacent to them. It was an eyesore. He understood the developer not wanting to create a similar development. Six lots would have big houses.

Chair Kirk did not think it would be fair to require the current owner to provide a buffer between other neighbors and Highway 7. This is a great spot for a decent price point. He hopes it works. He thanked those present for attending.

10. Adjournment

Odland moved, second by Calvert, to adjourn the meeting at 9 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

By: _____
Lois T. Mason
Planning Secretary