

**Minnetonka Planning Commission
Minutes**

August 10, 2017

1. Call to Order

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

2. Roll Call

Commissioners Sewall, Calvert, Knight, O'Connell, Powers, Schack, and Kirk were present.

Staff members present: Community Development Director Julie Wischnack, City Planner Loren Gordon, Assistant City Planner Susan Thomas, Planner Drew Ingvalson, Water Resources Technician Tom Dietrich, and Natural Resource Manager Jo Colleran.

3. Approval of Agenda

Knight moved, second by Calvert, to approve the agenda as submitted with one additional comment provided in the change memo dated August 10, 2017.

Sewall, Calvert, Knight, O'Connell, Powers, and Schack voted yes. Kirk abstained. Motion carried.

4. Approval of Minutes: July 20, 2017

Knight moved, second by Calvert, to approve the July 20, 2017 meeting minutes as submitted.

Sewall, Calvert, Knight, O'Connell, Powers, and Schack voted yes. Kirk abstained. Motion carried.

5. Report from Staff

Gordon briefed the commission on land use applications considered by the city council at its meeting of July 24, 2017:

- Introduced an ordinance for items for the Mesaba proposal.

There will be a comprehensive plan steering committee meeting August 23, 2017.

The next planning commission meeting will be August 24, 2017.

6. Report from Planning Commission Members

Chair Kirk thanked staff for organizing the tour.

7. Public Hearings: Consent Agenda: None

8. Public Hearings

A. Expansion permit and shoreland setback variance for a second floor addition to the existing home at 2604 Crosby Road.

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.

Michelle Weber and Jeff Ecker, owners of 2604 Crosby Road, applicants, appreciated the opportunity to speak. Mr. Ecker stated that staff provided a thorough and informative report. He commended Calvert for visiting the site and meeting with the applicants. Preserving the trees is a priority and was taken into account. The three oak trees are extremely important. He would appreciate the proposal being approved. The neighbors have been involved with the design process. He provided two letters in support of the proposal. The proposal would fit aesthetically better than what is there now.

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

Schack visited the site and saw that the existing house is smaller than its neighbors. The proposal would be tight, but it would make the house fit in better with its neighbors.

Powers felt that the proposal is modest and suited to the area.

Calvert thought it would be very attractive and fit with the surrounding neighborhood.

Calvert moved, second by O'Connell, to adopt the resolution approving an expansion permit and shoreland setback variance for a second floor addition to the existing home at 2604 Crosby Road.

Sewall, Calvert, Knight, O'Connell, Powers, Schack, and Kirk voted yes. 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. Items concerning Midwest MasterCraft at 17717 State Highway 7.

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.

Sewall asked if the parking agreement identifies which spaces are included in the agreement. Thomas directed the question to the applicant.

In response to Chair Kirk's question, Thomas explained that the Ike's site has had a nonconforming use since the first restaurant opened decades ago. The site has never had enough parking to meet current ordinance requirements. A nonconforming business may continue to operate unless the site has been vacant for at least 12 months. When Ike's applied to add outdoor seating, the city required Ike's to obtain a parking agreement for off-site parking. Staff hoped that the parking agreement would continue.

Andy Larson, applicant, stated that he has owned the company for 15 years. He was confident the parking situation would work out. The intention is to reuse the existing signs and make them look nice. He and his architect were available for questions.

Sewall asked how boats would enter and exit the site. Mr. Larson said that there are garage doors on the west side of the property to provide access. The rear of the building has room for a boat inside. The primary storage location will be the Crystal location. Most boats would be delivered on the water. His busy time would be opposite of the restaurant's busy times.

In response to Chair Kirk's question, Mr. Larson stated that the boats are 20 feet to 24 feet in length. The products are expensive because of the content, but only

a few of the boats are over 24 feet in length. The showroom would display a boat in the winter instead of having one outside.

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

In response to Calvert's question, Thomas explained that the proposed use would be required to have 12 parking stalls. The number of spaces provided would meet the demand for this use.

Chair Kirk thought that the proposal would be great. He hoped the business would be successful in the proposed location.

Sewall moved, second by Powers, to recommend that the city council adopt the resolution approving final site and building plans with an expansion permit, conditional use permit, and variance for Midwest MasterCraft at 17717 State Highway 7.

Sewall, Calvert, Knight, O'Connell, Powers, Schack, and Kirk voted yes. Motion carried.

This item is scheduled to be reviewed by the city council at its meeting on August 28, 2017.

C. Items concerning Mesaba Capital at 17710 and 17724 Old Excelsior Boulevard.

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

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

Calvert asked about stormwater management. Ingvalson explained that there would be a chamber onsite to accommodate stormwater. Stormwater management requirements would be met. The site's impervious surface requirement would be met.

Sewall asked for the maximum building height allowed in a B-1 District. Ingvalson explained that the height of the building would be restricted by the setbacks. The height requirement is the same for B-1 and R-5 zoning districts.

Ingvalson noted that the site meets parking requirements.

Della Kolpin of Mesaba Capital Development, applicant, introduced herself and Walker Methodist Vice President of Operations Anneliese Peterson. Ms. Kolpin stated that Ingvalson did such an amazing job that she could shorten her presentation. She stated that:

- The proposal would have 97 units including studio to two-bedroom and two-bath apartments.
- There would be common areas and support spaces.
- The site has many attributes including being located near a major intersection, commercial uses, families, schools, churches, and medical facilities.
- She explained the parking plan and parking agreement with South Lake Pediatrics.
- She provided photos of examples of the common spaces, bistro, coffee shop, library, screen porch, dining room, and wellness center. The wellness center would be open to the public.
- The outdoor spaces would be landscaped with pockets of landscape architecture. There would be wild flowers and stone benches. This would set the tone for future developments.

Ms. Peterson stated that:

- Walker Methodist has been providing services to seniors for 71 years. Their mission is to enhance the lives of older adults through care, respect, and service.
- They currently operate 12 properties.
- They provide independent living. The average age is in the 80s.
- The apartment is leased month to month and services can be increased as needed.
- Care suites are an enhanced assisted living product. There would be a one to five staffing ratio. This can be an alternate to skilled care. Apartments would be in a circle with a common space in between. That staff person is always within earshot.
- The units would be market rate. Each unit pays for rent and care. If a resident runs out of funds due to the increased need for care, residents can apply for an elderly waiver which helps the resident cover the cost of services. The goal is to keep residents in the same environment until the end of their life.
- Walker Methodist is 100 percent certified in the memory and music program. This program reduces residents' anxiety and enhances their ability to communicate.

- The facility is part of the Struthers Parkinson's network so staff are trained in the protocols to care for someone with Parkinson's.
- The Minneapolis office has a dental clinic which is open to all residents in all properties.
- Seventy percent of residents belong to the fitness center. The equipment is designed for older adults.

Calvert asked where the enclosed garden space would be located. Ms. Kolpin pointed out the location on the site plan. Walking trails would be attached to the garden.

Chair Kirk asked how many staff would typically be at the facility. Ms. Peterson answered that 10 additional administrative staff would be at the facility Monday through Friday. There would be 10 to 15 staff members during the day, 8 to 10 staff members in the evening, and 3 to 5 staff members overnight depending on the amount of needed care. Staff would park in the most inconvenient spots. The independent residents would have the indoor parking stalls. Parking would be available in the South Lake Pediatrics Lot half of the day on Saturdays, all day Sundays, and weekdays after 6 p.m.

Sewall asked what percent of residents have vehicles. Ms. Peterson stated that all of their properties have available indoor parking spaces for residents. The facilities range from 10 percent (in buildings operating for 5 years or more) to 50 percent (in newer buildings) of residents who have vehicles. A shuttle is provided for weekly trips to Target, grocery stores, and other outings. Sewall liked the shuttle option.

Gordon noted that the traffic study and parking study evaluated assisted and care residents to determine the number of trips. St. Therese has been a good comparison.

Powers asked why so much parking would be included if it would not be needed. Ms. Kolpin stated that the proposal meets ordinance requirements and prefers to error on the side of having too much parking rather than not enough. Gordon added that parking for an apartment building is required by ordinance to plan for possible future use of the facility.

Chair Kirk asked how many ambulance runs to the site would be typical. Ms. Peterson estimated zero to three a month. The model allows for residents to take advantage of homecare which can handle falls to prevent the emergency call. The goal, as a provider, is to have as few emergency calls as possible.

The public hearing was opened.

Karen McGowen, 17809 Old Excelsior Boulevard, stated that:

- The proposed development is not suited to the area because of the infrastructure around it. She is concerned with the traffic and high school traffic. Drivers make a u-turn around a divider to enter the daycare. Bottlenecks happen often.
- There would only be one access to the site. She did not see how a vehicle would turn around to exit the same access.
- There is no sidewalk on the side of the street that the building would be located. The area is landlocked.

No testimony was submitted and the hearing was closed.

Ingvalson explained that the proposal includes adding a sidewalk on the north side of Old Excelsior Boulevard. Gordon noted that there is no sign preventing a u-turn into Kinderkare. He will look into that.

Gordon noted that the proposal would rezone the site from office to residential. The proposed use would create less traffic than an office use.

Schack asked if a traffic study was done to evaluate St. Therese's impact on traffic. Gordon stated that the traffic and spill over parking concerns expressed for St. Therese at the time it was proposed did not come to fruition. No traffic generation complaints have been received.

Schack asked if Applewood Pointe created any traffic complaints. Thomas explained that the only complaint received occurred when the facility first opened and numerous residents moved in at the same time. Those units are all owner occupied, so residents moved in all of their belongings.

O'Connell is in favor of the proposal. The rezoning would decrease the site's density. An office use would generate a lot more traffic at the wrong time of day given the high school issue. The proposal fits the long-term plan. He confirmed with Gordon that the sidewalk and landscaping are conditions of approval.

Sewall frequents South Lake Pediatric and he has never had a parking problem.

Calvert thought the design would be very attractive.

Chair Kirk thought the size of the building might be a little large for the view from the single-family residences. The proposal would be an appropriate transition. It would be very attractive and a relatively quiet one. He supports the proposal.

Calvert shared his concern. She took pictures of the property from across the street to help visualize how the proposal would look. She was concerned with the mass. The building would be very attractive and is needed by a fast-growing demographic in the community.

Powers moved, second by Knight, to recommend that the city council adopt an ordinance rezoning the properties from B-1 to R-5; approving preliminary and final plats; and approving final site and building plans with a variance associated with Mesaba Capital at 17710 and 17724 Old Excelsior Boulevard.

Sewall, Calvert, Knight, O'Connell, Powers, Schack, and Kirk voted yes. Motion carried.

This item is tentatively scheduled to be reviewed by the city council at its meeting on August 28, 2017.

9. Other Business

A. Concept plan review for Villa West at 16913 and 17101 State Highway 7.

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

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

Schack noted that exiting the site and getting on Highway 7 was difficult. Thomas explained the proposed traffic pattern. Schack was concerned with traffic safety related to entering and exiting the site. Chair Kirk suggested switching the entrance and exit.

Powers preferred two entrances from Highway 7 to provide another opportunity if a driver missed the first entrance.

Sewall asked if it would be possible to access Sandy Lane or Clear Spring Road. Thomas stated that had been considered, but deemed unfeasible.

Calvert noted that some of the trees on the site are nice and some are dead. She asked if the trees on Highway 7 would be preserved. Thomas stated that would be a goal.

David Carlson, owner of Gatehouse Properties, applicant, stated that the proposal would address a need for empty nesters with main-floor living. There are very few units of this type on the market. He has done a similar project, Eldorado, across from Big Willow Park on Minnetonka Boulevard. The building has three units which were sold as soon as they hit the market. He was open to whatever access would work best. The proposal was created by a civil design engineer. The development size, density, and scope would be minimal compared to what could be done on the site. Thomas did a nice job describing the concerns expressed at the neighborhood meeting which were traffic access and screening to the adjacent property owners. He was available for questions.

Chair Kirk asked how close units 6 and 7 would be located to the residences on the south side. Mr. Carlson said that the units would be 20 feet from the property line.

In response to Sewall's question, Mr. Carlson estimated the base price for the units to be \$500,000 with an additional \$25,000 for a 4-season sunroom and \$50,000 for a second story with loft.

Schack asked if he hoped to purchase additional land adjacent to the site. Mr. Carlson stated that the proposal and accesses would need to be approved before purchasing additional property.

Mr. Carlson explained that the cost for new construction is extremely high and it continues to rise. An individual 62 years of age or older may qualify for an FHA program known as a reverse mortgage. A qualifier may sell one's current, paid-off house for \$350,000, put that \$350,000 into purchasing a new \$600,000 residence, and there are no monthly payments. The interest accrues and gets paid along with the remaining balance when the residence is sold. This is an interesting way to provide affordable housing for a senior with obsolete living conditions or a residence in need of repair through financing instead of the purchase price.

Chair Kirk invited the public to provide input.

David Devins, 17100 Sandy Lane, stated that, generally, the neighborhood is in favor of the proposal. There are not a lot of objections. He agreed with the issues staff mentioned. He talked with the developer and land owner and everyone

seems pretty amenable to work on things. The issues are the exit and entrance on Highway 7. He has lived there 25 years and accessing Highway 7 is not that scary once a driver is used to it. Spacing the in and out accesses would solve a lot of problems. There is a berm that has trees and landscaping between his property and the proposed site. He hoped the berm could be recreated. The developer seemed open to that. It would be in everyone's best interests. He is the president of the homeowner's association. The residents of his building are comfortable with the proposal and he is also. It would be a good use of the land. Addressing the Highway 7 accesses and landscaping would make it a good use for everyone.

No one else chose to speak.

Calvert agreed that there is a market for the product. She understood the enthusiasm. It would fit the property. She was glad the neighbors found it acceptable. Maintaining a berm and keeping some mature trees along Highway 7 and providing buffering for the adjacent properties would be important.

Chair Kirk agreed with the importance of preserving the trees along Highway 7. He suggested positioning the residences to make it possible in the future to possibly access Sandy Lane. He agreed that the proposal would be the right product for the area. The density of this proposal is more appropriate than the last proposal's density.

Powers likes the proposed density and the proposal is attractive. He left the entrance and exit to engineers to find the best solution. He liked the product and the idea of providing one-level living. The developer is well established and reliable.

Schack saw it as a testament to the developer that the neighborhood is now supportive of the proposal. She agreed that avoiding the creation of horseshoes roads would be preferable. A decrease in price for new housing is unrealistic. Residents want different accessibility. These types of units are in high demand. She supports the proposal. She likes the plan. Access to the site is the biggest issue.

Chair Kirk suggested that staff provide the city council with an overlay of the existing neighborhood with the proposed accesses to review at its meeting.

O'Connell did not want to tie up this proposal on the hope that the property owner on the east might sell. He left the traffic issues to the experts.

Knight likes this proposal much better than the previous one. It is ideal. He was confident drivers would learn the location of the entrance and exit after visiting the site a couple times.

This item is tentatively scheduled to be reviewed by the city council at its meeting on August 28, 2017.

10. Adjournment

***Sewall moved, second by Calvert, to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m.
Motion carried unanimously.***

By: _____
Lois T. Mason
Planning Secretary