

**Unapproved  
Minnetonka Planning Commission  
Minutes**

**Feb. 1, 2018**

**1. Call to Order**

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

**2. Roll Call**

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

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

**3. Approval of Agenda**

***Schack moved, second by Knight, to approve the agenda as submitted with changes in the change memo dated Feb. 1, 2018.***

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

**4. Approval of Minutes: Jan. 4, 2018**

***Sewall moved, second by Knight, to approve the Jan. 4, 2018 meeting minutes as submitted.***

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

**5. Report from Staff**

Gordon briefed the commission on land use applications considered by the city council at its meeting of Jan. 8, 2018:

- Reviewed items for the Villas of Glen Lake.
- Reviewed the concept plan for Ridgedale Executive Apartments.

Staff had a workshop in January on community resiliency with staff from the Freshwater Society.

Staff has been hosting meet and greet opportunities with the public. There will be 13 drop-in meetings at different locations to discuss the comprehensive guide plan.

The next planning commission meeting is scheduled for Feb. 15, 2018.

There will be a study session with the city council, planning commission, park board, and economic development authority commission on Feb. 12, 2018.

**6. Report from Planning Commission Members**

Schack thanked staff for the work being put into the informative comprehensive guide plan meetings. She invited citizens wanting to be more involved to attend the meetings.

Schack provided that the State of the City address will be given Feb. 7, 2018 at 7:30 a.m. at city hall.

**7. Public Hearings: Consent Agenda**

No items were removed from the consent agenda for discussion or separate action.

***Powers moved, second by Schack, to approve the items listed on the consent agenda as recommended in the respective staff reports as follows:***

**A. Amendment to the Minnetonka Corporate Center sign plan as it pertains to the building at 12701 Whitewater Drive.**

Adopt the resolution amending the Minnetonka Corporate Center sign plan as it pertains to the building at 12701 Whitewater Drive.

***Powers, Schack, Sewall, Knight, O'Connell, and Kirk voted yes. Motion carried and the items on the consent agenda were approved as submitted.***

**8. Public Hearings**

**A. Preliminary and final plat for Simpson Park Addition, a three-lot subdivision at 15617 Lake Street Extension.**

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.

In response to Chair Kirk's question, Colleran identified which trees would be removed.

Jim Simpson introduced himself and his son, Tom Simpson. Jim Simpson explained that he and his wife purchased the lot and intend to build a house for Tom Simpson in 2018. The other two houses would be built over time.

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

Schack asked if replacing the retaining wall in the future would create an issue. Colleran explained that replacing the retaining wall would cause removal of trees. The retaining wall would need to be replaced regardless if the proposal would be completed or not.

***O'Connell moved, second by Knight, to recommend that the city council adopt the resolution approving the preliminary and final plat for Simpson Park Addition.***

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

Chair Kirk stated that this item is tentatively scheduled to be reviewed by the city council on Feb. 26, 2018.

**B. Conditional use permit with variances and an expansion permit for a restaurant with outdoor seating area at 5445 Eden Prairie 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.

Schack asked staff to compare parking for the proposal with the Station Pizza and Gold Nugget sites. Thomas provided a chart detailing parking for Ike's, People's Organic, and Gold Nugget.

Sewall asked where off-site parking could be located. Thomas answered that there is an office building on the south side that has different peak hours of operation, a bank on the north side, and there are some churches in the area that are being considered. The restaurant's staff would typically be the ones required to park off-site. The conditional use permit would require a parking agreement to be in place between the property owners.

In response to Chair Kirk's question, Thomas noted that the site is currently at its hard-surface coverage maximum.

Chris Bjorling and Danielle Bjorling, applicants, introduced themselves. Mr. Bjorling stated that:

- He appreciated Thomas explaining the project so well.
- The proposal is looking at redeveloping the space in the Glen Lake neighborhood to continue the revitalization that is happening there.
- The Copper Cow is intended to be a very family-friendly, neighborhood restaurant selling burgers, fries, salads, and sandwiches. There would be a pick-up window and walk-up counter with ice cream.
- He has been working to maximize the parking and is in negotiations with the property owner across the street to lease additional parking. Employee and over-flow parking is being considered at another site.

- He was happy to answer questions.

Powers asked how the traffic pattern would work with the drive-thru. Mr. Bjorling explained that orders could be made and paid for online to cut out two of the three steps of a typical drive thru. He estimated that orders would be ready by the time the customer arrived for pick up. There would be a designated waiting area for pick-up orders. Powers liked how the applicant had thought the proposal through.

Mr. Bjorling stated that parking information would be available on the restaurant's website, on each receipt, and on signs. He would want to be a good neighbor to residents near the site and who, hopefully, would be frequent patrons of the restaurant.

Schack asked if valeting had been considered. Mr. Bjorling answered affirmatively. It would be implemented if it would be needed.

The public hearing was opened.

Kathy, a Ramsey resident and property manager at Oak Glen Apartments, stated that she was concerned with the parking. When Unmapped opened, there was nowhere for the apartment's residents to park. The parking lots are now signed that a permit is required to park in the lot. She noted that there would be seating for 85 customers and 26 parking stalls.

Paula Larson, 14414 Stewart Lane, stated that she works for the Oaks Glen Lake Apartment's management company. Parking is a big issue. Eden Prairie Road is a busy road and there is no crosswalk.

Tom Wartman, 14401 Excelsior Boulevard, stated that he is concerned with parking. He appreciated staff's report. The lower level would be used as a prep kitchen and part of the overall space. He has a parking problem at Gold Nugget. Employees are supposed to park across the street in the Lunds-Byerly's parking lot. Spasso's has overflow parking occurring in Lakewinds and the hardware store. Ike's has a natural overflow onto the frontage road. It took two years to get the crosswalk at Woodhill Road and Excelsior Boulevard. There is no transit to transport employees to Glen Lake. The 13 to 18 employees would drive to the site.

No additional testimony was submitted and the hearing was closed.

Thomas clarified that the lower level was not included in the parking requirement calculation. She did not anticipate that the lower level would generate the same amount of needed parking that the upper level would generate. The parking requirement looks at the number of indoor seats and square footage of certain areas. Staff is comfortable with its calculation.

Chair Kirk noted that existing parking problems for surrounding uses should not prevent a new use from being approved. The conditional use permit would require a parking agreement for additional parking stalls.

Chair Kirk asked for comments on the appropriateness of the use at the proposed location. Sewall felt that the use and location would be reasonable.

Schack stated that the success of Gold Nugget is a testament to the need for a restaurant of this type in the area. She did not think that the addition of the proposal would even meet that demand. The site is currently vacant. The proposal would be a definite improvement. The patio would be shielded by the building. It would not create a nuisance issue. She is comfortable with the use.

Powers stated that the positives would outweigh the possible negatives. Everyone would benefit. He supports the proposal.

O'Connell felt that the use would be reasonable for the site. It would look better than what is currently there.

Sewall commended the applicant for vetting the parking options before the meeting.

Powers liked the owner's presentation. He thought it was smart of the owners to look for parking alternatives.

Knight liked the use. He lives two blocks north and would walk to the restaurant, even in the winter. He looked forward to a new restaurant in the area.

Schack noted that Station Pizza is located in her back yard. When its application was reviewed, there was a lot of concern expressed by neighbors regarding parking and traffic. She has not experienced any trouble with parking. It has not been an issue. The whole neighborhood walks there in the winter as well.

***Knight moved, second by Powers, to recommend that the city council adopt the resolution approving a conditional use permit with variances and an expansion permit for a restaurant with outdoor seating area at 5445 Eden Prairie Road.***

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

Chair Kirk stated that this item is tentatively scheduled to be reviewed by the city council on Feb. 26, 2018.

## 9. Other Business

- A. Concept plan review for Ridgedale Active Adult Apartments at 12421 Wayzata Blvd.

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

Gordon reported. Staff recommends that the planning commissioners provide comments and feedback on the identified key issues and others the commissioners deem appropriate. The discussion is intended to assist the applicant with future direction that may lead to the preparation of more detailed development plans.

Schack asked if residents provided positive feedback at the neighborhood meeting. Gordon answered in the affirmative. Those present liked the residential density located closer to the mall rather than at the edges.

Sewall asked if JCPenny would subdivide the site. Gordon answered that the intent would be for the applicant to purchase the land from JCPenney. A plat would be part of a formal application review process.

Chair Kirk noted that the proposed park would be an amenity for the public. Gordon agreed.

Chair Kirk drives Ridgedale Drive every day. He supports adding controlled-turn lanes rather than the current uncontrolled-turn lanes.

Johnny Carlson, of Trammel Crow, applicant, introduced himself and Lukas Van Sistine, architect for the project. Mr. Carlson said that:

- Gordon has done a great job reviewing the design.
- Trammel Crow is the nation's most active developer. He primarily focuses on multi-family housing. He has a lot of experience in the Midwest. He is a native of Minnetonka.
- Each project is designed to fit in the community.
- He reviewed some of Trammel Crow's developments including The Island Residences at Carlson Center.
- The development would be geared to active seniors with an age restriction of 55 years and older. Housekeeping, transportation, and meals may be paid for separately. There would be a full-time activities director.
- The units would be more expensive than market-rate apartments, but less than independent living. Rent for a one-bedroom unit would be about \$2,200.
- Residents who require more care would move off site.

Mr. Van Sistine stated that:

- He is excited about the project because there is a lot of parking space around the mall.

- He reviewed the floor plans. Levels one and two would walkout at grade. The building would appear to be six stories on the low side and five stories on the high side.
- There would be a sidewalk all around the building.
- The enclosed parking would be buried into the grade.
- There would be space for residents to form a community within the building.
- The renderings are conceptual. The neighboring office buildings would be taken into consideration. A more contemporary building would be appropriate. Something similar to the Nordstrom building with striated precast and different textures is being considered. The base would be brick.

Mr. Carlson explained the traffic pattern.

Powers asked why the height would be limited to six stories. Mr. Carlson said that the feasibility to fund operation of the site was considered along with the height of the surrounding buildings. All of the active-adult buildings developed by Trammell Crow have been six-stories tall.

Schack asked if there is a conversion plan for when senior housing is no longer in such demand. Mr. Carlson answered that the use would not provide senior care, but would fit a niche for active adults. The residents would be able to walk to the library, mall, and restaurants. The census data supports a strong demand for this type of use for a long time.

Wischnack noted that out of 24,000 households in Minnetonka, 13,000 are single-family units and 7,000 are in multi-unit structures. The number of households that are multi-family in Minnetonka equal nearly 30 percent.

Mr. Carlson explained that the smallest unit would be 566 square feet. That would be made as affordable as possible with rent around \$2,000. There would be small, medium, and large sizes of one-bedroom units and small, medium, and large sizes of two-bedroom units.

In response to Chair Kirk's question, Mr. Carlson stated that the guest parking would be self-contained. There would be a few stalls near the drop-off area. There would be 168 units, with approximately 160 occupied at the same time. The units typically have 1.1 number of vehicles per unit which would equal 176 stalls. The proposal includes 216 parking stalls, which would leave 40 stalls for staff and visitors.

Knight liked the view of the patio area around the pool. He asked if there would be community space on the roof. Mr. Carlson said that the amenities work best when they are all located in the same area. Most of the units would have a balcony.

Chair Kirk invited those present to provide input.

Tristan Lundblad, 1801 Welland Avenue, stated that he is in favor of the project. He wanted to make sure that the building standards would be maintained. He looked forward to working with Trammell Crow to make sure that the labor force would be union members. He wants the building to be standing and viable in 35 years. He thanked commissioners for volunteering their time and being active in the community.

Tom Tart, 1807 Timberline Trail, thanked staff for their time. He asked what type of framing would be used.

Chair Kirk thanked those who spoke.

Mr. Van Sistine explained that the framing would be wood, traditional framing for a building this size. The podium level would use precast floors.

Sewall stated that the more he thought about it, the more it made sense to him to locate multi-family housing near Ridgedale. The proposal would support Ridgedale Shopping Center. He liked locating the housing on the south end. He liked the green area and park. The proposal would be an asset to the mall and surrounding area. The mass would be appropriate inside the ring surrounding the mall. He suggested that a separate dog run/space be included.

Schack agreed with Sewall. She liked the location of the density inside the ring. She recommended that the building be constructed to provide the possibility of being converted to provide housing with no age restriction. She would like to see some continuity around the mall to provide walkability and tie it all together.

Powers likes adding high density in the Ridgedale area. There is a limited amount of space to go vertical. This is the place to do it. He would like the proposed building to be taller. There is a huge demand. The space is precious. He would be opposed to decreasing the height. Anything that gets seniors out of single-family houses would benefit Minnetonka. He liked the proposal.

Knight concurred. He liked the idea of building inside the mall's ring. The parking lots are huge. He asked where snow would be piled. He liked the proposal. He could envision himself living there. The restructuring of the drive aisles on Ridgedale Drive may block off the loading dock to JCPenneys. He was a little concerned with the tight turns for a large truck. The park is a good idea.

Gordon noted that if a round-about would be used, then it would be done correctly.

Chair Kirk noted that snow could be hauled away. Apartments now surround Southdale Center. This proposal would be more attractive than those apartments. He thought there might be a better way to decrease the appearance of the mass created by the horseshoe shape. He liked the proposed landscaping. The exterior white looks urban and hip, but he recommended breaking up the appearance of the exterior mass.



Chair Kirk stated that this item is tentatively scheduled to be reviewed by the city council on Feb. 5, 2018.

**10. Adjournment**

***Sewall moved, second by Knight, to adjourn the meeting at 9:16 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.***

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