

**Minnetonka Planning Commission
Minutes**

Dec. 5, 2019

1. Call to Order

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

2. Roll Call

Commissioners Powers, Sewall, Hanson, Henry, Knight, and Kirk were present. Luke was absent.

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

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

4. Approval of Minutes: Nov. 14, 2019

Henry moved, second by Knight, to approve the Nov. 14, 2019 meeting minutes as submitted.

Powers, Sewall, Hanson, Henry, Knight, and Kirk voted yes. Luke was absent. Motion carried.

5. Report from Staff

Gordon briefed the commission on land use applications considered by the city council at its meetings of Nov. 18, 2019 and Dec. 2, 2019:

- Adopted a resolution approving the final plat for Inverness Wyola Addition on Inverness Road.
- Adopted a resolution approving the preliminary plat for Conifer Heights with some additions to include stormwater sewer improvements.
- Adopted a resolution approving the telecommunication tower at 3717 Co. Rd. 101.
- Adopted a resolution approving a conditional use permit and variance for Park Dental on Hwy. 7.
- Adopted a resolution approving a conditional use permit for Inspire Dance Studio on K-Tel Drive.
- Adopted a resolution approving a 12-month extension of final site and building plans for a two-phase parking ramp at 12501 Whitewater Drive.

Gordon announced that the next planning commission meeting is scheduled to be held Dec. 19, 2019. The planning commission meeting regularly scheduled for Jan. 2, 2020 has been cancelled.

6. **Report from Planning Commission Members:** None

7. **Public Hearings: Consent Agenda:** None

8. **Public Hearings**

A. Expansion permit to replace the flat roof of an accessory structure with a pitched roof at 16816 Grays Bay Blvd.

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.

Knight asked if the proposal would create an issue with water traveling off the roof on the north side and into the lake. Thomas stated that a condition of approval would require additional vegetation to be planted on the north side.

Nate Jurmu of Frontier Custom Builders, representing the applicants, stated that the current roof is leaking. The stairs need to be replaced and the deck is not appealing. The new roof would be more appealing and provide room for storage.

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

Powers moved, second by Sewall, to adopt the resolution approving an expansion permit to replace the flat roof of an accessory structure with a pitched roof at 16816 Grays Bay Blvd.

Powers, Sewall, Hanson, Henry, Knight, and Kirk voted yes. Luke was 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. Conditional use permit for an auto body repair and painting business at 13600 Co. Rd. 62.

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 Henry's question, Ingvalson explained that double stacking of parking stalls would not be allowed for vehicles driven by patrons that would be coming and going from a site; however, double-stacked parking areas are allowed when the drivers

moving vehicles are workers on the site. Gordon provided auto dealerships as an example of vehicles allowed to be parked double deep by dealership employees. An auto repair business would operate in a similar manner.

Henry asked how leaking oil and antifreeze would be handled to protect the wetlands. Ingvalson and Wischnack answered that would be regulated and enforced by the state building code and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

Sewall confirmed with Ingvalson that a condition of approval would require vehicles waiting to be repaired to be screened. Ingvalson explained that the screening must block the view of the vehicles year round. A seven-foot fence would be adequate.

Richard LaMettry, applicant, stated that he was available for questions.

Henry asked how paint spray would be captured. Mr. LaMettry stated that the business is a licensed, hazardous-waste generator. Everything must be removed by a licensed, hazardous-waste handler which is regulated and inspected by the state. The paint fumes would be filtered so they would not cause hazardous conditions, but may still carry a scent.

Powers confirmed with Mr. LaMettry that this would be his eleventh auto body repair shop. Mr. LaMettry added that there is a loading dock on the building that would not be utilized. It could be fenced and used as storage for vehicles. There is an abundance of office space in the building that could be leased. The warehouse rental would be used for storage.

In response to Henry's question, Mr. LaMettry stated that there would be no buried tanks. He has been in the business since he was 18 years of age and has never been cited for improper handling or disposal of waste.

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

Knight moved, second by Hanson, to recommend that the city council adopt the resolution approving a conditional use permit for an auto body repair and painting business at 13600 Co. Rd. 62.

Powers, Sewall, Hanson, Henry, Knight, and Kirk voted yes. Luke was absent. Motion carried.

9. Other Business

A. Concept plan review for a senior rental building at 801 Carlson Parkway.

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

Gordon reported. Staff recommends commissioners provide comments and feedback on the identified key issues and additional issues that commissioners deem appropriate.

Sewall asked if there is a need for hotels. Wischnack has heard of a need for hotels along the I-394 corridor and Ridgedale area. A report was provided on the number of needed commercial and industrial uses in the 2030 comprehensive guide plan.

Rick McKelvey of United Properties, applicant, stated that:

- The site is beautiful, but lacking activity. The 186 apartments geared toward residents 55 years of age and older, hotel, and restaurant would add to the energy of the location.
- Amenities would include an outdoor pickleball court, bocce ball, fire pit, and outdoor pool.
- He hoped that the restaurant would be supported by tenants of the Carlson Towers.
- The existing trails are fantastic.
- The proposal would create a new community.
- United Properties would become a long-term holder and resident of the property.
- He was proud of the design team. He looks forward to providing a fantastic project for the city.
- He was available for questions.

Lukas VanSistine of ESG Architects and Jesse Symynkywica of Damon Farber Landscape Architects introduced themselves. Mr. VanSistine stated that he also worked on the Island Apartments and Avidor Apartments in Minnetonka. Mr. VanSistine stated that:

- He was excited about what was happening on the campus already.
- The applicant has gone through a wide variety of site plan configurations.
- There is a strong east-west access to the site. It fizzles out into the lawn. The proposal would create a north-south access from Carlson Parkway and Lakeshore Parkway. He explained the traffic pattern. It would feel like a quiet street on the front.

Mr. Symynkywica stated that:

- The proposal would complete the site. There would be walking paths and a water feature in the middle. There would be festival areas to provide a movie night or other events to bring the community together. There would be arbors, grills, and outdoor dining areas adjacent to the green area.
- The area between the two buildings would be a green connection for cross pollination between the two projects.
- There would be open green walkways and places to sit and hang out.

- He pointed out the walkway connections and loop.
- The proposal would not impact too many trees. There are existing ash trees which would have to be dealt with, so it would be good to add different species of trees to the site.
- Pollinator gardens and natural plantings would be used to eliminate heavy maintenance. It is a better approach for the future.

Mr. VanSistine stated that:

- The apartment would provide resort-style living. A community would grow within it.
- High-quality materials would be used to complement the towers. Brick and metal panels would be used. Lanterns on the corners would tie in the campus. Bays would provide a home aesthetic rather than a large, blank wall.
- There would be a clear entrance. The entrance to the Carlson Towers would be prominent on the other end.
- Parking would be at grade due to its elevation. He pointed out a parking area that would be below grade.
- The apartments would have a business center, theater, fitness room, club room, great room with dining lounge, workshop, gaming area, and outdoor terrace and outdoor pool.
- There is a movement of people who want to sell their houses and move into a community like the proposed one with built-in activities.
- Much of the parking would be below grade with 1.34 stalls per unit.
- There would be a lounge on the top level to overlook the gardens and court.
- The hotel would use similar materials. This would be a good location due to its visibility from the interstates.

Hanson asked if senior housing is specifically addressed in the comprehensive guide plan. Gordon answered affirmatively. The aging population is large and growing larger. The need shows up in the comprehensive guide plan in the housing study. The proposal fits well with seniors wanting to move out of their single-family houses and stay in Minnetonka.

Wischnack read from the housing study included in the comprehensive guide plan that identifies the need for 170 independent, senior-housing units within one to three years and 320 additional units in five to 20 years and 192 assisted-living units within five years and an additional 199 units after five years. There is a pretty high demand in the independent senior market.

Chair Kirk noted that Applewood sold out as a cooperative. He questioned why the proposal would be for rental apartments and not an ownership cooperative.

Mr. McKelvey explained that United Properties conducted a rigorous market study which found the site attractive due to its access to I-394 and surrounding park land. The applicant was confident the building would be successful.

Powers agreed with the high demand. He thought the building could go higher and provide more units. The area already has mass and distance views. There would be no residences within 300 feet. Mr. McKelvey answered that the proposal would be the largest apartment building United Properties has developed to date.

Henry asked if affordable housing had been considered. Wischnack stated that staff has been discussing the possibility with the applicant. Discussions will continue.

Chair Kirk asked why the proposal would not be a cooperative. Mr. McKelvey described the financing structure. The proposed project would not be able to presell over 60 percent of the units to commence a project. The Applewoods have been very successful. Those are limited to 100 units to 110 units to create a smaller community. The proposed building would be larger, but the site would be able to accommodate the size.

Henry supports the building using less energy. He asked what would be done to minimize energy consumption. Mr. McKelvey stated that energy savings and conservation is a goal at United Properties. The project would go through an energy-design assist process to maximize energy efficiency.

In response to Henry's question, Mr. McKelvey provided that he is leading the construction of a building being built right now in Minneapolis on Hennepin Ave. and Washington that will be powered by steam and chilled water. That building would rely on a renewable source and provide a significant energy reduction. The proposed building would have energy-efficient windows. He was involved with developing the Ford building in Minneapolis which achieved LEED Certification.

Chair Kirk noted that the building codes have been updated to require more energy efficiency. He supports creating green roofs, water capture features and using pervious surfaces instead of impervious surfaces.

Knight asked why the building would not be made taller like student housing near the University of Minnesota. Mr. McKelvey explained how smaller unit sizes could help the student housing at UMN be financially feasible per square foot.

Mr. VanSistine appreciated the support for a tall building. He stated that there is a huge cost increase to construct a building with more than six stories which would make the rent too high. A building more than six stories would cross a threshold that would require the building to have to be 12 or 13 stories, be made of concrete, and have 300 units to be viable.

Sewall asked if the amenities would be shared between the hotel and the apartments. Mr. McKelvey answered in the negative. Apartment residents could purchase services

from hotel staff, but hotel guests would not use the apartment building's amenities. The pickle ball court would be fenced.

Sewall asked where he anticipated most of the traffic would come from at 5 p.m. Mr. McKelvey stated that the vehicles parking in the ramp would empty onto Deer Creek Parkway.

Henry asked if there would be one entrance to underground parking. Mr. VanSistine pointed out on the concept plan that there would be one entrance to the underground parking and a separate one to the at-grading parking area. Half of the 41 at-grade parking stalls would be designated as visitor parking. The parking ramps for the attached office buildings are full during the work week.

Powers asked if the apartments would have storage units. Mr. McKelvey explained that every apartment unit would have a dedicated storage room about 400 square feet in size.

Chair Kirk noted that no one from the public was present to comment.

Hanson appreciated the community the applicant would try to build. He likes the welcoming promenade and landscape architecture. He likes the aesthetics of the building. He was disappointed the building would not be taller than six stories, but understood the economics. He likes the amenities. The use makes sense for the site.

Powers agreed with Hanson. The presentation and property are very nice. The proposal would not add enough to the Carlson Towers area. The demand for this type of living is probably more than anticipated. The proposal looks and feels pretty. He likes the amenities package. The proposal is moving in the right direction.

Henry would like the outdoor spa to be open all year. He questioned if an indoor pool was considered. Mr. McKelvey stated that there would be an indoor pool in the hotel that the apartment residents could utilize for certain events and classes. It would be a large pool. The hotel would be convenient for business travelers and family members of the apartment residents.

In response to Henry's question, Mr. McKelvey pointed out the trails that would make the campus walkable. Chair Kirk was looking for a trail connection on the north. Henry liked the idea of a trail through the woods and appreciated that so many people involved in the project were present to receive feedback. Henry would like special features on the building, such as towers, to give it more pizzazz. He would like to see connections between the lawn area and the south lawn area between the hotel and apartments. He suggested a pass through or grand entrance into the living area that would allow visibility of the amenity area. Mr. VanSistine said that the proposed building would complement the towers, but not override them. Henry liked that philosophy. Mr. VanSistine stated that the brick would have a modern sheen and finish. The proposal strives to find a balance of traditional and modern.

The public spaces reminded Knight of the public spaces in Paris, Madrid, and Munich. He really likes the public spaces. This would be fantastic. He had no issues with the appearance of the buildings. He likes the proposal. It is a shame that the building could not be taller, but he understood the options. He likes the concept plan.

Sewall likes the openness and green space. Other applications for apartments attempted to shoe-horn a building onto a property. It would be a great place to live. The land use would be appropriate. The entrances would be back, farther off of Carlson Pkwy. That is smart from a traffic stand point. The building is fine. He understood the economics that would prevent going higher. He loves the landscaping and open spaces.

Chair Kirk thinks the proposed building would be exactly the right height. He saw the Carlson Towers as being very iconic. He would struggle with the appearance of a taller building competing with the towers. He would choose a six-story building over a 12-story building. He agreed that the openness would be great. He saw brick as timeless. Mixing other elements with the brick would provide more modern elements. He encouraged implementing affordable housing and utilizing sustainable practices in the proposal.

10. Adjournment

Sewall moved, second by Hanson, to adjourn the meeting at 8:23 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

By: _____

Lois T. Mason
Planning Secretary