

**Minnetonka Planning Commission
Virtual Meeting
Minutes**

Jan. 21, 2021

1. Call to Order

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

2. Roll Call

Commissioners Powers, Waterman, Hanson, Henry, Luke, and Sewall were present. Maxwell was absent.

Staff members present: Community Development Director Julie Wischnack, City Planner Loren Gordon, Senior Planner Ashley Cauley, and IT Assistants Joona Sundstrom and Gary Wicks.

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

4. Approval of Minutes: Jan. 7, 2021

Waterman moved, second by Powers, to approve the Jan. 7, 2021 meeting minutes as submitted.

Powers, Waterman, Hanson, Henry, Luke, and Sewall voted yes. Maxwell was absent. Motion carried.

5. Report from Staff

Gordon reported that the next planning commission meeting is scheduled to be held Feb. 4, 2021.

Gordon thanked Luke for her service on the planning commission. Luke expressed her appreciation for having the opportunity to serve on the planning commission and EDAC. She encouraged residents to service on a commission and thanked the commissioners for their support. Commissioners expressed their appreciation for Luke's insightful comments.

6. Report from Planning Commission Members: None

7. Public Hearings: Consent Agenda

No item was removed from the consent agenda for discussion.

Hanson moved, second by Luke, to approve the item listed on the consent agenda as recommended in the staff report as follows:

A. Resolution approving a conditional use permit for an accessory apartment at 14303 Oakwood Road Extension.

Recommend that the city council adopt the resolution approving a conditional use permit for an accessory apartment at 14303 Oakwood Road Extension.

Powers, Waterman, Hanson, Henry, Luke, and Sewall voted yes. Maxwell was absent. Motion carried and the item on the consent agenda was approved as submitted.

This item is scheduled to be reviewed by the city council Feb. 8, 2021.

8. Public Hearings

A. Resolution repealing and replacing Resolution No. 2017-118 for a conditional use permit for a religious institution at 15408 and 15414 Minnetonka Industrial Road.

Chair Sewall 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.

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

Luke stated that the application is straight forward and Cauley covered everything in the staff report.

Cauley received an email from the applicant stating that he had nothing to add to the staff report and he was ready for the motion.

Luke moved, second by Powers, to recommend that the city council adopt the attached resolution repealing and replacing Resolution No. 2017-118 for a religious institution at 15408 and 15414 Minnetonka Industrial Road.

Powers, Waterman, Hanson, Henry, Luke, and Sewall voted yes. Maxwell was absent. Motion carried.

9. Other Business

A. Opus Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR)

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

Gordon reported. He recommended commissioners receive the report and any public comment that may be provided.

Hanson was impressed with the amount of work that went into the AUAR. He appreciated the proactive approach. He questioned how much impact the AUAR would have on a developer considering a project for a property located in Opus. Gordon gave the example of one project, Dominion, which was required to do an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) because it would have 375 or more residential units. The EAW would not have been required for the Dominion project if the AUAR would have existed at that time because it would have met that requirement. The AUAR is a benefit to developers.

Henry asked how often an applicant requests an amendment to the comprehensive guide plan. Gordon estimated one land use comprehensive guide plan amendment application is received each year.

Waterman found it helpful to see how uses could potentially fit in the area. He asked at what point Scenario Two would be implemented to create more of an overall plan rather than piece by piece. Gordon explained that the guidance for the Opus area is for mixed use in the comprehensive guide plan. That provides a broad range of use types. Wischnack added that the map might need a little clarification to distinguish that it illustrates a possible land use scenario and not the actual comprehensive plan designation.

Chair Sewall asked Gordon to guess what chance Scenario Two has to come to fruition. Gordon answered that three years ago he would not have predicted that 1,400 housing units would be under construction in Opus in 2021. The AUAR helps Minnetonka to consider and plan contingencies for possible scenarios. Wischnack said that staff is learning from other areas that received more development due to the addition of light rail transit to allow for better preparation. Currently, vacancy rates for Dominion and The Rize are very low. Even with the new units being constructed, Minnetonka has a vacancy rate of 2.6 percent. A healthy vacancy rate for a city is five percent to seven percent.

Powers felt the AUAR is a helpful exercise. He asked when Scenario Two would be triggered. Gordon responded that a spreadsheet is being kept with current numbers regarding capacity and infrastructure systems. The types of land uses that are lacking or over saturated in Minnetonka are also being reviewed. Wischnack added that the engineers have calculated estimated costs, what funds need to be invested to cover those costs, and the breaking point determined by reaching a certain number of units. The financing mechanism to do affordable housing could also be used for traffic improvements. The trigger points will be determined after receiving input from meetings with the planning commission, economic development authority commission and city council.

Henry felt that preparing the numbers will help Minnetonka prepare for the future. Gordon agreed that the AUAR will service the Opus area well.

Chair Sewall noted that most comments received in reference to the AUAR were provided by affordable housing advocacy groups. Gordon confirmed.

In response to Chair Sewall's question, Gordon provided an example of how Minnetonka assigned a number of trips to each parcel that would benefit from the traffic improvements for Bren Road and how property owners would pay funds if the use created more than the allocated number of trips to cover traffic improvement costs. This prevents the last applicant in the area from carrying the entire burden for the cost of a traffic improvement required by the increase in the number of trips. Wichnack added that the current scenario in Opus makes the Bren Road improvement project seem easy. The AUAR is much more complicated.

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

Chair Sewall appreciated the timely and cohesive AUAR report.

This item will be reviewed by the city council at its meeting on Feb. 8, 2021.

10. Adjournment

Luke moved, second by Powers, to adjourn the meeting at 8 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

By: _____
Lois T. Mason
Planning Secretary