

**CITY OF ST. FRANCIS
ST. FRANCIS, MN
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
JULY 17, 2024**

1. **Call to Order:** The Planning Commission meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chairman Dustin Pavek.
2. **Roll Call:** Present were Dean Becker, Gail Genin, Dustin Hingos, Deb Humann, Marc McMullen, Dustin Pavek, and Daniel White.

Others in attendance: Jessica Rieland, Community Development Director; Brad Scheib, HKGi Vice President; and City Council Liaison Kevin Robinson.

3. **Adopt Agenda:** Motion by McMullen, second by Pavek to approve the agenda. Motion carried 7-0.
4. **Approve Minutes:** Motion by Genin, second by Hingos to approve the May 15, 2024 minutes. Motion carried 7-0.
5. **Public Comment:** None
6. **Public Hearing:**
 - a. Rivers Edge PUD Amendment

Scheib reviewed the Staff packet in regard to the Rivers Edge PUD Amendment request.

The Commission asked if this is being requested due to land constraints. Scheib said yes and added that they are also looking to update the side yard setbacks for the Villas to six feet as a part of this request.

The Commission asked if the reduction to 6-foot setbacks will impact any planned utility easements. Scheib explained that the City engineers reviewed this and they did not have any concerns regarding the utility easements.

Public Hearing opened at 7:12 p.m.

No one came forward to address the Commission.

Public Hearing closed at 7:12 p.m.

Motion by McMullen, second by Humann to recommend approval of the PUD amendment to rezone 2.5 acres of land along Rum River Blvd NW into the Rivers Edge PUD and allow reduced side yard setbacks for the villa lots within the Rivers Edge PUD with conditions and findings of fact as presented by Staff. Motion passed 7-0.

7. **Regular Business Items**
 - a. Hiller Property Concept Review

Scheib reviewed the Staff packet and the Hiller Property concept review.

The Commission asked if the apartment complex could be rearranged on the lot and pushed back to better fit the space. Jeff Weaver, President of The Weaver Bros. Co., came forward and shared that this is a fourth-generation family business and they are dedicated to their work. He noted that they retain their properties and do not sell them to turn a profit. He explained that they have done a lot of work in downtown Anoka and they would like to bring the same concepts they used there into St. Francis. He added that if they rearranged the building on the lot, then the public would end up looking at the back of the building when they drove by. He noted that the front of the building will pop and this is what they will want the public to see.

The Commission discussed concerns with this plan and its proximity to the high school. Scheib explained that Bridge Street is a County corridor, which does have traffic during peak times. He added that traffic is always an issue around a high school. He shared that the development on this property will benefit downtown and traffic will have to have a management strategy that they apply. He stated that the County has given feedback on this and wants a turn lane to help traffic flow through this area. He said there will be a lot of detailed discussion on the traffic impacts. He noted that traffic is not as much of a concern as they will have a management strategy. Mr. Weaver added that there is a middle turn lane for eastbound traffic and this helps keep traffic flowing. He added that the County Engineer would like a turn lane going westbound, which would alleviate westbound traffic after school hours.

The Commission discussed the parking lot design and how it would be consistent with other developments in the area.

Scheib explained that they are working to find the balance between costs and market demands.

Mr. Weaver shared that their plan is to come in with the commercial development first and then begin working on the housing piece of this lot.

The Commission expressed concerns when events are taking place at the high school and people trying to park in this lot. Scheib explained that the large lot will not be there until the apartment building is built.

The Commission asked if the developer would consider building fewer parking spaces. Mr. Weaver explained that people who live in the apartments may need additional parking spots to hold additional vehicles like trailers or boats that will need somewhere to be stored. He said they would not want to have too many parking spaces but they also would not want to have too few. He noted they are not interested in just putting in the minimum parking spaces only to maximize the space.

The Commission asked if they are considering any closed storage for vehicles like boats or trailers. Mr. Weaver said this would be possible. He explained that average garage rent is around \$50 a month, so they could definitely come up with something like this; however, it would not be the kind of building that people would want to see in a new development.

Mr. Weaver discussed the timing of this project.

The Commission asked what kind of apartment housing it would be. Mr. Weaver said it would be market-rate housing, with one and two-bedroom options, and possibly a three-bedroom option. He shared that these would be high-quality units.

The Commission shared concerns with high school students walking across the street from the school to the drive-thru business and the increase in pedestrian flow that would create. Mr. Weaver explained that part of their design is to make this development user friendly for both vehicles and pedestrians.

Councilmember Robinson asked if they were to move forward with the commercial phase of the project, would they still be able to discuss what the remaining phases of the project would look like. Scheib explained that the purpose of tonight's discussion is to provide the developer with general comments that would give them a risk assessment of how willing the City would be to consider deviations from the Code in regard to this project. He noted that this is very early on in the process; however, time is of the essence.

The Commission shared that they would like the developer to think about having some outdoor green space for the apartments. Mr. Weaver noted that green space adds stability to their projects.

The Commission shared that having more affordable housing options in the City will be a good thing for residents due to the high costs of living.

The Commission shared support of the drive-thru as currently designed.

The Commission shared concerns with the parking between the building and Bridge Street. Scheib noted that they have already allowed parking up and down Bridge Street on both sides.

Mr. Weaver encouraged the Commission to look at the work they have done in downtown Anoka to get an idea of what this project would look like.

The Commission provided direction and feedback to The Weaver Bros. Co. in regard to the concept plan for the Hiller property.

8. Planning Commission Discussion

None.

9. Adjournment:

Motion by Becker, second by Humann to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed 7-0

Meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Website Link to Packets and Minutes for the Planning Commission:

<https://www.stfrancismn.org/meetings>

Recorded by: Jessica Rieland

DATE APPROVED: