

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ST. CLOUD PLANNING COMMISSION

A meeting of the St. Cloud Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, September 11, 2012, at 5 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers. Members present were Anderson, DeVine, Holtberg, Andzenge, and Chirhart. Radaich was absent. City Council representative Goerger was present.

Open Forum: No one was present to speak at the open forum.

Consent Agenda: Chirhart moved to approve the consent agenda as follows:

Acceptance of staff reports for September 11, 2012, as part of the official record.

Approval of minutes from the August 16, 2012 Planning Commission meeting.

The motion was seconded by Holtberg and carried unanimously.

Schmidt/Knife River Temporary Excavation Permit at 23735 County Road 75: Matt Glaesman, Planning Director, stated that the applicant intends to utilize its property at the southwest quadrant of the I94 and Opportunity Drive interchange for granular material associated with reconstruction of an adjacent stretch of I94. The application materials include information on permits already obtained from state agencies for the project. However, staff is seeking additional information on three issues before offering its recommendation, including: traffic control, future land use implications, and storm water/erosion control. Devine noted that the project is slated to begin in the coming weeks and asked if more time should have been provided for this review. The following person spoke:

Mark Magnusson of Knife River

Magnusson explained that the State contract was only recently received and that a local application prior to that approval would have been premature. The initial project meeting was held earlier in the day. There are two proposed uses of the site; granular extraction and concrete crushing for use in the project. Magnusson explained that the project already has its SWPP and that site would be contained by a berm and silt fencing through the period that seeding takes root. Magnusson noted that the extraction is removing a hill from the site and that the extent of depression should be limited.

Andzenge asked if the applicant felt the concerns raised by staff could be addressed prior to City Council consideration. Magnusson indicated that they could and agreed to set a meeting within the week. Glaesman agreed that these were not fatal concerns, but simply required greater coordination and information. Glaesman added that the land use concern was not one of limiting uses, but adding significant cost to regrade the site for a large user. Chirhart indicated that the potential impact upon value of the site for future development is a matter of private property ownership. Anderson asked where the materials would be utilized. Magnusson indicated that the project extends from CR75 to the Stearns/Wright line.

Holtberg moved to recommend to the City Council approval of the temporary excavation permit provided that the applicant is able to address staff's concerns with drainage, erosion, and traffic control. The motion carried unanimously.

2013 Development Budget Proposal: Matt Glaesman, Planning Director, presented three scenarios for the Development Fund revenue, expenditures, and year-end balance through 2018. The scenarios depict the impact of a \$1 million expenditure for IT infrastructure given variables of in revenue and expenditures. Glaesman noted that all three scenarios result in a 2018 fund balance well in excess of the current \$100,000 standard in the Planning Commission's Development Fund policy. However, with historic revenues spending would be limited to the recent staffing and planning operation expenses without land purchase. Chirhart questioned the other funding sources for the IT project. Glaesman responded that the City is contracted with an outside party to seek grant funds, while Administration has agreed to other funding sources would need to meet the gap or the remaining \$1.4 million. Holtberg asked if there has any discussion about changing the Development Fund percentage or fees. Glaesman indicated that fee increases would not have a dramatic impact. Goerger indicated that the City Council has discussed possible changes to the Development Fund, but those have not been forwarded. Chirhart clarified that the Development Fund is established by Charter and that input of the Charter Commission and/or voters would be required. Holtberg questioned the impact of a future comprehensive plan updated at more than \$500,000. Several

members shared this concern. Chirhart noted the important role of the Comprehensive Plan in defending legal challenges and that the City's plan is more than 10 years old. Glaesman felt that an update would be significantly less than the \$2003 process given the City's advancements in GIS and ability to facilitate process, but agreed that the cost would be challenging and projected years in advance to spread that cost. Chirhart noted that staffing expenses were not reduced in any scenario, which is in conflict with the Planning Commission's policy. Glaesman noted that was the case. Goerger questioned if the amount should be adjusted up for anticipated staffing cost increases. Glaesman felt that current staffing expense was the best possible element given uncertainty in benefit costs and actual staffing levels. Devine asked if the 30% cost of the department secretary being shared with Economic Development is accounted for in the numbers. Glaesman noted that it was and that ½ a Senior Planner position is also removed from the Development Fund and paid by CDBG. Devine asked if the entire \$1 million IT allocation would occur in 2013 or spread across multiple years. Glaesman said that more than one year is likely. Anderson questioned if the cost for annual maintenance of the IT improvements would be a future Development Fund expense. Glaesman indicated that annual maintenance costs would be spread across the General Fund budget of many departments. Holtberg asked if there was the potential for the IT project to be shared across jurisdictions. Glaesman indicated that was possible and discussions had already started. Anderson agreed that there is the potential for cost sharing through governmental partnerships.

Holtberg moved to change the minimum balance noted in the Planning Commission's Development Fund policy from \$100,000 to \$250,000. The motion was seconded by Andzenge. The motion to approve carried unanimously.

Holtberg moved to approve the 2013 Development Fund budget as presented in September. The motion was seconded by Devine. Devine questioned whether the motion should clarify the Planning Commission's expectation that cost of ultimate cost of the IT project be spread across multiple departments. Glaesman indicated that the motion relates to entire Development Fund budget and preferred that it be simplified. Although staff would carry forward the comments as more

information is gained about the grant funding and final project amount. The motion to approve carried unanimously.

Chirhart and Goerger excused themselves from the meeting.

Discussion of Front Yard Fence Height Restrictions: Matt Glaesman, Planning Director, explained that the Zoning Board of Appeals recently considered a variance request to increase the height of fencing within front yards abutting arterial roadways. The current ordinance limits front yard fencing to 4 feet. The Zoning Board of appeals denied the recent variance request and forwarded the matter to the Planning Commission for consideration of changing the ordinance.

Holtberg questioned the number of instances that this problem arises. Glaesman indicated that the matter does arise occasionally, which supports the ZBA's decision to forward the matter. Holtberg indicated that there are many instances that a front yard increase would be appropriate given the depth of the homes setback; he noted homes upon Roosevelt Road that are setback more than 100 feet. Anderson noted that there are other instances, such as on 8th Street North or 3rd Street North, where the front yards are very small. Glaesman noted that the ordinance might be drafted to account for the depth of the setback. Devine questioned the use of front yard in Section 3 and 3c of the ordinance's text language finding it confusing. Glaesman suggested that the language was intended to acknowledge rear yards that along arterial roads that are technically front yards given their width, but function as rear yards. Glaesman agreed that the language could be improved.

The Planning Commission agreed that the matter should return for formal consideration in coming months.

Administrative or Abbreviated Procedures for Amending Conditional Use Permits: Matt Glaesman, Planning Director, stated that past PUD have authorized staff to administratively approve minor changes to approved site plans. Glaesman added that the ordinance also provides for an abbreviated process for certain variances. Glaesman suggested that one or both of these means be incorporated into the ordinance for conditional use permits. He described a recent situation in which a building expansion was clearly acceptable but required six weeks delay due to the application and

meeting schedule. Devine noted that this is one means of becoming more business friendly. Anderson noted that there is also a cost savings for the applicant.

The Planning Commission agreed that the matter should return for formal consideration in coming months.

Summary of GIS Utilization: Matt Glaesman, Planning Director, stated that the GIS utilization numbers are provided in support of continued budget discussions. Anderson noted that large number of hits are a not a good indicator of utilization, while daily users are a good indicator of GIS importance. Anderson noted that the failed requests are not alarming as there are several potential causes for those instances which are not direct customer impacts. Glaesman added that a good portion of the users may have needed to contact or visit City staff if the online tool was not available. Holtberg acknowledged that the Planning Commission's investment of Development Fund dollars in GIS is proving to be a wise investment.

Other Business: Holtberg.

Adjournment: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Emil Radaich, Secretary