

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ST. CLOUD PLANNING COMMISSION

A meeting of the St. Cloud Planning Commission was held on Wednesday, February 13, 2013, at 6 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers. Members present were Anderson, Andzenge, Ballantine, DeVine, Holtberg and Radaich. City Council representative Goerger was present.

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

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

Acceptance of staff reports for February 13, 2013 as part of the official record.

Approval of minutes from the January 8, 2013 Planning Commission meeting.

The motion was seconded by Radaich and carried unanimously.

Cohen Esrey Affordable Partners, LLC on behalf of Good News Assembly of God

Church / Rezone to PUD: Matt Glaesman, Planning Director, explained the request to rezone the property located at 712 17th Ave S and 1602 7th St S from R2 to Planned Unit Development (PUD). The two-parcel property began as the former Garfield School. A similar rezoning request was considered at the March 2012 Planning Commission meeting for residential land uses but did not have sufficient detail for the Planning Commission or City Council to take an action in support. The current request also proposes to convert the property to residential, but it offers significantly more detail as to the development plan. The applicants are proposing to rezone the property for a 29 unit senior housing complex, which includes remodeling the existing building into 17 dwelling units. The remainder of the dwelling units will be in three 4-dwelling unit buildings to the east of the existing building. An approved site plan as well as additional architectural details and perspective drawings are typically incorporated into the PUD. Staff is supportive of the request and suggests that the presented images be incorporated in the PUD as detail standards for development of the property.

Holtberg opened the public hearing and invited testimony. The following persons testified:

Clint Jayne Cohen Esrey Affordable Partners	He is a development partner with Cohen Esrey Affordable Partners. The desire is to convert the former Garfield School building, which was built in 1926, into 17 affordable living units for seniors ages 55 and over.
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Overland Park, KS Three new fourplexes will be constructed for a total of 29 units. Ten percent of the units will be fully ADA accessible, and all units will have some aspect of accessibility. The units are similar to transitional housing and are not assisted-living. Partial funding will come from Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) combined with Historic Tax Credits, both Federal and State. The Historic Tax Credit limits what can be done to the exterior of the building, as well as many facets of the interior of the school building. There is no desire to change the school building other than to replace the existing windows with the original design of windows. The original entrance will also be opened up and any other features will match the historic components. The gym space will be returned to its original form however, it will be used as a large community room, and there is a possibility of incorporating the City's needs. He stated he feels confident in having the building placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The original architect, Nairne Fisher, has four buildings on the register including St. Mary's Cathedral in St. Cloud. In 2004, Housing and Urban Development (HUD) issued a report stating that there was a significant and ongoing need for senior housing in St. Cloud, and they projected that need for decades going forward.

Emil Radaich
Commission Member He asked if the school building currently has an elevator.

Clint Jayne The building does not currently have an elevator, but one will be included.

Sheila DeVine
Commission Member She asked about exterior accessibility.

Clint Jayne There is currently an ADA accessible entrance in the interior courtyard. There will also be ADA parking placed to the right of the entrance.

Sheila DeVine She asked if a need for garages was seen.

Clint Jayne Garages for the fourplex buildings were originally included in the design however, based on the setback requirements there is not a way to add garages without encroaching significantly into the living space of the fourplex buildings. There is consideration of incorporating covered parking in an aesthetically pleasing way.

Chairperson Holtberg He asked if there has been a neighborhood meeting.

Clint Jayne He stated there was a neighborhood meeting two weeks ago at the property. About 25 people attended the meeting which lasted approximately two hours. They were very interested and seemed receptive to the idea.

Dennis Ballantine
Commission Member He asked what the operational procedures are to make sure the people that live in the building are actually supposed to be there.

Clint Jayne	He stated they are bound by HUD guidelines if LIHTC funding is awarded. There are significant criteria involved with the program that limit the number of tenants in a particular unit.
Dennis Ballantine	He asked if there is an on-site staff person.
Clint Jayne	There will be an on-site manager. He stated they have been working with affordable senior living projects for 15-20 years, and they have extensive experience in compliance.
Chairperson Holtberg	He asked about the project timeline.
Clint Jayne	He stated they are looking at the end of 2013 as a potential start date for demolition. The construction phase will begin in 2014. The preliminary work will begin in the school building before the new construction of the fourplexes.
Emil Radaich	He stated he thinks this is a great idea for the property. He questioned whether the lack of garages will affect occupancy.
Clint Jayne	He stated it is a legitimate concern, which is why there are continuing conversations to ascertain if covered parking will meet the need.
Dan Brill 1520 Garfield Ct	He was at the meeting for the previous request to rezone the property to speak against the proposed change. At that time, the neighbors were asking for a realistic plan for the property with experienced partners. He believes this plan will bring diversity to the neighborhood and it seems very realistic. He stated he would be happy to have this development in the neighborhood. Several members of the neighborhood park on the streets often through the winter, and he does not believe garages will be an obstacle. He asked how much leeway the developer has for changes if the PUD is granted.
Matt Glaesman Planning Director	The PUD typically states that minor amendments can be approved at the discretion of the Zoning Administrator. Deviations in the specific use of the property would not be considered minor amendments and would require the item to return to the Planning Commission for review and a new public hearing. If the project received CDBG funds, the City will require a repayment action if there is a change in use or a sale of the property. There are a number of ways the City will have controls over the use and the potential sale of the site.
Dan Brill	He asked if Cohen Esrey would be managing the property or simply developing the site.
Ryan Huffman Chairman of the Board PreservingUS, Inc.	Cohen Esrey would serve as the managing agent for the partners. PreservingUS, Inc. will be the managing member and the de facto owner for the project.

Dan Brill

With the new library, Coborn's and Lake George improvements, he thinks this would be another feature to add to the diversity of the neighborhood. He stated he is in full support of the project.

Roxanne Ryan
1527 8th St S

She was at the meeting for the previous rezoning request and shared the same concerns as her neighbors. At the neighborhood meeting for the current request, everyone was thrilled with the opportunity for the addition to the property. She stated this is a great use for the Garfield School building and she likes that there is a historic preservation factor. Neighborhood members are appreciative that the property will be managed, and should a major change be made the neighborhood will be involved in the process. She is on the Lake George Neighborhood Coalition and the St. Cloud Neighborhood Coalition and she has received very positive feedback about the project. She is in support of the project being a part of the neighborhood.

There being no one else wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed. Holtberg asked what would happen to the PUD if the funding does not come through and the project does not move forward. Glaesman stated that past PUD's have not required an ownership interest or management company, but it is an option to write it into the PUD. Radaich made a motion for approval subject to conditions as presented. The motion was seconded by Ballantine. Anderson asked if landscaping standards will be written in to the PUD. Glaesman stated the site plan with landscaping as shown, floor plans, architectural review and detached buildings would serve as the exhibits addressing site and design. Holtberg questioned the proposal of closing the access to the alley. Glaesman stated the alley is fully accessible and does not affect the eastern portion of the block; neighbors will still have access to the alley. Holtberg questioned the requirements for parking. Glaesman stated that under the definition of independent living facilities, 1.25 parking spaces are required per unit. The proposed site plan shows 1.69 spaces per unit. Staff recommended in the conditions to remove two parking spaces, but that would not affect the proposed parking supply. Anderson commented that this project should be a model of how to go about a rezoning and commended all those involved. Holtberg agreed. Andzenge complimented the applicants on responding to the needs of the neighbors. He asked if the suggested conditions are agreeable to the applicant. Jayne stated that there is no problem incorporating the recommendations, and they are happy to make the changes. Ballantine commented

that it is remarkable to have an entire neighborhood in agreement and he complimented the applicants. Holtberg called for a vote and the motion carried unanimously.

Storm Water Drainage Analysis Presentation: This item was postponed until a future date.

Beaver Island Trail Phase 4 Preliminary Design Images / Fund Request for Campbell

Property: Matt Glaesman, Planning Director, explained that two questions are being posed to the Planning Commission. The first issue is approval of trail head design concepts for phase four of the Beaver Island Trail including the trail head, shelter, and parking. The second request relates to the opportunity to acquire property adjacent to the River Bluffs Regional Park. The City has been awarded a \$580,000 Park Legacy Grant to acquire the Campbell Property. An appraisal report from July 2012 recommended a price of \$681,000 for the property in question. The St. Cloud Park and Recreation Advisory Board is seeking \$100,000 from the City's Development Fund to cover the local funding share.

Scott Zlotnik, Park and Recreation Director, explained that a grant application was submitted to the MN DNR in September 2012 requesting funds for the Campbell Property acquisition. At the time it was believed additional consideration in the selection process was afforded to applicants that provided a local cash match. The Comprehensive Plan (CP) states it is within our means necessary to acquire all lands that are environmentally sensitive. The property contains oak woodland, savannah and Mississippi River bluffs, and it is considered highly environmentally sensitive under the Environmentally Sensitive Ordinance. This particular land mass has been identified as one of the number one priorities for acquisition by the Natural Parks & Trails Coalition. Radaich asked how much is available in the Development Fund. Glaesman stated that the budget projections from 2013 to 2018 show roughly \$300,000 balance each year. Radaich asked if it is typical to list matching funds before asking for the funds. Glaesman commented that multiple local funding sources existed at the time of the application. The Development Fund now seems the most appropriate source. The land acquisition is consistent with the Neighborhood Master Plan and the CP, and the Development Fund is essentially a fund to implement the CP. Zlotnik added that historically the Development Fund

has been responsible for 41% of contributions towards park land acquisition. Anderson stated he is supportive of the request, and he made a motion to approve the request for funding. Ballantine asked if this acquisition completes what is planned in the area or if additional property will be acquired. Zlotnik stated there is the intention of more lands to be amassed along the Mississippi River for open space and recreation. Glaesman added that the Hardrives site and its pools is one that is targeted for potential City acquisition. Radaich seconded the motion to approve the request for funding. DeVine stated she supports the expenditure for the purpose of park land acquisition but is concerned with the Development Fund budget. Glaesman stated that the budget for revenue is based on historical revenues from the last five years. The budget should be a worst-case scenario rather than a realistic projection. DeVine stated that the Development Fund can absorb a \$100,000 expenditure, but she questioned the cost of more expensive acquisitions in the future. Glaesman stated the Hardrives site will be the most difficult, and it will likely be State and property tax dependent. The adjacent Lenzmeier property will be easier to attain, and there is a possibility of a multiple year pay off plan. DeVine asked if there are other funds available for this portion of property acquisition. Glaesman stated there are not. DeVine commented that she is in support of the acquisition, but she is concerned with future Development Fund expenditures for land acquisition and thinks it necessary to work on removing planning staff expenditures from the Development Fund budget.

Holtberg asked if the grant would still be available if funding from the Development Fund is not granted. Zlotnik stated the grant would likely be reallocated to another applicant. Holtberg asked if the budget reflects expenditures for the current year. Glaesman stated that items approved in 2012 for the current year are reflected in the Development Fund budget. Holtberg stated the Campbell property is an important piece of the park. A \$1 million commitment has been made for IT improvements. Although the Development Fund may not be the best fund for the land acquisition expenditure, he stated he will vote in favor of the motion. Glaesman stated that although a \$1 million commitment has been made, the use of those dollars and implementation is unknown at this time. The expenditure could be over a four year period and would then have a lesser impact. Ballantine

commented that he would be in support of the motion but thought the process was backwards in committing the dollars before requesting the funds. Glaesman stated that a corridor alignment was presented in 2011 and staff was instructed to acquire land along that corridor. Through the negotiations of the trail corridor the opportunity to purchase the entire site was presented. Staff understands the concern with Development Fund balance and will proceed cautiously. Anderson commented that going forward when matches are committed in applications the Planning Commission should be made aware. Holtberg called for a vote and the motion carried unanimously.

Ballantine made a motion to approve the preliminary design concepts as presented. The motion was seconded by Anderson and carried unanimously.

Progress Report on 2012 / 2013 Planning Initiatives: Matt Glaesman, Planning Director, presented information on the status of several planning initiatives.

Development Assessment: The Zucker Systems team was hired to evaluate the City's operational process in which they gave more than 220 recommendations. A community taskforce is in place to discuss the recommendations, including IT improvements. Six of seven meetings have taken place, and a final report will be presented to City Council on March 4. Ballantine commented that there is a need for IT improvements city-wide and asked if there is a plan to move the recommendation forward. Goerger stated that City Council is aware of the need and Administration is working to find funding for the improvements. Glaesman stated the taskforce report contains a summary of Zucker's recommendations, the community taskforce recommendations and staffs' opinions. The report will also help track the recommendations as they are completed.

Sustainability: This year's Green Forum topic, engaging our youth, will focus on involving youth to get sustainability and energy initiatives undertaken in communities. The Sustainability Expo will take place on April 21st at the River's Edge Convention Center. This year's Expo features Don Shelby, the MN Zoo and the MN Science Museum, along with over 100 exhibitors, to draw the connection between consumer and provider in regards to sustainability. Last Fall, all those involved in the sustainability industry were brought together to review the Sustainability Plan. Holtberg asked if

surrounding cities are included in the sustainability effort. Glaesman stated there is a regional sustainability committee that meets every other month, and some cities are coming forward as financial partners. Anderson asked if Stearns County contributed to the Expo financially. Glaesman confirmed that Stearns County contributed \$2,500. Goerger commented that the Green Forum is being held on a school day and asked if that will affect the ability to include students. Glaesman stated they are working on that factor.

Housing Assessment: The City has entered into a contract with Western Economic Services (WES) for a housing market analysis. This study will be a comprehensive study on housing in the current market condition. The City, along with several community stakeholders, has contributed funds towards the study to answer questions about homelessness needs and current market rate needs. Holtberg asked if the study will be shared when it is completed. Glaesman stated there will be a significant community engagement process, and the study will be available publicly. Holtberg asked about the contributing sources. Glaesman stated there are multiple contributors including United Way, Catholic Charities, Tri-cap and the Community Foundation. A complete list is in the City Council packet from Monday, February 11.

Placemaking: The Lakota Group came to St. Cloud the week of January 28 and began talking to community members to get perspective on the identity of St. Cloud. They will be back in March to give their opinion on the suggestions made. In August they will deliver a detailed implementation plan.

33rd Street South Improvements: A consultant, SRF Consulting Group, was hired to study the three block stretch of the 33rd St S corridor and give suggestions on balancing mobility and accessibility. Past concerns with accessibility have been addressed and many people are now satisfied. Holtberg commented he is happy to hear that property owners are on board. Glaesman stated that the remaining issue of extending a road past Skatin' Place and onto Southway Drive is being revisited. New information on special assessments will be given to property owners soon. Goerger stated that business owners are thankful that staff has looked at the accessibility issue again. There will still be

some costs incurred by the business owners, but they understand that the City made the extra effort to make the plan workable for everyone. DeVine asked if any of the business owners to the South have changed their opinion on the project. Glaesman stated that not all problems are solved but the City is working to address all concerns. DeVine asked when the response will be available regarding the road extension. Glaesman stated a response is expected in the next few weeks. Ballantine asked if there is an estimate of traffic flow for when the interchange on Highway 15 is complete. Glaesman stated that projected traffic volumes are included in the analysis.

Capital Improvements Program (CIP): A list of proposed projects is ready for the Commissioners. The schedule shows a second working session should take place in February and the public hearing in March. Staff is suggesting the working session for the week of February 25. Commissioners agreed to meet for a study session on Thursday, February 28 at noon.

Summary of Community Development Block Grant Applicants: Commissioners met at 4:30 p.m. in Conference Room 1 for CDBG application presentations. Each of the seven applicants took 10 minutes to present an outline of their request. The session took place to let Commissioners know what the projects involve.

Adjournment: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Dick Andzenge, Secretary