



**Planning Commission Regular Meeting
City Council Chambers, 2660 Civic Center Drive
Minutes – Wednesday, March 5, 2025 – 6:30 p.m.**

1. Call to Order

Chair Pribyl called to order the regular meeting of the Planning Commission at approximately 6:30 p.m. and reviewed the commission's role and purpose.

2. Roll Call

At the request of Chair Pribyl, City Planner Thomas Paschke called the Roll.

Members Present: Chair Michelle Pribyl, Commissioners Tammy McGehee, Pamela Aspnes, and Erik Bjorum.

Members Absent: Michelle Kruzal and Vice-Chair Karen Schaffhausen

Staff Present: City Planner Thomas Paschke, Community Development Director Janice Gundlach, and Senior Planner Bryan Lloyd

3. Approve Agenda

MOTION

Member Bjorum moved, seconded by Member Aspnes, to approve the agenda as presented.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Motion carried.

4. Review of Minutes

a. January 8, 2025, Planning Commission Regular Meeting

Member McGehee indicated she sent corrections to City Staff before the meeting.

Member Aspnes explained she had a minor correction to lines 225 and 227. The word “great” should be changed to “grade”.

MOTION

Member McGehee moved, seconded by Member Bjorum, to approve the amended January 8, 2025, meeting minutes.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Motion carried.

5. **Communications and Recognitions:**

- a. **From the Public:** *Public comment pertaining to general land use issues not on this agenda, including the 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update.*

None.

- b. **From the Commission or Staff:** *Information about assorted business not already on this agenda, including a brief update on the 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update process.*

City Planner Thomas Paschke thanked Chair Pribyl and Commissioners Schaffhausen and Kruzal for their work on the Planning Commission.

Chair Pribyl thanked the Commissioners and staff. She felt that the commission was a respectful body even though they did not always agree on everything, and she appreciated all of their time together.

6. **Public Hearing**

- a. **Consider a Request by Lydia Rose Apartments LLC to Allow Residential Density in a Proposed Apartment Building Greater than 24 Dwellings per Acre as a Conditional Use (PF25-001)**

Chair Pribyl opened the public hearing for PF25-001 at approximately 6:38 p.m. and reported on the purpose and process of a public hearing. She advised this item would be before the City Council on March 24, 2025.

Senior Planner Bryan Lloyd summarized the request in detail in the March 5, 2025 staff report.

Mr. Lloyd explained the site was located at 2490 Snelling Avenue, a former medical office that has been vacant since the 1960s. The proposal included an 18-unit apartment with a one-way drive aisle and shared parking with the neighboring property. The applicant was seeking approval to allow up to thirty-six units per acre, with the current proposal being twenty-eight units per acre.

Member McGehee questioned the lack of a public meeting for this change.

Mr. Lloyd explained that open house meetings were not required for conditional use applications.

Member Aspnes asked Mr. Lloyd for more information on the pathway the city has asked the developer to add. She thought it was odd because it would only be for one building. She also questioned the adequacy of parking for an 18-unit building, noting only thirty-seven parking stalls being shown.

Mr. Lloyd explained that staff was not recommending a condition of approval that the property owner, the applicant, install a pathway, but rather reserve space in an easement so that as the city acquires more easements over time in that area, the city can build a pathway. He also noted that the zoning code allowed for shared parking with neighboring properties, and the current proposal met those standards.

Chair Pribyl inquired about the site's screening requirements.

Mr. Lloyd confirmed that fencing or opaque landscaping must meet setback and screening requirements.

Member McGehee indicated she also had some concerns with parking due to current headlight problems. Since this was a conditional use, she wondered what the conditions were. She thought that with buildings in a new building, underground parking could avoid this problem, which did not exist in the traffic patterns around the other two buildings owned by the same person.

Mr. Lloyd reviewed the conditional use with the Commission. He explained that the approval being requested concerned the fact that this could one day become an apartment with a busier parking area. He noted that underground parking was not a requirement, and he did not know the logistics or feasibility of having underground parking in a building of that size.

Member McGehee understood but disagreed because there would be more light than the people were used to. She indicated it was not the cars coming in but the headlights coming in at all different times of night, so she thought some screening would be needed to block the light from the headlights. She thought that was a problem throughout the city.

Mr. Paschke and Ms. Gundlach reviewed the City Code and landscaping requirements with screening sections and buffers.

The building designer, Mr. Matt Faber, addressed the Commission and answered its questions regarding density, underground parking, and screening.

Public Comment

Ms. Brenda Hartman, Resident, co-owner of 2939 Asbury

Ms. Harman indicated she was at the meeting with her brother and sister, who also wanted to address the Commission.

Ms. Hartman presented concerns about increased traffic, noise, and the current condition of the existing property.

Mr. Bryan Hartman and Ms. Barb Hartman, co-owner of 2939 Asbury

Ms. Harman indicated she had the same concern as her sister about the lights and the upkeep of the fence.

Mr. Brian Harman, co-owner of 2939 Asbury

Mr. Harman expressed similar concerns about the impact on their property and the need for better maintenance of the existing property.

Mr. Shawn Adsitt, co-owner of the dental office at 2960 Snelling Avenue

Mr. Shawn raised concerns about overflow parking and the current condition of the vacant property.

Chair Pribyl acknowledged the concerns of the public.

Commission Deliberation

Member McGehee suggested conducting a neighborhood meeting and a shadow study to understand the proposed development's impact better.

Member Aspnes questioned the adequacy of the site to support 18 units without borrowing parking from the neighboring property.

Mr. Lloyd explained that the zoning code allowed shared parking, and the current proposal met those standards.

Member Bjorum expressed a desire for the building to be dense and to have more green space but acknowledged that the current proposal met the required standards.

Member Aspnes raised concerns about the shared parking arrangement and the lack of improvements to the existing property.

Mr. Lloyd explained that the city cannot obligate the owner to improve other properties, but the Planning Commission can request them.

MOTION

Member Bjorum moved, seconded by Member McGehee, to recommend to the City Council approval of the request to allow an increase in density from the standard limit of 24 units per acre to 28 units per acre, based on the content of this RPCA, public input, and Planning Commission deliberation, with the condition that a pathway easement be dedicated along the westernmost 5 feet of the property (PF25-001).

Ayes: 3

Nays: 1 (Aspnes)

Motion carried.

Member Aspnes expressed concerns about runoff entering a neighbor's backyard, the driveway, parking lot, and fence condition. Despite the neighbor's issues, she emphasized the importance of property rights and the legal allowance for the proposed use. She advised neighbors to raise their concerns with the city if they have

not already done so. The obligation of the Planning Commission was to focus on the proposal before them, ensuring it was a permitted use.

Chair Pribyl agreed with Member Aspnes and found the proposal for 18 units on the site reasonable. However, she indicated she was frustrated that the property owner did not attend the meeting to address the neighbors' questions directly.

Member McGehee highlighted the value of the Commissioners' opinions, especially since two were architects. She suggested that neighbors should continue to raise their issues with the city to hold the property owners accountable. She discussed potential solutions for the runoff problem, suggesting involvement from the engineering department or the Watershed District. She mentioned that drive-through parking might be fixed with a curb and well-placed boulders. She acknowledged the limitations of the Planning Commission's ability to resolve the issues and noted efforts to improve the code.

Chair Pribyl suggested the designer and developer discuss green space and talk to neighbors.

Community Development Director Gundlach mentioned sending a nuisance inspector to address maintenance issues.

7. **Other Business**
8. **Commission Direction on Commission Member Initiated Agenda Items**
9. **Adjourn**

MOTION

Member Aspnes, seconded by Member McGehee, to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 p.m.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Motion carried.