

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
PLANNING COMMISSION
LITTLE CANADA, MINNESOTA**

APRIL 14, 2022

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof a regular meeting of the City Council of Little Canada, Minnesota was convened on the 14th day of April, 2022 in the Council Chambers of the City Center located at 515 Little Canada Road in said City.

Chair Chris Kwapick called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and the following members of the Planning Commission were present at roll call:

PLANNING COMMISSION: Johnson, Kulousek, Kwapick, Buesing, and Thorson. Absent: Mitchell, Quarles

ALSO PRESENT: Community Development Director/ Planner Corrin Wendell and City Administrator Chris Heineman

ADOPT AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented.

MINUTES

Commissioner Johnson made a motion to approve the March 10, 2022 Planning Commission minutes as submitted. Commissioner Kulousek seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

3248 Twin Lake Road, stated that he received a letter which mentions property on Owasso but believed the address is on Twin Lake Boulevard.

The Community Development Director explained that the GIS map uses the address for the PID number and confirmed that the development would have a new address that reflects Twin Lake Boulevard.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

COMMISSION BUSINESS: MINOR SUBDIVISION/LOT SPLIT – 3000 ARCADE STREET – CASE 1410

The Community Development Director presented a minor subdivision/lot split request for the property at 3000 Arcade Street. She stated that the lot currently has 150 feet of lot width along

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Arcade and the proposal would split that in half noting that each new parcel would meet the minimum lot width. She stated that the existing home would be demolished, and two new homes would be constructed, one on each lot. She stated that the request does meet all applicable zoning code requirements. She noted that the City Council will hold a public hearing for this request at its April 27th meeting.

John Simpson, 838 Westwind Drive, asked if there are regulations that stipulate where a home can be constructed on a lot.

The Community Development Director stated that the R-1 zoning regulations would include setbacks that identify the buildable area of the lot.

Kulousek introduced the following motion:

***RECOMMENDING THE APPROVAL OF A MINOR SUBDIVISION, LOT SPLIT,
LOCATED AT 3000 ARCADE STREET, PID 042922230009***

The foregoing motion was duly seconded by Johnson.

Ayes (5). Nays (0). Motion passed.

**COMMISSION BUSINESS: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT – 0 NORTH
OWASSO BLVD (TWIN LAKE BLVD) – CASE 1411**

The Community Development Director presented a Comprehensive Plan amendment request. She stated that the property was previously approved for a rezoning, contingent upon the Comprehensive Plan amendment. She noted that the property is currently guided as medium density and the request would reguide the parcel as high density residential. She noted that this development proposal would be phased to have two 60-unit buildings. She reviewed the comments received from other municipalities and/or entities, noting that all responses received were favorable. She stated that the City has received some comments in the form of email and calls related to traffic, pedestrian safety, road improvements, trail improvements, parking, sidewalks, and exterior building materials. She stated that the notification period was extended from the required 350 feet to 700 feet in order to reach more residents. She stated that the City Council will hold a public hearing on April 27th.

Commissioner Kulousek asked if approving this would approve the development plans.

The Community Development Director stated that once the Comprehensive Plan amendment is approved, the rezoning would also take effect. She stated that the applicant has also submitted a Site Plan which is being reviewed and therefore once the proper approvals are gained, the building permits could be submitted.

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Commissioner Johnson asked if the changes to the zoning and guiding of the property would remain on the property, even if the applicant did not move forward with their development.

The Community Development Director confirmed that the property would remain as high density in that scenario.

Paul Keenan, applicant, was present to address any questions.

Jessica, 3329 Twin Lake Road, commented that she was not aware this property was marked for residential development. She stated that she would prefer the property not to be developed as residential. She commented on previous flooding issues in the area and was concerned that this would add additional impervious surface. She also noted a concern for the wildlife in the area.

Keith Cook, 223 Twin Lake Trail, commented that he understands the City wants to put the buildings in. He stated that he has concern with the condition of Twin Lake Boulevard and the impact that additional traffic would have on the road. He asked the plans for reconstruction of the road.

The Community Development Director stated that the road condition was mentioned during these discussions and advised that there are plans to reconstruct Twin Lake Boulevard in the near future.

Wayne Holly, Twin Lake Boulevard resident, stated that he has concern with the additional traffic as this would, at minimum add at least 120 vehicles. He asked where those vehicles would be parked. He also asked where the kids would play on the site and expressed concerns for safety.

Mr. Keenan commented that it is his understanding that the sidewalk will be on the north side of the road. He stated that they have only developed plans for phase one which would include one building with 60 underground spaces and about another 60 surface spaces. He did not anticipate street parking. He noted that they do not charge for underground parking, as they want residents to use the parking.

3248 Twin Lake Road, commented that this project would add 120 units which would add pollutants to the lake. He stated that there are also issues with flooding and believed this property would be better used as a City park. He commented that there are nice lakes in the area, and he did not believe they should build on the property.

The Community Development Director stated that this will move to the City Council at its April 27th meeting where a final decision will be made on this matter. She noted that it is a public hearing and residents are invited to provide input.

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Steve Allen, Twin Lake Boulevard, stated that it sounds like even though this is not a done deal, it is leaning towards approval. He noted that most residents probably did not make it to the last meeting because of the snowstorm. He asked if the City has already sold this land and why this density is being considered. He stated that the residents like the neighborhood as it is and did not see a reason to add this level of density.

The Community Development Director replied that the property is under contract but has not yet been sold. She stated that the City Council would have the ultimate say on this project.

Chair Kwapick stated that the Commission is listening to the comments from the residents and will make a recommendation to the City Council based on the balance of concerns and residential needs of the city.

Mr. Allen commented that he owns a business in Minneapolis and there were many high-density apartments constructed around his business. He noted that each of those developers stated that they had enough parking on premises, but people fill up on the on-street parking.

122 Twin Lake Boulevard, shared the concerns of the previous speakers. He stated that they purchased their home because it is a quiet neighborhood but adding this number of people to the site would create noise and parking concerns. He also asked where the children that live in the buildings would play. He did not see a reason to remove the woods to create apartments.

Bob Libal, 124 Twin Lake Boulevard, commented that the Comprehensive Plan was just updated and showed this property as medium density. He did not believe the site should be changed to high density as there is no high-density housing in that area. He stated that this development would add a lot more people and hardcover to the site, draining water into the lake that already has too much water and issues with flooding. He stated that the meeting in December happened quickly and did not give residents time to respond. He asked the Commission not to support this request.

Mr. Allen asked the incomes of those that would be living in the apartments, whether it would be marketed to low-income individuals.

Mr. Keenan commented that currently the units are designated to those making 60 percent or less of the area median income (AMI), which would be slightly less than market rate apartments. He stated that the residents will need to work and have jobs, and this will not be subsidized or section 8 housing. He noted that residents would have to show sufficient income to support the rent.

Another resident stated that her husband used to work at the Vadnais Heights Fire Station expressed additional concerns with drainage and water quality. She asked that those be serious considerations because of the already existing issues with water. She noted that the trailer park is built in a low area and experiences flooding each spring.

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The City Administrator stated that while the questions being asked are specific to the project, the issue before the Commission tonight is related to the guiding of the property in the Comprehensive Plan. He stated that the reconstruction of Twin Lake Boulevard has been moved forward in the CIP as a 2023 project. He noted that the project had to be planned cooperatively with Vadnais Heights. He stated that Twin Lake Boulevard would likely have no parking allowed for this site, noting that proof of parking would need to be provided for within the project. He stated that these parcels were purchased by the City in the 1980s for development purposes. He stated that the properties had been zoned as medium density since that time and several projects have been reviewed but those projects were not feasible at that level of density. He stated that this Comprehensive Plan amendment to support higher density development would make a project feasible. He stated that the total project cost does include stormwater management, underground parking, and other related development requirements. He stated that the flooding that was experienced in 2018 and 2019 were related to overflow issues from Vadnais Heights and were not caused by this site. He stated that the berm was repaired by the Watershed District and the District also installed the outlet pipe for Twin Lake to prevent that situation from occurring again. He stated that this project would also extend water and sewer services to the area which are currently not available in this location today.

Another resident commented that while he realizes that the City purchased the property for development that does not mean this is the right development for the City or this neighborhood. He commented that single-family homes would make sense on the property, but apartment buildings do not.

Commissioner Thorson stated that there was a lot of time discussing the Comprehensive Plan and therefore this could be a dangerous precedent to increase the density for the first request.

Commissioner Johnson stated that she appreciates the input from the residents tonight. She stated that the guiding for this property as medium density was carried over from previous years. She stated that there is new information that this site would not be economically feasible to develop the property as anything other than high density development. She stated that the property was purchased for development over 40 years ago. She stated that part of the Comprehensive Plan focuses on population density over time and within the plan it states that places must be provided for people to live. She stated that this would be a good spot for people that have jobs, and it would make sense for people that have jobs in the city to live near where they work. She stated that this is an opportunity to add higher density housing and for more people to live in this great community.

Commissioner Thorson stated that if this passes there will be additional comments related to traffic and greenspace.

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Commissioner Johnson commented that this is a big step to change the land use to high density as the land use would run with the property, whether it is this plan that moves forward or a different plan.

Commissioner Kulousek stated that she appreciates the input from the residents, and she sympathizes. She noted that she built a home on a wooded lot, and she received many comments that people did not want her to build on her own property.

Chair Kwapick stated that the Commission makes a recommendation to the City Council, who will make the final decision. He encouraged the residents to express their comments to the Council as well.

Johnson introduced the following motion:

RECOMMENDING THE APPROVAL OF A 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT TO REGUIDE THE LAND USE OF PARCELS LOCATED AT 0 NORTH OWASSO BOULEVARD, PID 313022310001 AND PID 313022310002 FROM MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL TO HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL ON THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP

The foregoing motion was duly seconded by Buesing.
Ayes (4). Nays (1) (Thorson opposed). Motion passed.

REPORT FROM STAFF

The Community Development Director provided an update on the process of updating the zoning map. She noted that the Commission will review that at its May 5th meeting.

REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Thorson noted an upcoming neighborhood meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.