

# **City of Cottage Grove Planning Commission March 27, 2006**

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a regular meeting of the Planning Commission was duly held at City Hall, 7516 – 80th Street South, Cottage Grove, Minnesota on the 27th day of March, 2006, in the Council Chambers and telecast on local Government Cable Channel 16.

## **Call to Order**

Chairperson Reese called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

## **Roll Call**

Members Present: Shane Bauer, Ken Brittain, Jason Cavallo, Rebecca Kronlund,  
Tracy Poncin, Chris Reese, David Thiede

Members Absent: Rod Hale

Staff Present: Howard Blin, Community Development Director  
John McCool, Senior Planner  
Mark Grossklaus, City Council Liaison

## **Approval of Agenda**

*Motion by Bauer, second by Brittain, to approve the agenda. Motion approved unanimously (7-0 vote).*

## **Open Forum**

Chairperson Reese asked if anyone wished to address the Planning Commission on any non-agenda item. No one appeared to address the Commission.

## **Chair's Explanation of the Public Hearing Process**

Chairperson Reese explained the purpose of the Planning Commission, which serves in an advisory capacity to the City Council, and the City Council makes all final decisions. In addition, he explained the process of conducting a public hearing and requested that any person wishing to speak should come to the microphone and state their full name and address for the public record.

## **Public Hearings**

### **6.1 Auto Dealership Ordinance – Case TA05-053**

**The City of Cottage Grove has applied for a zoning text amendment relating to automobile dealerships.**

Blin summarized the staff report and recommended approval.

Thiede asked if there are any B-3 areas that are developable for auto dealerships. Blin responded no, but the city will be rezoning land to B-3 in the near future. Thiede asked if where auto dealerships could locate in the city. Blin responded some of those areas include the Langdon area, the West Point Douglas frontage road, by the bus garage if that parcel were to be rezoned, or the golf dome property which would also need rezoning.

Reese asked if the standards were designed to keep most of the inventory inside. Blin responded no, even with a 40,000 square foot building, most of the vehicles would be outside. He explained that the standards would require landscaping and a better appearance than the average car dealership. Reese asked if there would be any nonconforming businesses if this ordinance were approved. Blin responded there would be two legal nonconforming auto dealership businesses, Sunbelt Auto and Diaz Auto. Reese then asked if language could be added regarding lighting. Blin responded that the city has lighting standards, but specific language could be added to make it more explicit.

Thiede asked about Diaz Auto. McCool responded that they are an auto repair business and have a conditional use permit to sell vehicles.

Blin explained that several years ago the City changed the ordinance to allow auto dealerships but only if they have at least one auto service bay.

Kronlund asked if the two existing dealerships have any plans for expansion. Blin responded Sunbelt Auto is looking at the vacant parcel next to them for expansion. Kronlund asked if they would then be subject to the new performance standards. Blin responded that the new part of the site would be subject to the standards.

Cavallo suggested lowering the maximum number of elevated vehicles and prohibiting lights on the elevated structures. Blin responded that four was just an arbitrary number and instead of prohibiting them out right, the standards would ensure that they are landscaped and are more attractive.

***Reese opened the public hearing. No one spoke. Reese closed the public hearing.***

Bauer asked what staff would suggest about the number flags that would be allowed. Blin suggested no more than two American flags with a limit on their size.

***Brittain made a motion to approve the application with changes including reducing the number of landscaped ramps to two, increasing the lighting standards, adding language regarding speakers and sound systems, and limiting the number of American flags to two. Kronlund seconded. Motion passed unanimously (7-to-0 vote).***

## **Applications and Requests**

### **7.1 East Ravine Zoning Amendments**

McCool summarized the draft ordinance amendments for Planning Commission review and comment.

Brittain suggested requiring larger garage sizes in zoning districts with larger lots. He then asked who the architectural design committee would consist of. McCool responded that there would be a consultant who would review and make recommendations on architectural design for developments. Town house and row house developments are conditional uses, which are reviewed by the city. Brittain asked if the review committee be consistent from development to development. McCool responded that the city would like to have one firm look at the projects. Brittain concurred with having only one company review the different developments.

Poncin asked if the planned development overlay applies to all new developments or only certain projects. McCool explained the overlay would be available for all zoning classifications but developers would have to apply for it. He stated that the overlay would provide some flexibility but the underlying zoning of the property would still have development standards that they would have to abide by.

Thiede asked for clarification on the requirement that exterior wall materials must wrap around the corner a minimum of 24 inches. McCool responded that when, for example, a brick knee wall wraps around the corner it provides the front of the house with a finished look. Thiede asked if the 35-foot maximum height would apply to front or back of the house or both. McCool responded it would be an average height of all four sides of the structure. Thiede then asked if the proposed ordinance should list what the minimum landscaping requirements in the section requiring landscaping to exceed city ordinance minimums. McCool responded that those requirements are already listed in the city code; staff is proposing that the subdivision ordinance amendments include requiring a minimum of five additional trees, not counting the boulevard tree, and ten shrubs be planted on each property. He noted that the landscaping requirements would be enforced through the restrictive covenants for the development plan. Thiede asked how the East Ravine Master Plan document matches with the proposed ordinance amendments. McCool responded that the proposed zoning amendments implement the Master Plan document.

Thiede asked about the requirement for an average of a 75-foot buffer for roads, which currently is 60 feet. McCool clarified that the 75-foot buffer references the green strips along the arterial and collector roadways, noting that every road would have a 60-foot right-of-way, which is where the street and boulevard are located. Thiede asked about requiring lawns to be sodded instead of allowing seeding. McCool explained that sodding leaves a more finished appearance. Brittain asked about requirements for black dirt. McCool responded that the subdivision ordinance has a four-inch topsoil requirement, which is noted on the as-built surveys. Thiede asked about the trigger for requiring sidewalks. McCool explained that it is based on traffic counts, number of homes, and whether there is a park, church, school, or other such use located in the area.

Cavallo asked if exterior materials could be extended around the side of the house more than what was suggested. McCool responded that could be looked at. Cavallo asked about accessory structures at town homes. McCool responded that some town homes could have detached garages unit instead of attached. Cavallo would like to see a limit the use of

accessory structures town home developments to only a garage use. Brittain stated that we have to be careful about limiting people too much in the use of their property.

Kronlund asked if residential dwellings that face streets, trails, and sidewalks are required to have enhanced architectural design. McCool responded yes. Kronlund asked if there was any thought about cost for this requirement. Blin responded that four-sided architecture such as window trim would be required, not necessarily having all side mirror the front of the house.

Reese asked if street widths would be added to the ordinance. Blin responded yes, it would be added to the subdivision ordinance. Brittain asked if streets width would affect the setback for the structures. Blin responded that it would not; the setback is measured from the property line, which is the edge of the right-of-way, and that would remain 60 feet. Reese then asked about materials for sidewalks and trails. Blin responded that currently the standard is concrete for sidewalks and asphalt for trails. The current standard width for residential sidewalks is six feet to allow for snow removal equipment, but the Commission could look at reducing that width. He stated that his recommendation would be that the city only plow the sidewalks on the major thoroughfares and snow removal from sidewalks on local streets would be the responsibility of the property owners. Brittain agreed with Blin, but he also wants to ensure that sidewalks leading to schools are kept plowed.

Reese asked how the city ensures that homeowners associations stay active. Blin responded that he would check with the city attorney on that; however, the practical way would be to include items such as landscaped islands and more robust recreational facilities, which would give the homeowners associations something to maintain long-term. Reese asked if these standards would only apply to the East Ravine or would they apply to all developments going forward. McCool responded that they could be applied anywhere if a developer applies to change the zoning to one of these new districts. Reese asked if there could be areas where the lot width is averaged to give more variation. McCool responded that could be implemented using the planned development overlay classification. Reese asked if the proposed ordinances require all parking areas to be paved. McCool responded that is already in the city's ordinances.

Thiede asked why a planned development overlay district is needed instead incorporating those requirements into the subdivision ordinance. McCool responded that the overlay district would be a review of the entire plan and would be dependent on the development characteristics of the property. Thiede asked if about variances for those purposes. McCool responded that granting a variance requires a hardship. The overlay district also allows for flexibility in the development plan. Brittain asked if the overlay district would be a PUD for residential development. Blin explained that it is a PUD in another form. Currently the PUD would be the zoning that is applied to the property. With the overlay district, there would be an underlying zoning classification. A developer could apply for a planned development overlay to allow flexibility to those standards.

Blin gave an update on the East Ravine planning process. He explained that the master plan that was passed out to the Commissioners tonight was adopted by the Council on March 15. The city is now in the implementation phase of the Plan. The one change the Council made in their approval was to the land use map in which they changed the commercial designation of

a small parcel of land located along East Point Douglas Road on the east side of County Road 19 back to parkland. He thanked the Commission for all their work on the Master Plan.

## **7.2 Park Dedication Fee Increase – Case No. TA06-014**

Blin summarized the staff report, noting that the public hearing would be held before the City Council at their meeting on April 19, 2006. He recommended approval of the ordinance amendment to increase park dedication fees.

Bauer asked if the city takes both land and money for a single development. Blin responded yes. Bauer asked if the money is dedicated to improve other parks. Blin responded that the money is put in the park trust fund, which is used for park acquisition and development. That fund is limited to those items and is not used for park maintenance and operations.

Thiede noted that last year the park dedication fee was raised last year from \$2,000 to \$3,000. He asked how long the \$2,000 per unit fee was in place. Blin responded about three years, noting that the fee previous fee was \$1,000. He believes the city was slow to keep up with rising land values, which have increased greatly in the last four or five years. Thiede noted that the homeowners ultimately pay for this dedication. Blin responded that the fee does get rolled into the cost of a lot. He noted that there are areas in the East Ravine where the city is going to get land dedicated but there are other areas where land for park purposes will need to be purchased.

Blin noted that the Parks Commission reviewed this proposal and recommended approval.

***Brittain made a motion to recommend approval. Bauer seconded. Motion passed on a 6-to-1 vote (Thiede).***

Thiede stated that the city just increased the fee last year, the homeowners in the new developments pay for the increase, he would like to see Cottage Grove stay affordable, and he does not want to see the city to go from charging under the median fee in the metropolitan area to charging over the median fee.

## **7.3 Swanlund Property Concept Plan**

Blin provided background information on the proposed concept plan for a residential development to be located on the west side of Hadley Avenue, north of 95th Street. He introduced Dennis Griswold, the developer of the property. Griswold described the proposal, noting that the property consists of 160 acres. He stated that about 85 percent of the site would consist of single-family homes and 15 percent would be attached town homes. He asked the Commission for their comments on the proposed development.

The Commission commented on the location of the streets; the continuous curving road throughout the development, which would require numerous street name changes; adding more trails on the northwest corner of the site to allow better access to the school; the location and size of the town homes; whether there should be town homes in the development; Hadley Avenue; tree preservation; lot sizes; and the tot lot/open space.

## Approval of Planning Commission Minutes of February 27, 2006

***Motion by Thiede, seconded by Bauer to approve the minutes from the Planning Commission meeting on February 27, 2006. Motion passed unanimously (7-to-0).***

### Reports

#### 9.1 Recap of March City Council Meetings

Blin reviewed the items discussed by the City Council at their meetings in March 2006.

#### 9.2 Committee Reports

None.

#### 9.3 Planning Commission Requests

Brittain asked when the proposed changes to Military Road would be implemented to fit the East Ravine master plan. Blin responded that Military Road will be vacated in segments over the next couple years. Brittain noted that he did not receive his packet until Saturday. Blin responded that staff will hand deliver packets in those cases. Thiede noted that there is no sidewalk in front of the Von Hanson's/Shamrock Liquor building, which could be a safety issue. McCool explained that currently there is no requirement for a sidewalk between the parking spaces and the building but that could be looked at for new developments.

#### 9.4 Response to Planning Commission Inquiries

None.

#### 9.5 Annual Organizational Meeting and Election of Officers

***Thiede made a motion to nominate Brittain as Chair. Bauer seconded.*** Reese asked if there were any other nominations. There were none. ***Motion passed unanimously (7-to-0).***

***Bauer made a motion to nominate Reese as Vice Chair. Kronlund seconded.*** Reese asked if there were any other nominations. There were none. ***Motion passed unanimously (7-to-0).***

***Brittain made a motion to nominate Bauer as Secretary. Reese seconded.*** Reese asked if there were any other nominations. There were none. ***Motion passed unanimously (7-to-0).***

### Adjournment

***Motion by Brittain, seconded by Bauer, to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously (7-to-0). The meeting adjourned at 9:13 p.m.***