



**CITY OF LONG LAKE
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
NOVEMBER 12, 2013**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Erickson.

Present: Commission Members Erickson, Hughes, Jerde, and Stephenson; City Planning Consultant Addison Lewis; Brian Bourassa, WSB; and City Councilmember Skjaret.

Absent: Commission Member Adams.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

APPROVE AGENDA

Commissioner Stephenson moved to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner Hughes seconded. Ayes: all.

CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes of the October 8, 2013 Planning Commission Meeting

Commissioner Stephenson noted that his absence should be listed as excused rather than unexcused.

Commissioner Stephenson moved to approve the Consent Agenda as amended. Commissioner Jerde seconded. Ayes: all.

OPEN CORRESPONDENCE

None.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Public Hearing: Planning Case #2013-05/Long Lake Chiro Center, 1865 Wayzata Boulevard; Sign Variances for Signage Exceeding Maximum Area and Height Permitted

Chair Erickson opened the public hearing at 6:35 p.m.

City Planning Consultant Lewis introduced himself as a representative from WSB who will be providing service to the City while his colleague is on maternity leave. He presented an

application from Long Lake Chiro Center, which include variance requests and advised that the staff report does recommend approval of the request. He reviewed the current sign limitations for the B-2 zoning district as well as the proposed sign dimensions. He identified the location of the property on an aerial photograph and explained that the applicant believes that a sign of that size would be necessary to alert passing drivers. He advised that this property is unique in that it is the only property, which fronts onto the highway, where vehicles travel at higher speeds. He displayed a sketch of the proposed sign including the dimensions and also provided a photograph of a similar sign used for the business at their Golden Valley location. He reviewed the variance criteria that must be considered and reviewed how staff believes the applicant meets each criteria.

Commissioner Jerde questioned if a sign is requested for the other side of the building.

Michael Schwartz confirmed that there is access but noted that the door is usually locked and is not used for general public access so a sign is not requested for the other side of the building.

City Planning Consultant Lewis stated that because of the unique request and the fact that the request will not result in detriment to the neighboring properties staff finds that the variance criteria are met and therefore recommends approval of the variance request. He noted that letters of support for the variances were included in the Commission packet. He reviewed the proposed conditions of approval recommended by staff.

Mr. Schwartz stated that his business has been in Long Lake for a few years and simply outgrew the previous location. He believed that this location was a unique opportunity and wanted to take advantage of the new location.

Commissioner Hughes questioned if there is a sign near the driveway to the property.

Mr. Schwartz advised of the location of the Town Center sign, which is slightly hidden by trees. He also identified the location of a monument sign that the business would have the opportunity to add signage if desired.

City Councilmember Skjaret advised that in the past two years this will be the second request to have a sign that shines down onto Highway 12, probably the sixth in the past seven years, all of which have been denied by the City Council. He explained that the City Council does not wish to allow signage onto Highway 12. He explained that the variance request is asking for a sign twice the allowed area. He noted that the past requests have been within the industrial zone and have been requests to advertise businesses other than the business located at the property.

Chair Erickson noted that the Planning Consultant present at the previous meeting explained that approval of this variance request would not set precedent for properties in the industrial zone. He believed that this is a unique property and there is no effort to point downward. He believed that the distance from the highway and the grade of the property and believed that the proposed sign would fit on this unique property.

City Planning Consultant Lewis advised that this is a multitenant building and explained that upper level tenants are not allowed to have signage on the lower level.

Chair Erickson closed the public hearing at 6:55 p.m.

Commissioner Jerde moved to recommend that the City Council adopt a resolution to approve variances for a commercial wall sign in the B-2 General Business zoning district that exceeds the maximum area and height permitted for property located at 1865 West Wayzata Boulevard with the findings of fact and conditions noted in the memo and expressed at the Planning Commission meeting. Commissioner Stephenson seconded. Ayes: all.

B. Metro Transit

Chair Erickson noted that a representative from Metro Transit has arrived at the meeting.

Steve Mahowald, Metro Transit, introduced himself to the Commission and noted that his department works in regard to long-term planning in conjunction with the Metropolitan Council. He stated that they have no immediate plans for any service changes in Long Lake but they are beginning a service improvement program in the community. He advised of public meetings at which Metro Transit is reaching out to the communities to develop and explain ideas for service improvement. He explained that this process is solely for regular route service. He advised that Long Lake is served by two express trips, in each direction, which average about 15 boarders per day. He advised that the metro area is broken into four transit markets and reviewed the criteria that are considered when creating those markets including employment density, population density and transit dependability. He discussed park and ride features and the services that can be offered for higher frequency service areas. He mentioned the properties along Brown Road, which were discussed with the Mayor about six months ago. He advised that he will leave brochures for the service improvement program that is ongoing.

Chair Erickson questioned if the demand for transit in Long Lake would be higher than Maple Plain.

Mr. Mahowald stated that Metro Transit has been moving away from smaller park and ride lots and focusing more on the larger lots where more frequent service can be provided. He stated that for a lot of 100 or less there would be no more than two to four trips offered. He stated that Metro Transit did request for grant dollars to begin a preliminary demonstration route to Maple Plain that was denied. He explained that it is inefficient to string together smaller lots as the driver must stop at multiple locations prior to reaching their destination. He advised that HOV lines have allowed for express routes to provide quick travel times and reliability.

Chair Erickson referenced the number of bus stops in Long Lake and stated that he would have no idea of the locations, without looking at the website, because of the lack of signage.

Mr. Mahowald stated that Metro Transit would love to install signage and he believed that additional signage could bring additional riders. He confirmed that they would love to work with staff in that regard.

Chair Erickson noted that the City is in the process of transition and would love to start with some signs once things settle down.

City Planning Consultant Lewis questioned when the input of cities is requested for the service improvement process.

Mr. Mahowald reviewed the timeline for the process and confirmed that there are still two to three months left to provide input.

OTHER BUSINESS

Council Liaison Report

Councilmember Skjaret provided updates on the two large capital improvement projects for the year, which are almost complete. He provided updates on recent Council activity including approval of the Joint Powers Agreement for the Lake Minnetonka Communications Commission (LMCC). He advised that some previous members have chosen to leave the LMCC and contract directly with Mediacom, noting that Long Lake did not consider leaving the LMCC. He noted that water and sewer charges will be raised this year. He referenced the recycling reimbursement program noting that the City did receive a reimbursement the first year of participation but did not do so well this year. He advised that the recycling rate will increase slightly for that reason. He explained that the participation rate has continued to rise but the reimbursement cost has fallen. He advised that a turnback open house will take place on November 19th at 5:30 p.m., explaining that the County will not be present and this is simply for Long Lake residents. He encouraged everyone to attend the open house because of the upcoming decision on how much funding to contribute towards the project and the options that can be included. He advised that the Council will also be voting for the new City Administrator, noting that 58 applications were received and 18 were interviewed by the hiring consultant. He noted that the Council will be interviewing ten final candidates. He advised that there will be group interviews held during a weekend and encouraged residents to come to City Hall to participate.

Commission Member Business

Chair Erickson referenced the request of earlier notification for public hearings. He stated that even though there is a requirement to publicly notice a public hearing through the newspaper it is not required to post notice at the post office. He believed that it would be nice for the Commission to receive notice of public hearings the same day the notice is published in the newspaper.

Staff Business

No additional comments.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Jerde moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:42 p.m. Commissioner Stephenson seconded. Ayes: all.

Respectfully submitted,

Addison Lewis
City Planning Consultant