



**CITY OF LONG LAKE
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
JULY 14, 2015**

CALL TO ORDER

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

Present: Commission Members Adams, Erickson, Hughes, Jerde, and Keating; City Administrator, Scott Weske; City Planning Consultant Addison Lewis.

Absent: None.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

APPROVE AGENDA

The Agenda was amended placing item B as the first public hearing, followed by item A.

*Commissioner Hughes moved to approve the agenda with the above changes noted.
Commissioner Adams seconded. Ayes: all.*

CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes of the June 9, 2015 Planning Commission Meeting

Commissioner Adams moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Commissioner Jerde seconded. Ayes: all.

OPEN CORRESPONDENCE

None.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Public Hearing: Planning Case #2015-06/Variance from Perimeter Tree Planting Requirements for Parking Areas, 1310 Wayzata Blvd. West, Brennan Greene (Birch's on the Lake).

City Planning Consultant Lewis presented.

The applicant is requesting a variance of the Zoning Ordinance, which requires that the perimeter of parking areas for all commercial, industrial, and multiple family properties be

planted with deciduous shade trees at least 3" in diameter at a number equal to 1 tree per 4 parking spaces, and spaced to provide the maximum shading of the parking area. Birch's is proposed to have 132 parking spaces upon completion of the parking area, which equates to 33 trees being required.

The applicant has proposed to plant a total of 16 new trees, 9 of which are proposed within a planting area directly in front of the building, along with other flowers and shrubs. City Staff asked the applicant to revise the submitted landscaping plan to show additional trees within the bluff impact zone and applicant agreed to plan an additional 7 trees in this area. Additional landscaping improvements including erosion control and two rain garden area with various plantings are part of the improvements.

City Planning Consultant Lewis noted the following requirements:

1. Property owner proposes to use property in a reasonable manner not permitted by this ordinance.
2. The plight of landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner.
3. Variance will not alter the appearance of the neighborhood.
4. Granting variance is in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the ordinance.
5. Variance is consistent with the comprehensive plan.

He added that City Staff feels the request is in harmony with the ordinance.

Chair Erickson opened the public hearing at 6:42 p.m.

Commissioner Keating asked for clarification on the number of trees required by the variance. City Planner Lewis stated the variance is the number of new trees to be planted.

The applicant, Brennan Greene said Birch's wants the property to look as nice as possible.

Commission Hughes asked if there are any plans for bicycle parking. Mr. Greene said that can be added to the plans and there is room for bike racks on the new property as well.

He added that construction should be completed by mid – August and the business will be open in September. Final walk through and inspections will be conducted by the City and the State.

Chair Erickson closed pub hearing at 6:48 pm.

City Staff recommend that the City Council adopt a resolution to approve a variance to the perimeter tree planting requirements for parking areas in order to allow for the proposed landscaping plan, subject to the following condition:

- a. The landscape plan be revised to show the 8 additional trees planted in the bluff impact zone.

Commissioner Hughes moved to recommend adoption of the resolution.

Commissioner Adams seconded. Ayes: all.

B. Public Hearing: Planning Case #2015-05/Variance to Allow for Wall Signage Exceeding Maximum Area and Height Permitted in PUD District, 1786 and 1810 Wayzata Blvd. West, Jan Guenther (Gear West).

City Planning Consultant Lewis presented the case.

The applicant (Gear West) is requesting two variances related to signs for properties located at 1786 and 1810 West Wayzata Boulevard.

Consultant Lewis noted that the 1786 address is referred to as Phase 1 and the 1810 address is referred to as phase 2.

He explained the applicant wishes to install a wall sign in the gable of the south side of the Phase 1 building that exceeds the permitted area and height allowed in the PUD zoning district. The City Cod permits up to 45 square feet in the area of wall signage and a maximum height of 14 feet for wall signs. The newly proposed business sign is approximately 93.5 square feet in area and 37.5 feet in height.

A sign permit was previously obtained for two existing wall signs on the building – one 14.17 square feet, and another 29.25 square feet in area. In addition, there is wall signage on the east side of the building which advertises various merchandise for which a permit was never obtained and which is estimated to be 40.00 square feet in area. The proposed sign would give the Phase 1 building a total of 176.92 square feet of signage, 131.92 square feet over the amount permitted in the PUD district.

A variance is needed for the proposed sign area and height of the new sign. City Staff recommends that the Applicant be required to remove the signage that was installed without a permit. The Planning Commission should consider whether one of the existing signs should be removed if a variance sign is to be approved to accommodate the new sign.

Additionally, Consultant Lewis explained the applicant wishes to install six separate wall signs on the Phase 2 building. On the east side of the building, the sign (“Gear West Adrenaline”) would be located in the gable and would be 41.38 square feet in area and 30.50 feet in height. Also there would be two individual sport signs located lower on the building within the height requirement totaling 13.33 square feet each in area.

On the west side of the building, the business identification sign “Gear West” would be located in the gable with an area of 22.21 square feet and 30.17 feet in height. The two individual sport signs are proposed lower on the building within the height requirement and totaling 13.33 square feet each in area.

The total area of all proposed wall signage on the Phase 2 building is 116.92 square feet, 71.92 square feet over the amount permitted in the PUD district. A variance would be needed for the proposed sign area and height of the two gable signs.

Additionally, City Staff is supportive of a variance to sign area to allow for the two business identification signs due to the fact that the sign ordinance does not allow additional area for properties with multiple street frontages, the fact that both signs individually are less than

the maximum area allowed, and the fact that only one of the signs would be visible for traffic traveling in either direction. Staff does not support including the individual sport signs as part of the variance for sign area, as these do not alleviate any practical difficulty in giving the business a reasonable amount of visibility. Staff also does not support the requested variance to sign height for the Phase 2 building due to the fact that the wall signs are primarily intended for traffic traveling along County Road 112 and the fact that there are other locations on the building, which could reasonably accommodate both signs and meet the height requirement.

Chair Erickson opened the public hearing at 7:12 p.m.

Commissioner Hughes asked if the signs would be lighted.

Tom Steinke, representing the applicant, Jan Guenther, noted some letters in the signs will be individually lit and some will have recessed lights. He added with construction of the bypass, the Gear West business and other businesses in Long Lake have had to make adjustments in order to attract customers to their stores. Many businesses have not survived after construction of the bypass, and this new signage is needed in order for customers to see where Gear West is located and to bring in customers to the business.

Commission Adams asked why Long Lake makes it so difficult for our businesses to bring in customers.

Chair Erickson said he was disappointed to see the ordinance was approved in the PUD category – in B1 and B2 districts, adding it does not belong there. He added the PUD is really meant for larger projects and its primary purpose was to give more flexibility for land use options within the parcel. He added that the PUD was designed to give bigger developers flexibility, however they must go through a larger planning cost, and additional details in order to be approved. Chair Erickson states to put this in the same sign ordinance category with these small shops makes sense for the B1 district.

He added he want Gear West to move forward and succeed, noting that Gear West has done much for the City of Long Lake. He stated that the Commission will need to again review the sign ordinance and make changes and this is a glaring example of how poor the PUD fits into the ordinance.

He added he would be comfortable granting significant variances here, and added these signs are comparable to the chiropractic sign installed several years ago, which increase visibility for the business from Highway 12.

Commissioner Adams added Gear West is a destination business and could be considered a multi-use building, which would allow for the separate signage. He added a one size fits all percentage related to signage for the size of a building is not logical.

Mr. Steinke also noted the best vantage point for the "Adrenaline" sign is at the top of the Gear West building, and is the logical place for it.

Chair Erickson stated he is comfortable with the variances and might like to see a condition be that the free standing bicycle shop sign be brought down in height.

Commissioner Keating stated he did not see an issue with the signage, adding that there needs to be a way to get customers into town.

Commissioner Adams added the unpermitted sign should be removed so as not to set a precedent for unpermitted signs.

Chair Erickson closed the public hearing at 7:57 p.m.

Commissioner Adams made a motion to recommend that:

1. All signs be approved at the size presented
2. Applicant remove all non-permanent signs and relocate them to the south side of the building
3. The "Adrenaline" sign be reduced in size from 48 square feet to 45 square feet
4. The Gear West sign on the west side be no more than 22 square feet

Chair Erickson made an amendment to the motion that as a condition of the variances the existing freestanding bicycle sign be lowered to 15 feet. The motion failed for lack of a second. The original motion was moved.

Commissioner Jerde seconded. Ayes: all.

OTHER BUSINESS

Council Liaison Report

No Councilmember present.

Commission Member Business

Commissioner Adams asked if signs were installed.

Chair Erickson asked staff to send a timely email to all Commissioners when a public hearing is published in the city paper, as a reminder.

Staff Business

City Administrator Weske noted the sign ordinance should be brought back to the Planning Commission for review. The Commissioners added a joint working meeting with the City Council would be helpful to discuss the sign ordinance further and review for potential changes.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Keating moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m. Commissioner Adams seconded. Ayes: all.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Weske, City Administrator