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**CITY OF ARDEN HILLS, MINNESOTA
PLANNING COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 2023
6:30 P.M. - ARDEN HILLS CITY HALL**

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, Chair Paul Vijums called to order the regular Planning Commission meeting at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present were: Chair Paul Vijums, Commissioners Brad Bjorklund, Shelley Blilie, Joshua Collins, Arlene Mitchell, Kurtis Weber, and Jonathan Wicklund.

Absent: None.

Also present were: Community Development Director Jessica Jagoe, Senior Planner Elena Fransen and Councilmember Emily Rousseau.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – JUNE 7, 2023

Commissioner Blilie moved, seconded by Commissioner Wicklund, to approve the June 7, 2023, agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously (7-0).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

May 3, 2023 – Planning Commission Regular Meeting

Commissioner Blilie moved, seconded by Commissioner Weber, to approve the May 3, 2023, Planning Commission Regular Meeting as presented. The motion carried unanimously (7-0).

PLANNING CASES

- A. **Planning Case 23-010; 4001 Lexington Avenue North – Site Plan Review – Public Hearing Not Required**

Community Development Director Jagoe stated the Applicant has submitted a land use application for a Site Plan Review, seeking flexibility on the number and size of freestanding monument signs allowed for the Subject Property. New Horizon Academy is located within

Building C on the Land O’Lakes corporate campus. The campus consists of 47 acres that is developed with three buildings and two parking lots. The Subject Property has road frontage along County Road F West and Lexington Avenue. As part of the headquarter campus expansion in 2018, Land O’Lakes began partnering with New Horizon Academy to provide onsite childcare to their employees. Since 2020, New Horizon Academy has seen a decline in enrollment with many campus employees continuing to work full-time from home. As a result, the two parties have agreed to allow for open enrollment of childcare services to non-employees.

Community Development Director Jagoe reported the Applicant is seeking flexibility to install an additional single-tenant freestanding sign along Lexington Avenue in order to advertise their childcare facility to the community. As part of this application, the existing monument sign along County Road F will be refaced to include the New Horizon Academy name and updated Land O’Lakes logo. No other changes are proposed to existing signage that was approved in 2018 as part of the Master Sign Plan.

Community Development Director Jagoe reviewed the site data, surrounding area, the Plan Evaluation and provided the Findings of Fact for review:

1. The Subject Property is located in the I-1 Zoning District and is guided as Light Industrial and Office in the Land Use Plan.
2. In Sign District 6, one additional freestanding sign is permitted up to 22.5 square feet in area and 12 feet in height for properties that front more than one public street.
3. In 2018, the Subject Property was approved a sign standard adjustment for the permitted size of the freestanding monument and auxiliary signs as part of a Master Sign Plan through the Site Plan Review process.
4. The Applicant has submitted an application for Site Plan Review to allow a third freestanding sign for the Subject Property which would be the second freestanding sign located along the east property line adjacent to Lexington Avenue.
5. Sign Standard Adjustments to the requirements and standards for the height, number, type, lighting, area, and/or location of a sign or signs established by this Chapter may be approved with a Site Plan Review or a Planned Unit Development process as described for in Section 1320 and 1355 of the Zoning Code.
6. Flexibility through the Site Plan Review process has been requested for the number and size of freestanding signs allowed on the Subject Property.
7. The proposed additional freestanding monument sign would be consistent with the size and design of the existing signage approved as part of the Master Sign Plan for the Subject Property.
8. The proposed signage plan does not conflict with the general purpose and intent of the I-1 Zoning District or the Comprehensive Development Plan for the City.
9. The application is not anticipated to create a negative impact on the immediate area or the community as a whole.
10. The proposed plan will not produce any permanent noise, odors, vibration, smoke, dust, air pollution, heat, liquid, or solid waste, and other nuisance characteristics.
11. A public hearing is not required for Site Plan Review.

Community Development Director Jagoe reviewed the options available to the Planning Commission for Planning Case 23-010 for Site Plan Review of a sign standard adjustment at 4001 Lexington Avenue N.:

1. Recommend Approval with Conditions
 - 1) That the project shall be completed in accordance with the plans submitted. Any significant changes to these plans, as determined by the Community Development Director, shall require review and approval by the Planning Commission and City Council.
 - 2) A separate sign permit shall be required for all proposed signage.
 - 3) All signage shall meet all other requirements of Sign District 6.
 - 4) All freestanding signs shall be externally illuminated in accordance with the Master Sign Plan.
 - 5) Prior to issuance of a sign permit for the New Horizon Academy freestanding monument sign, the Applicant shall stake the location of the proposed new sign adjacent to Lexington Avenue. Planning staff shall approve the location meets the minimum setback of 5 feet from any property line prior to installation.
2. Recommend Approval as Submitted
3. Recommend Denial
4. Table

Chair Vijums opened the floor to Commissioner comments.

Commissioner Weber asked if the sign would be located in Ramsey County right of way.

Community Development Director Jagoe stated the sign would not be within the Ramsey County right of way and the sign code requires a five foot setback as measured from the property line for freestanding signs.

Commissioner Weber questioned why this sign was located between County Road F and the eastern entrance. He suggested the sign be placed at the south side of the eastern entrance.

Community Development Director Jagoe reported the sign designer was in attendance and could address this comment.

Craig Heitzmann, Electro Signs, explained the proposed sign location provided the greatest visibility for traffic going north on Lexington Avenue and did not crowd the existing sign. He reported other sign locations were considered but would require the removal of trees and this was not allowed per City Code.

Marcia Droege, Land O'Lakes representative, indicated she has had long discussions about the size and location of the sign. She reported if the sign were larger a second adjustment would be required. She stated the current monument sign was lower than the New Horizon sign, which would create good visibility for both north and southbound traffic traveling along Lexington Avenue.

Chair Vijums asked how far apart the two monument signs would be.

Community Development Director Jagoe stated the two monument signs would be 244 feet apart.

Commissioner Weber questioned if any other items had to be considered given the fact a second use would be added to the Land O'Lakes campus.

Community Development Director Jagoe explained a child care facility was a permitted use for this zoning district. She commented she did not see any conflict with the Master PUD or land use.

Commissioner Bjorklund questioned why this could not be counted as a third sign.

Community Development Director Jagoe reported under the Master PUD only two monument signs were allowed, along with four auxiliary signs. She indicated there was no way to approve a third monument sign administratively.

Commissioner Mitchell stated she supported the proposed site plan review.

Chair Vijums inquired if this sign would be externally illuminated.

Community Development Director Jagoe indicated the 2018 approval allowed the applicant to have externally illuminated signs. She noted as proposed, the monument sign would be non-illuminated.

Chair Vijums commented he was not opposed to the sign, but he feared the visibility would be difficult at the proposed location.

Commissioner Wicklund moved and Commissioner Weber seconded a motion to recommend approval of Planning Case 23-010 for a Site Plan Review at 4001 Lexington Avenue North based on the findings of fact and the submitted plans, as amended by the conditions in the June 7, 2023, report to the Planning Commission. The motion carried unanimously (7-0).

B. Planning Case 23-011; Zoning Code Amendment to Chapter 13 to TCAAP Redevelopment Code in The Campus Commercial Zoning District – *Public Hearing*

Community Development Director Jagoe stated in November 2012, the City Council approved a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) with Ramsey County which establishes a partnership between the City of Arden Hills and Ramsey County with the goal of the remediation and redevelopment of the 427-acre Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant (TCAAP) site. Under the JPA, the City and County created a Joint Development Authority (JDA) that is the joint governing entity of the TCAAP site as allowed by the Joint Powers Act and MN State Laws. The JDA is the authority responsible for, but not limited to, environmental remediation, elimination of blight, infrastructure construction and financing, comprehensive planning and zoning, and economic development and redevelopment. The JDA Board is comprised of two County Commissioners, two City Councilmembers, and an additional non-elected City appointee as the Chair. Key points of the JPA are as follows: