



Approved: April 12, 2021

**CITY OF ARDEN HILLS, MINNESOTA
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
MARCH 22, 2021
5:30 P.M. - ARDEN HILLS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, Mayor Grant called to order the Special City Council Work Session at 5:30 p.m.

Note: On March 20th, the Mayor signed a determination allowing Councilmembers to participate in City Council meetings via telephone pursuant to State Statute 13D.021

Present via telephone: Mayor David Grant, Councilmembers Brenda Holden, Fran Holmes, Dave McClung and Steve Scott

Absent: None

Also present: City Administrator Dave Perrault; Interim Public Works Director David Swearingen; and City Clerk Julie Hanson

Also present via telephone: Bolton & Menk Planning Consultants Jane Kansier and Corrin Bemis; Grove Community Church Pastors Josh Krehbiel and Katie Krehbiel; Property broker Cameron Peterson; Consultant Tom Goodrum; Church building committee members Paul Spakousky and Spencer Hutton; Church board member Mark Herringshaw; Architect Thomas Small; and City Attorney Joel Jamnik

1. AGENDA ITEMS

A. Concept Plan Review at 1275 Red Fox Road – Grove Community Church

Planning Consultant Kansier explained that this is different from a typical Concept Plan Review. The uses being proposed are not permitted in the District, it is zoned I-Flex District. If the Concept Plan should move forward, it will require an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to allow the uses to be permitted in that District.

Councilmember Holden asked if there would be any change to the Comprehensive Plan.

Planning Consultant Kansier replied there would not be.

Mayor Grant asked if the development could be done by way of Conditional Use Permit.

Planning Consultant Kansier responded that was possible and part of the direction the Council would need to give staff. She said it could be a Conditional Use Permit or possibly a Planned Unit Development, either way an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance is required.

Grove Community Church Pastor Josh Krehbiel introduced property broker Cameron Peterson, consultant Tom Goodrum, building committee members Paul Spakousky and Spencer Hutton, board member Mark Herringshaw and architect Thomas Small.

Grove Community Church Pastor Katie Krehbiel gave background information about herself and her family. She explained they met while attending Northwestern University and started the church in their home near Lake Johanna in 2013, they began meeting in the evening at a church in St. Anthony Village in 2015, and started searching for a building in 2018. When they move into their own church space they will change the name to Everyday Church. Pre-COVID they had about 700 adults and 150 children attend services. They have more than 125 zip codes represented which includes young professionals, young families and college students.

Pastor Josh Krehbiel said they have a passion to empower everyday people, and they believe the key to healthy communities is healthy hearts, relationships and homes.

Pastor Josh Krehbiel gave a summary of the project. They are proposing to use approximately 75,000 square feet that would include a 900-seat auditorium, 400 parking stalls, large format classrooms, 30,000 leasable square feet on the second floor, a daycare center, and counseling center.

Pastor Josh Krehbiel addressed zoning of the property. He said the daycare, classrooms, counseling uses are permitted or conditional uses in the district. The I-Flex district is adjacent to the B3/B4 districts which allows houses of worship as a conditional use. Primary programming will occur during non-peak business hours so traffic impact will have less of a strain on traffic in the area than previous businesses in the location. He explained the first and second floor site plans and the benefits to the community, including improving a vacant property and the economic impact of having a church community.

Councilmember Holden asked if the applicant was aware of International Paper working 24/7 with noise and semi-trucks.

Pastor Josh Krehbiel responded that as they have walked the property it hasn't been a concern. The daycare would be under 25 children and would be on the back (north) side of the building. He also said that even as they draw attention to young professionals, those attending their services come from all different demographics and socio-economic conditions. They would be asking for long term 5 year or more leases for the second floor.

Councilmember Holden felt they should add a sidewalk along their property and asked if they were going to be changing the lighting on the property.

Pastor Josh Krehbiel said they are talking about increasing lighting in the parking lot. There is room to add a sidewalk next to Red Fox Road.

Mayor Grant asked if the counseling center would be internal to the church, what does it mean to have master classes, and asked for more information about the daycare.

Pastor Josh Krehbiel replied the counseling would be for both church members and others. A master class is training by experts in their fields within the church for other members of the church. There is not a current established Montessori daycare that they would transition over to the new space, it is a concept plan that could serve the church community and beyond.

Mayor Grant asked if they had people looking to lease the second floor.

Pastor Josh Krehbiel said they have some leaders in their community that have expressed interest in renting space. He noted the current church building they are leasing is approximately 20,000 square feet. This building would give them about 40,000 square feet on the first floor.

Councilmember Scott expressed curiosity regarding their ability to undertake such a large project.

Pastor Josh Krehbiel responded that they have a very generous community, and only lost about ten percent in giving in 2020. They are actually stronger than they have ever been financially now.

Councilmember Holmes asked if the sanctuary area was two story, as it looks like there are stairs going up from that area.

Pastor Josh Krehbiel said there is potential for minimal platforms but there is no second floor in the sanctuary.

Councilmember McClung asked if they envisioned the second floor being tenants not affiliated with the church and on the tax rolls.

Pastor Josh Krehbiel stated that in talking with Ramsey County, the tax rolls will include the rental space on the second floor.

Councilmember Holden stated that a coffee shop isn't a permitted use in the area and commented that the church could take away customers from the other coffee shops in the area.

Pastor Josh Krehbiel replied that their intention would be for internal use and used to create a space of connection and community within the church.

Mayor Grant added that it is not uncommon to have coffee shops in larger churches.

Councilmember Holden asked if there would be any variances requested.

Planning Consultant Jane Kansier said based on the current information available it doesn't appear there would be.

Councilmember Holden asked if they could limit the number of children in the daycare.

Planning Consultant Jane Kansier said she would like the city attorney to respond to that question. But she felt the Conditional Use Permit could limit the number of children.

Mayor Grant noted that the Fire Marshall would have to look at their plans and they may have to make a change to the number of seats in the sanctuary in order to meet fire codes.

Councilmember Holden asked how many staff would be there on a daily basis.

Pastor Josh Krehbiel replied they currently have seven full time staff and they anticipate around 15 in the coming years.

Councilmember Holden asked if they had any intention of putting a gym in the building.

Pastor Josh Krehbiel said it could be a potential use for space on the second floor, but they anticipated it being small space utilized by the second floor tenants.

Pastor Katie Krehbiel added it wasn't part of the current plan.

City Administrator Perrault asked what the different avenues are to move forward.

Planning Consultant Jane Kansier responded the first step would be to amend the ordinance to allow this use in the I-Flex District, keeping in mind that it wouldn't be exclusive to this property. After that is done, they would look at how this proposal fits into the new ordinance requirements. For example, if they need a Conditional Use Permit, they would have to make application for that and go through the public hearing process.

City Administrator Perrault said staff would want the City Council to weigh in on how the zoning ordinance is changed first, and then address the planning application after that.

Mayor Grant said he would see it as a Conditional Use Permit so it is only changed for the site and not permitted throughout the entire District.

Planning Consultant Jane Kansier clarified that the Zoning Ordinance has to be amended to allow it in some way; either permitted outright, a Conditional Use Permit, or a Planned Unit Development.

Councilmember Holden asked if the coffee shop and daycare would be automatically approved if it's not a Conditional Use Permit.

Planning Consultant Jane Kansier responded that the zoning ordinance currently lists specifically what is permitted in the district. If they decide the church is permitted, they don't necessarily have to allow the accessory uses.

City Attorney Jamnik cautioned that the traditional accessory uses for houses of worship have to be allowed. Food shelves, fellowship, shelters would normally be considered as uses. A commercial coffee shop wouldn't normally fit into that category but a coffee station for fellowship before and after service in a social situation would be a traditional accessory usage. He didn't feel making it a permitted use was how most communities deal with houses of worship because you

want to look at traffic and parking, and having it as a permitted use doesn't allow you to do enough of a case by case analysis. But he also recommended against going as a Planned Unit Development because most are a single site and usually a PUD at a single site is a number of deviations from city standards with nothing in return or exchange that is a betterment for the community. Consequently, he thought it should be a Conditional Use Permit with standards and conditions that are detailed.

Councilmember Scott said he agreed with the Conditional Use Permit. He would also like to get community feedback.

City Attorney Jamnik explained the rezoning would require a hearing before the Planning Commission and action by the City Council in advance of the application of the Conditional Use Permit.

Councilmember Scott felt it was an industrial area with heavy truck traffic and that concerns him.

Mayor Grant noted that getting on and off of Lexington Avenue is another concern, although they could go down Dunlap if they were going south. He recommended the applicant spend time in the area on several Sundays to see what the traffic from the other businesses is like.

Pastor Josh Krehbiel said there is a staggering of when people leave, they have found that leaving after services often times extends up to 30 minutes.

Councilmember Scott asked if they would be having classes or services on Wednesdays.

Pastor Katie Krehbiel replied they would continue to have two services on Sundays and classes on Wednesday nights.

Mayor Grant asked if the Council was comfortable allowing the church as a Conditional Use Permit.

Councilmember Scott said tentatively yes.

Councilmember McClung said he had concerns regarding truck traffic from International Paper and some of the applicant's plans such as the coffee shop – his opinion was that the City shouldn't initiate a zoning amendment, but the applicant should make that request.

Councilmember Holmes agreed that the applicant should work with Planning to request the zoning change and follow up with the Conditional Use Permit. She is also concerned about the commercial aspects.

Councilmember Holden wondered if the applicant was looking anywhere else.

Pastor Josh Krehbiel replied they are not looking anywhere else and would like to move forward with this building. They are in negotiations with the seller at this time.

Councilmember Holden said according to the City Attorney they don't have a lot of leeway so she was fine with it, but she had the same concerns as previously expressed.

Mayor Grant also felt he Conditional Use Permit was appropriate and had concerns with International Paper.

Pastor Josh Krehbiel said they aren't attached to the idea of a gym and moving forward they would gladly cancel that out of future plans.

2. COUNCIL/STAFF COMMENTS

None

ADJOURN

Mayor Grant adjourned the City Council Work Session at 6:50 p.m.

Julie Hanson
City Clerk

David Grant
Mayor