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**CITY OF ARDEN HILLS, MINNESOTA  
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION  
DECEMBER 21, 2020  
5:00 P.M. - ARDEN HILLS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

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**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, Mayor Grant called to order the City Council Work Session meeting at 5:00 p.m.

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

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

**Absent:** None

**Also present:** City Administrator Dave Perrault, Public Works Director/City Engineer Todd Blomstrom, Community Development Manager/City Planner Mike Mrosla, Assistant City Engineer/Engineer in Training David Swearingen, and Deputy Clerk Jolene Trauba.

**Also present via telephone:** Finance Director Gayle Bauman and City Clerk Julie Hanson, Kensington Development Partner Dan Rea, NORR Architects David Babbnig and Josh Warren and Larson Engineer Group Representative TJ Rose

**1. AGENDA ITEMS**

**A. Lexington Station 3<sup>rd</sup> Addition Concept Review – Kensington Development**

**Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosla** stated in 2013, the City approved a Master Planned Unit Development (PUD) for Roberts Management’s proposed Lexington Station redevelopment project, located at the southwest corner of Lexington Avenue North and Red Fox Road. The total project area is 7.57 acres and is comprised of three parcels. The proposed development would be completed in three phases. Phase I of the redevelopment was completed in 2013-2014 and included the demolition of the former Blue Fox Restaurant and the construction of a multi-tenant commercial building with a drive through. Phase II consisted of removing the existing building at 1120 Red Fox Road and constructing a new multi-tenant commercial building with a drive through. Phase II was completed in in the fall of 2018. The approved plan for Phase III or the Subject Site consists of a 15,210 square foot multi-tenant commercial building with a

drive through and a standalone 17,841 square foot box retail building on 4.24 acres. During construction of Phase III, a new access on Lexington Avenue would be constructed.

**Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosła** explained the proposed access would align with the existing Target service entrance and the existing access on Lexington Avenue would be removed. The proposed new access/intersection would include a traffic signal. The proposed traffic signal is included in Ramsey County's Lexington Avenue reconstruction project that is anticipated to start in 2022.

**Dan Rea**, Kensington Development Partner, introduced himself and Kensington Development to the Council. He discussed several large projects that he had completed in the Midwest. He provided the Council with a presentation on the Lexington Station 3<sup>rd</sup> Addition proposed project and noted the areas that required flexibility. The building materials were described in further detail with the Council. It was noted signage relief was being requested. He thanked the Council for their time and noted he was available for comments or questions.

**Councilmember Scott** asked if the exterior architecture was unique for the client or if a more generic building type could be pursued.

**Mr. Rea** stated that the user's generic building product was more corrugated metal and resin panels. He indicated the proposed building was more contemporary while still trying to match the existing Lexington Station buildings.

**Councilmember Holden** questioned if Phase 3 would be including one building instead of two.

**Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosła** reported this was the case.

**Councilmember Holden** commented she was concerned about the amount of parking proposed for this project. She indicated there was not enough parking available for Phases 1 and 2.

**Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosła** stated he reviewed the Phase 1 and 2 approvals and explained the site was meeting retail parking requirements. He noted there was some peak parking demands in the evening hours due to the restaurants. He reported he was uncertain what new tenants would be occupying Phase 3.

**Councilmember Holden** indicated she was concerned about the south elevation.

**Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosła** explained this elevation would be blocked by the Big O Tire building and proposed landscaping.

**Councilmember McClung** requested further information on how traffic would flow through the site.

**Mr. Rea** discussed how traffic would access and exit the site. It was noted traffic would access the site on the east side. The cross site access and traffic stacking were further described with the Council.

**Councilmember McClung** stated access and traffic flow were concerns for him. He feared the site would have a bottleneck at the proposed intersection. He commented on the other grocery stores in close proximity to this area. He encouraged the applicant to consider the viability of another grocery store within this development.

**Mr. Rea** stated his tenant was a very large corporation that has invested a lot of resources in order to complete market studies. He explained his client believes this is a great market for them to be in. He reported Kensington Development was a key developer of grocers in the Midwest. He had 100% confidence that his tenant has completed the proper amount of research and would be successful in this market.

**Councilmember Holden** questioned if the building would have a drive-thru.

**Mr. Rea** reported the building would not have a drive-thru.

**Mayor Grant** requested further information on how traffic would flow through the site.

**Community Development Manager/City Planner Mroska** discussed the Lexington Avenue project noting it had been pushed from 2021 to 2022. He explained the tenant believed a signal would be installed at the service road of Target and the southern portion of Lexington Station Phase 3. He indicated a median would be installed along Lexington Avenue when the project was completed which would limit left turns. He reported if the project does not move forward in 2022 as proposed, Ramsey County would implement a stop light. He noted Arby's and the Big O Tire would then have right-in, right-out access only.

**Mayor Grant** asked if City staff has had any conversations with Enterprise Rental Car.

**Mr. Rea** reported he had been in contact with the Enterprise building owner.

**Mayor Grant** reiterated that this was an area with several grocery stores in close proximity and noted this was not something the Council could not base its decision on.

**Councilmember Holden** asked if pedestrians could walk safely from Phase 3 to Phase 1 or Phase 2.

**Mr. Rea** explained he could work with Larson to identify a safe walking path.

**Councilmember Holden** anticipated shoppers would want the properties tied together in order to allow them to shop for groceries and then walk to get a cup of coffee.

**Councilmember McClung** supported this recommendation and recommended the applicant pursue a walkability plan.

Discussion ensued regarding cost sharing and access to Arby's and Big O Tires.

**Councilmember McClung** suggested staff or the applicant reach out to Arby's and Big O Tires to discuss a cost sharing and access option in the future.

**Councilmember Holmes** questioned if the applicant was aware that a grocery proposal was submitted at the PACE location.

**Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosła** reported this has been discussed with the applicant.

**Councilmember Holmes** commented the proposed building exterior was not quite the same as the other two phases of Lexington Station. She stated she would like to see more brick used on the building.

**Josh Warren**, NORR Architects, explained the brick on the bottom of the building was selected to match Phases 1 and 2 of Lexington Station. He noted the other building materials were selected to address the tenants' needs.

**Councilmember Holden** expressed concern with the fact the applicant was proposing to use brick veneer. She noted this was not allowed in Arden Hills.

**Mr. Rea** reported he was proposing to use traditional masonry brick and not a brick veneer.

**Councilmember Holmes** questioned if the Council would be receiving material boards for this project.

**Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosła** stated the applicant would be providing this to the City.

Further discussion ensued regarding the proposed signage and signage building materials.

**Councilmember Holden** asked if the applicant would be providing the City with a lighting plan.

**Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosła** reported this would be required by the applicant if the plan were to move forward.

**Councilmember Scott** inquired if the requested sign was similar to the Cub Foods sign.

**Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosła** noted Cub received sign flexibility in 2012. He reported Cub has 678 square feet of signage on the front elevation. The square footage of Cub was discussed and compared to the proposed development.

**Mayor Grant** asked if the Council supported the parking variance.

**Councilmember Scott** stated he was not concerned with the parking variance and noted he could support the number of requested parking spaces.

**Councilmember Holden** questioned how the number of parking stalls was developed by the applicant.

**Mr. Rea** reported his tenant requires four parking stalls per 1,000 square feet, which calculates into 172 stalls. He noted they would be providing 35 extra stalls on top of this.

**Councilmember Holden** stated her main concerns with the project at this time were with signage, lighting and walkability.

**Mayor Grant** commented there was nothing within the development the Council objected to. He reported the Council would want to see building materials and directed staff to speak with the Big O and Arby's.

**Mr. Rea** thanked Council and staff for their input.

### **B. B-2 Zoning Code Update**

**Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosła** stated at the work session meeting on September 17, 2018 the City Council discussed building facade and parking setbacks standards for the B2 district. Staff proposed revising the front yard setback requirement from 20 feet to 50 feet. Staff also recommended removing the requirement that at least 50 percent of the largest building on each site be constructed at the front setback line of 20 feet. Council and staff agreed on removing the City code language below and revising the front yard building setback to 50 feet. The following language is proposed to be removed:

- 1325.05 Design Standards, Subd. 8, (F) (B):
  - o Twenty percent (20%) of all other first level building facades that are reasonably visible from the public right of way shall be comprised of window or door openings. Simulated or opaque windows may be used on service areas.
- 1325.05, Subd. 8, M. Parking (1) (2):
  - o Placing parking between the street right-of-way and a building shall be discouraged.
  - o No more than 50 percent of the parking on a site may be between buildings or in the side yards.

**Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosła** commented the Council did have additional concerns about building façade requirements. At its August 12, 2019 and June 8, 2020 work sessions, the City Council and staff continued discussing the façade transparency requirements on mechanical and storage areas in the B-2 and B-3 Districts.

**Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosła** explained during the discussions, Council asked staff to review spandrel glass and determine if it could be illuminated to appear as an active storefront when viewed from an adjacent public street. Upon review it was determined that spandrel glass should not be illuminated. Unlike typical window glass, which is meant to be transparent, spandrel glass is designed to be opaque in order to help hide features between the floors of a building, including vents, wires, slab ends and mechanical equipment. If the intent is to have the space to look occupied by illumination, spandrel glass should not be used.

**Community Development Manager/City Planner Mrosła** reported following a discussion, Council and staff concurred that the existing ordinance should not be amended and that the