



DRAFT

Approved:

**CITY OF ARDEN HILLS, MINNESOTA
PLANNING COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, JULY 6, 2022
6:30 P.M. - ARDEN HILLS CITY HALL**

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

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

ROLL CALL

Present were: Vice Chair Jonathan Wicklund Commissioners Shelley Blilie, Joshua Collins, Marcie Jefferys, Arlene Mitchell, Kurt Weber, and Clayton Zimmerman (Alternate).

Absent: Chair Paul Vijums and Commissioner Steven Jones.

Also present were: City Planner Jessica Jagoe and Councilmember Fran Holmes.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – JUNE 8, 2022

Commissioner Weber moved, seconded by Commissioner Zimmerman, to approve the June 8, 2022, agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously (7-0).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

June 8, 2022 – Planning Commission Regular Meeting

Vice Chair Wicklund reviewed two minor changes to the minutes on Page 6 and Page 10.

Commissioner Weber requested a change to the minutes on Page 5 noting his statement regarding the North Heights Church request should include he was concerned with the comprehensive plan amendment and including the churches entire parcel. He indicated he also discussed the impact the change would have on the allowed units per acre density.

Commissioner Zimmerman moved, seconded by Commissioner Jefferys, to approve the June 8, 2022, Planning Commission Regular Meeting as amended. The motion carried unanimously (7-0).

PLANNING CASES

A. Planning Case 22-012; 3737 Lexington Avenue North and 1133 Grey Fox Road – Launch Properties – Preliminary Plat, Final Plat, Master Planned Unit Development, Final Planned Unit Development, Conditional Use Permit, and Site Plan Review – *Public Hearing*

City Planner Jagoe stated Launch Properties (“The Applicant”) is requesting a Preliminary Plat, Final Plat, Master Planned Unit Development, Final Planned Unit Development, Conditional Use Permit, and Site Plan Review for a proposed project on 3737 Lexington Avenue N. and 1133 Grey Fox Road (“Subject Property”). The subject property is currently two lots with one building developed over both lots. The proposal includes a lot reconfiguration that would shift the existing lot line towards the west. This development includes the demolition of the existing vacant industrial building and redevelop the parcels with two separate one-story buildings, one approximate 4,900 square foot drive-through car wash and one 8,950 square foot multi-tenant retail building.

City Planner Jagoe reviewed the surrounding area, the Plan Evaluation and provided the Findings of Fact for review:

1. The property located at 3737 Lexington Avenue N. and 1133 Grey Fox Road is designated for Commercial uses on the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.
2. New building construction or site modification identified requires the submittal of a Site Plan Review application prior to construction.
3. For proposals for new construction, redevelopment of a site, and significant modifications to existing sites a PUD is required.
4. The PUD process allows for flexibility within the City’s regulations through a negotiated process with a Developer.
5. The Applicant has proposed a Master and Final Planned Unit Development in order to develop the property with shared access, parking, and maintenance between the two parcels.
6. The Master and Final Planned Unit Development generally conforms to the requirements of the City Zoning Code and design standards.
7. Where the plan is not in conformance with the City Code, flexibility has been requested by the Applicant.
8. Flexibility through the PUD process has been requested in the following areas: landscaping, building positioning, building materials, transparency, drive-through facilities, and signage.
9. A public hearing for a Preliminary Plat, Final Plat, Master Planned Unit Development, Final Planned Unit Development, and Conditional Use Permit request is required before the request can be brought before the City Council.

City Planner Jagoe reviewed the options available to the Planning Commission on this matter:

1. Recommend Approval with Conditions
2. Recommend Approval as Submitted
3. Recommend Denial
4. Table

Vice Chair Wicklund opened the floor to Commissioner comments.

Commissioner Jefferys asked what the code amendment process was.

City Planner Jagoe discussed the code amendment process with the Commission. It was noted if the code amendment was approved, it would apply to all future requests regarding menu boards.

Commissioner Jefferys questioned if Condition 17 addressed the flexibility being requested.

City Planner Jagoe stated Condition 17 reiterated the fact that, if approved, the applicant would have to apply for a separate sign permit.

Commissioner Weber inquired if the City would be paying for any of the sidewalk along Lexington Avenue.

City Planner Jagoe reported the City would be splitting the cost for the sidewalk along Lexington Avenue 50/50 with the County.

Commissioner Weber indicated the purpose of new developments was to have businesses pay for the cost of adjacent infrastructure. He recommended the developer pay for the sidewalk along Lexington Avenue given the fact they are being redone at this time. He then asked how the City defines digital display signs.

City Planner Jagoe reviewed how City Code defines digital display signs.

Commissioner Weber asked staff for further information regarding the exterior building materials that would be used.

Vice Chair Wicklund reported the applicant had provided staff with a product materials board.

Commissioner Mitchell questioned if there was a difference between smart and dynamic signs.

City Planner Jagoe explained these signs were the same.

Commissioner Mitchell discussed the landscaping requirements and noted the applicant would not be meeting the City's tree requirements.

City Planner Jagoe indicated the City's landscaping and tree requirements were two separate requirements under City Ordinance. The applicant was seeking flexibility to the minimum landscaping lot area requirements. The proposed number of trees along the right-of-way complied.

Commissioner Mitchell commented on how the car wash traffic would flow through the site. She appreciated how there would be no cross traffic problems.

Commissioner Collins asked if the menu signs would be handled separately.

City Planner Jagoe reported a land use application would be considered separately from a text amendment to allow dynamic display menu boards for businesses other than a fast food restaurant. The applicant is requesting review of the digital menu board signage for Panera under this application and the car wash would need to comply with the current ordinance language for manual menu boards. Sign permits are applied for after this review.

Commissioner Collins requested further information regarding the transparency flexibility.

City Planner Jagoe reviewed the type of polycarbonate transparent material that would be used at the car wash. She indicated the applicant was requesting to have 45% transparency when the City requires 50%.

Commissioner Blilie questioned if there was any reason to believe there would be noise concerns from the car wash.

City Planner Jagoe deferred this question to the applicant to explain the car wash and vacuum station operations.

Commissioner Zimmerman thanked staff for the detailed report. He noted he was surprised by the car wash request given the small footprint of the site and requested further comment from the applicant regarding this matter.

Vice Chair Wicklund opened the public hearing at 7:13 p.m.

Vice Chair Wicklund invited anyone for or against the application to come forward and make comment.

There being no additional comment Chair Vijums closed the public hearing at 7:14 p.m.

Vice Chair Wicklund invited the applicant to come forward at this time.

Bruce Carlson, Senior Vice President of Development for Launch Properties, introduced himself to the Commission. He explained he has been working with staff for the past seven months on this project. He indicated Launch Properties would be the master developer for this PUD and noted this property was currently under contract. He discussed why a car wash was being requested noting the car wash tenant would own their own lot. He stated this site had visibility and accessibility from Lexington Avenue and would work well for the proposed car wash. He noted the proposed car wash was ecofriendly and would use less water than washing a car at home. He commented further on the dynamic display sign that was being requested by Panera. He spoke to the sidewalks that were being constructed by the County and noted land was acquired by the County for this project.

Brian Wordaman, Civil Engineer with Kimley Horn, commented on the landscaping plan and clarified this project met the City’s tree requirements. He reported the City required 16 trees and he was proposing to plant 25 trees.

Commissioner Jefferys asked why so much flexibility was being requested for this project given the fact it was new construction.

Mr. Carlson explained he has done 70 to 75 site plans for this property trying to meet all of the needs of the tenants. He stated he was not trying to get away with anything, but rather was working to reasonably meet the needs of his tenants in order to move this project forward. He believed he had done really well with this project and stated other projects had been considered and approved by the City with more flexibility than he was requesting.

Commissioner Jefferys requested further information regarding signage.

Mr. Carlson reported the multi-tenant building required no flexibility for the signage. He commented further on the signage being requested for the car wash.

Commissioner Weber inquired if going to three tenants was an option versus having a car wash.

Mr. Carlson stated this was not an option because the site did not have enough parking.

Commissioner Weber indicated he was not a huge fan of the car wash and would rather see two multi-tenant buildings on this site. He suggested the applicant be required to pay a park dedication fee because this request was not meeting the City’s landscaping requirements. He asked how many employees were expected at the dental office.

Mr. Carlson commented he was uncertain at this time but noted the dental tenant would be Pacific Dental.

Commissioner Weber feared how the dental office employees and patients would impact the parking situation on this site.

Mr. Carlson indicated the dental use was aware of the parking available on the site. He believed the proposed tenants were complimentary to one another and would have different peak use times. He stated there was a delicate balance in order to have the right amount of parking for multi-tenant buildings.

Commissioner Weber discussed how the County was working to add greenspace along the sidewalks on Lexington Avenue. He requested further information regarding the signage on the car wash.

Mr. Carlson deferred this question to the Rocket Car Wash representatives.

Commissioner Mitchell stated she appreciated larger signs on local businesses because they allowed passersby to see them from a safe distance. She asked if having a lot of glass on the car wash was necessary given the nature of the business. She discussed how businesses were moving to dynamic display signs, not only fast food establishments, but car washes too. She

recommended staff consider this within the code amendment. She commented on the building setback requirements and questioned how the building might be oriented in order to meet City requirements.

City Planner Jagoe stated a new configuration would have to be considered to meet City setback requirements. She further discussed the building positioning and site configuration.

Commissioner Mitchell commented on the configuration for Lexington Station and stated that property had two entrances.

Mr. Carlson explained the gray shadow on this site plan depicts the underground stormwater management plan. He noted all access to this site has to come from Grey Fox Road but noted the site would be welcoming from Lexington Avenue. He discussed how difficult it was to meet all of the City's requirements for the three different tenants.

Commissioner Collins asked if Panera was requesting sign flexibility.

City Planner Jagoe indicated Panera was requesting sign flexibility.

Mr. Carlson reported he could alter the size of the Panera menu board signs in order to eliminate this flexibility request.

City Planner Jagoe explained the Commission could add a condition stating: The free standing signage for the menu boards on the multi-tenant building be compliant with City Code.

Commissioner Zimmerman asked what attracted Rocket Car Wash to this site, given the fact the City already had two other car washes.

Jeremiah Horder, Rocket Car Wash representative, commented on the demographics and competition in the area. He stated based on the studies there was an unmet demand in the region. He reported Rocket Car Wash would offer a different service than the other car washes in the community. He noted free interior cleaning materials would be provided to members. He stated his clientele was different than those that use an express wash at a gas station.

Commissioner Collins questioned what kind of noise would be generated by the car wash.

Mr. Horder indicated the vacuums and dryer would generate noise and would be directed away from adjacent properties. He explained noise dampening measures would also be put in place.

Commissioner Collins inquired if there would be congestion from the amount of traffic exiting this site from the car wash and Panera.

Mr. Horder stated this was taken into consideration. He reported congestion leads to poor experience for customers. He explained an abundance of signage was being considered in order to properly move traffic through the site. Further discussion ensued regarding how traffic would flow in and out of the site.

Commissioner Weber requested further information regarding the polycarbonate material that would be used on the car wash. He questioned if the car wash had a replacement plan in place for the polycarbonate panels.

Mr. Horder discussed the material that would be used and noted it was more durable. He noted this type of material has become more popular over the last five to ten years. He indicated these panels were treated with a material in order to keep substances from sticking to the glass. He commented on the rigorous cleaning process that would be followed on a daily, weekly and monthly basis in order to keep the car wash in a pristine condition.

Commissioner Weber suggested the City Council require durability test results on the polycarbonate panels that will be used on the car wash.

Mr. Horder stated his vendors would be able to provide the Council with this information.

Commissioner Weber questioned how many employees the car wash would have.

Jason Ricks, Rocket Car Wash representative, reported this site would have approximately 30 employees, but would only have six or seven employees during busy times. He commented on how Rocket Car Wash invests in its communities and worked to conserve water in order to be ecofriendly. He stated he was very proud of his company and the work they do with molding youth for the future.

Mr. Horder explained Rocket Car Wash was not a franchise organization, but rather each site is owned and operated.

Commissioner Weber requested further information about the member room at the car wash.

Mr. Horder described the services that would be provided within the member room, which included mat washers, cleaning supplies and free towels.

Further discussion ensued regarding parking on the site.

Vice Chair Wicklund reported the applicant is looking for a recommendation from the Commission regarding parking.

Mr. Carlson commented he was not requesting flexibility for parking but was meeting the City's requirements.

Commissioner Weber discussed how the building was set back and stated he feared the proposed building signs were too large. He asked if other developments within Arden Hills had flexibility for their wall signs.

City Planner Jagoe indicated she was aware that Cub Foods has flexibility for their wall signs, but had not researched how many others or which businesses had received flexibility.

Mr. Carlson stated he believed the signs for Rocket Car Wash were proportionate for the building. He reminded the Commission that the site would have more signage if three tenants were located on that site versus having just one tenant.

Commissioner Weber agreed with this statement and stated he did not oppose the proposed signs.

Commissioner Jefferys questioned if the proposed signs were standard for Rocket Car Wash.

Mr. Horder reported this was the case.

Commissioner Jefferys anticipated most businesses in Arden Hills would like larger signs. She stated she was not convinced the applicant could not adjust the sign size in order to meet the City's sign requirements. She inquired what the hours of operation would be for the car wash.

Mr. Horder stated the hours of operation would be 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Commissioner Jefferys asked if the site had adequate space for snow storage.

City Planner Jagoe reported the site plan has shown that snow storage space is provided for around the perimeter of the property.

Vice Chair Wicklund summarized the comments and questions that had been discussed with the applicant. He asked if a condition should be considered regarding parking stall requirements, park dedication fees, the polycarbonate panels, the city code amendment, and the size of the Rocket Car Wash signage. He requested further information from staff regarding park dedication fees.

City Planner Jagoe discussed how the City collected park dedication fees through subdivisions, PUD's and new developments. She reported these two lots have been previously developed. She indicated if the Commission wanted to make a recommendation regarding the sidewalk costs, this could be made to the City Council and staff would also review the condition with the City Attorney.

Vice Chair Wicklund noted the Commission was to make a recommendation regarding the number of parking stalls that should be provided on this site. He indicated if this plan gets approved as presented, all signage would be required to have a sign permit, which would be considered separately from this request. He asked if the Commission had further comments or questions.

Commissioner Jefferys stated she believed this was a good use for the site but was concerned with the amount of flexibility that was being requested.

Commissioner Weber commented he agreed with this statement but stated he also appreciated the proposed uses that would be on this site. He indicated he supported the City pursuing park dedication fees when possible. He requested the applicant provide staff with further information or test results on the polycarbonate panels.

Commissioner Mitchell stated she wanted the City to set new businesses up to succeed. She discussed how this site was in need of redevelopment and noted she was willing to support the flexibility being requested in order to get the new uses on the property. She believed the Rocket Car Wash signage made sense given the location of the car wash from Lexington Avenue.

Commissioner Collins indicated he would like the Panera signage to meet City requirements. He stated he supported the size of the Rocket Car Wash signage.

Commissioner Blilie stated these businesses would be a nice addition to the Lexington Avenue area and she supported the size of the Rocket Car Wash signage.

Commissioner Zimmerman recommended the developer look at planting islands in the parking lot in order to meet the City’s landscaping requirements.

Vice Chair Wicklund commented on all of the moving parts within this request. He thanked the Commission for raising concerns regarding this Planning Case noting these concerns would be brought to the City Council. He indicated he supported this request moving forward to the City Council.

Commissioner Jefferys moved and Commissioner Weber seconded a motion to recommend approval of Planning Case 22-012 for a Preliminary Plat, Final Plat, Master Planned Unit Development, Final Planned Unit Development, Conditional Use Permit, and Site Plan Review at 3737 Lexington Avenue North and 1133 Grey Fox Road based on the findings of fact and the submitted plans, as amended by the twenty-three (23) conditions in the July 6, 2022, report to the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Collins moved and Commissioner Weber seconded a motion to add Condition 24 to read: The applicant shall reduce the menu board signage for the fast food restaurant in the multi-tenant building to be compliant with City Code Section 1240.04. The motion carried unanimously (7-0).

Commissioner Jefferys moved a motion to add Condition 25 to read: For those areas where the applicant is requesting flexibility, the applicant must address in detail the barriers to meeting City requirements. The motion failed for lack of a second.

Commissioner Weber moved and Commissioner Jefferys seconded a motion to add Condition 25 to read: The applicant shall be required to pay a park dedication fee equivalent to the City’s portion of the cost of the sidewalk installation along Lexington Avenue as part of the Lexington Avenue Road Improvement Project as well as the supplementary difference of landscaping coverage in lieu of plantings.

Vice Chair Wicklund stated the City did not require park dedication fees for the development off of Lexington Avenue and Red Fox Road. For this reason he would not be supporting this motion.

The motion carried 5-2 (Commissioner Collins and Vice Chair Wicklund opposed).

Commissioner Mitchell moved a motion to add Condition 26 to read: The City supported the building placement and proposed front setbacks given the shape of the lot. The motion failed for lack of a second.

Vice Chair Wicklund asked for a roll call vote.

The amended motion carried unanimously (7-0).

UNFINISHED AND NEW BUSINESS

None.

REPORTS

A. Report from the City Council

Councilmember Holmes provided the Commission with an update from the City Council. She encouraged the Commissioners to attend the Commission picnic on Tuesday, July 19 at 6:00 p.m. at Cummings Park. She noted the Council recently approved a City Code change for the drive-in windows. She indicated the Council also held a hearing in order to consider a reduction to the residential speed limit in the City of Arden Hills from 30 miles per hour to 25 miles per hour. She explained the Council approved the garage addition on Valentine Court. She indicated the North Heights Church request was approved by the City Council and commented on the reasons for this support. She reported the Council would be holding a State of City event on September 21 and a cleanup day would be held on October 1. She then provided the Commission with an update on TCAAP.

B. Planning Commission Comments and Requests

Commissioner Zimmerman thanked staff for providing the Commission with a detailed staff report on the Planning Case that was reviewed this evening.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Zimmerman moved, seconded by Commissioner Collins, to adjourn the July 6, 2022, Planning Commission Meeting at 8:56 p.m. The motion carried unanimously (7-0).