

APPROVED

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE MOUNDS VIEW PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF MOUNDS VIEW
RAMSEY COUNTY, MINNESOTA**

**Regular Meeting
July 1, 2020
Mounds View City Hall
2401 Mounds View Boulevard, Mounds View, MN 55112**

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Stevenson at 7:00 p.m. for July 1, 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the meeting was held virtually.

2. Roll Call

Members Present: Commissioners Farmer, French (joined the meeting at 7:45 p.m.), Klander, Monn, Nelson, Rundle, and Stevenson.

Absent and Excused: None.

Also Present: Community Development Director Jon Sevald and Council Member Gary Meehlhause.

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3. Special Order of Business

None.

4. Citizens Requests and Comments on Items *Not* on the Agenda

None.

5. Planning Cases

A. PUBLIC HEARING: Resolution 1120-20, Variance to Reduce Setbacks for a Parking Lot at 4749 Old Highway 8

Community Development Director Sevald stated currently the building at 4749 Old Highway 8 has two tenants; Ace Supply (front) and Minvalco (rear). The property has parking on the north, west, and south sides of the building. The north parking lot is nearest to the businesses' entrances, and used by customers, employees, and semi-trucks. The applicant proposes to add a customer parking lot within the front yard, requiring a Variance to reduce the front yard setback, from 40' to 0' (the building has a 37' front yard setback). The new parking lot would be nearest to the front (main) entrance.

Community Development Director Sevald explained the majority of customers use the north side-entrance, which is not ADA accessible. Ace Supply applied for the same Variance in 2005, which was denied by the Planning Commission (Resolution 793-05), then appealed, and denied by the City Council (Resolution 6544). The reasoning was that the request did not demonstrate a sufficient hardship to warrant approval of the Variance. In 2011, Minnesota Statutes were amended, replacing the term "undue hardship" with "practical difficulty". The intent when approving a Variance is to answer "yes" to the following questions; (1) is the Variance reasonable; (2) do unique circumstances exist; and (3) would the Variance alter the essential character of the neighborhood. The 2011 amendment made it easier to support a Variance, but the intent is that Variances are only supported if the three questions can be answered in the affirmative. Staff commented further on the Variance request, requesting the Planning Commission hold a public hearing.

Tim Hasselbring, Ace Supply, discussed the current parking situation on his property. He explained the requested parking would allow for parking at the front of the building, along with handicap parking. He indicated during the winter months he loses the already limited parking for snow storage. He commented further on the Variance and requested the Commission approve the variance.

Bruce Hasselbring, Ace Supply, stated the building was recently remodeled to create additional training space which meant there was a need for more parking.

Commissioner Monn asked what improvements would be made to the site given the fact more parking would be added. Bruce Hasselbring reported he was thinking about adding more trees and shrubs. He noted the landscaping would have irrigation in order to keep it healthy and alive. Mr. Hasselbring discussed the location of his building and commented on the buildings color scheme. He noted an irrigation system was in place and would be made operational.

Commissioner Monn questioned if the site could have additional greenspace between the roadway and the parking lot. Community Development Director Sevald explained the available greenspace.

Chair Stevenson inquired if the location of the City Desk would be relocated. Mr. Hasselbring commented the City Desk had been relocated to the north, past the front doors.

Chair Stevenson asked how many visitor parking stalls were needed. Mr. Hasselbring stated he averages 14 customers per hour and these customers stay from 10 to 30 minutes. He indicated he also needs to be able to accommodate delivery trucks.

Further discussion ensued regarding the site's parking needs.

Commissioner Nelson questioned if the bike path or trail along Old Highway 8 would be eliminated. Mr. Hasselbring stated the path would remain in place. He explained there would be ten feet between the path and the parking lot.

Commissioner Nelson expressed concern regarding the proximity of the power lines.

Commissioner Klander believed the proposed parking lot change would allow for a separation between the visitors with smaller cars and the larger trucks entering the site. Bruce agreed stating the proposed changes would also create handicap accessible parking.

Commissioner Monn requested further information regarding the site's snow removal. Mr. Hasselbring described where snow was stored during the winter months.

Chair Stevenson explained he was concerned with the lack of greenspace on the site if the new parking lot were approved. Mr. Hasselbring reported there would be 10 feet between the parking lot and the trail, along with additional greenspace around the property. He noted the 10 foot strip would have trees and shrubs.

Chair Stevenson commented he did not have a clear indication of the applicant's plans for the greenspace. Community Development Director Sevald explained staff would recommend shrubs and perennials be planted in this area.

Commissioner Nelson agreed the lack of a plan for the greenspace was a concern for him. Bruce commented landscaping plans had not been completed because he was unsure if the City would approve the variance request. He explained he would be following the City's planting requirements if the variance were approved. Mr. Hasselbring reviewed the property site plan with the Commission. He reiterated that the request was being made to bring parking lot closer to the entrance while also providing handicap parking.

Commissioner Klander commented the applicant would have 10+ feet between the parking lot and the roadway. He understood the applicants were willing to landscape this greenspace area. He noted he supported the variance as requested. Community Development Director Sevald recommended if the variance is approved that a conditional for approval be added requiring shrubs and perennials to be planted along the parking lot in the greenspace. He reported 150% of the escrow for materials and labor was to be paid to the City to provide a one year guarantee on the survivability of the plants.

Commissioner Monn questioned if the Commission could require the plant to be pollinator friendly. Community Development Director Sevald stated the Commission could suggest this but would have to define what plants are pollinator friendly.

Commissioner Klander indicated the City could suggest pollinator friendly plants be planted.

Commissioner Nelson recommended the applicant be required to work with the City Forester on the plant species. He expressed concern with the fact the front door of the building would be so close to the drive aisle and parking spaces. Community Development Director Sevald recommended the applicant work with an architect to ensure the parking lot was ADA compliant.

Commissioner Monn questioned how many handicap parking stalls were required for this building. Community Development Director Sevald reported the building had to have three handicap parking stalls.

Commissioner Monn asked if the applicants had to go back to the drawing board to reconsider the parking needs for this site given the fact they were only proposing to have one handicap parking stall.

Mr. Hasselbring reported he would work with an architect to ensure the parking lot was ADA compliant.

Commissioner Monn inquired what the project timeline would be. Bruce stated he would like to have the project completed yet this summer.

Commissioner Monn questioned what the applicant was doing to bring the non-compliant parking spaces around the building up to code.

Commissioner French joined the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Commissioner Nelson stated he was not terribly confident about approving these plans given the lack of detail provided by the applicants. While he understood there was a cost to have plans drawn up, he believed it would benefit the applicants to meet with an architect prior to coming to the City for approval of a variance. Community Development Director Sevald reviewed the greenspace that would be available between the proposed parking lot and Old Highway 8 and it was estimated the applicants would have somewhere between 10 to 14 feet of greenspace. He indicated 10 feet of greenspace would allow for several rows of plants.

Chair Stevenson opened the public hearing at 7:52 p.m.

Chair Stevenson closed the public hearing at 7:52 p.m.

MOTION/SECOND: Commissioner Rundle/Commissioner Klander. To approve Resolution 1120-20, a Resolution Recommending Approval of a Variance to Reduce Setbacks for a Parking Lot at 4749 Old Highway 8 with the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall obtain a Zoning Permit for the parking lot expansion and begin work within one year of approval of this Variance, or the Variance shall become void, consistent with City Code, Section 1125.02, Subdivision 5 (Lapse of Variance or Appeal).
2. If the project adds 10,000 square feet or more of impervious surface area, or disturbs that amount of soils, then the applicant shall obtain a permit from Rice Creek Watershed District (Rule C). The applicant shall implement erosion controls during construction (Rule D).
3. The applicant shall install landscaping consisting of a continuous row of shrubs and a continuous row of perennials along the east parking lot. Prior to issuance of the Zoning Permit for the parking lot, the applicant shall submit a landscape escrow of 150% of the cost of plants and labor, to be held by the City for one year after installation and inspection of survivability. Because the landscaping will be located within the right-of-way, Ramsey County may remove landscaping at any time, without compensation.
4. The applicant shall stripe the entire parking lot(s) within one year, including providing for ADA parking.

Commissioner Monn requested the plants and shrubs be pollinator friendly.

Commissioner Klander supported the City Forester working with the applicant to make a recommendation on the type of shrubs and plants that would work best in this greenspace. He indicated an evergreen shrub may be more hearty in this space, versus a pollinator friendly shrub.

Chair Stevenson commented the Commission could leave this decision up to the City Forester.

Commissioner Rundle supported this recommendation.

Commissioner Klander recommended the language require the applicant to consult with the City Forester.

Commissioner Monn expressed concern with the fact this property would not be in compliance with the City's Comprehensive Plan and the City's efforts to become a pollinator friendly community.

Chair Stevenson reported the City Forester had the authority to review plans and make recommendations per the Comprehensive Plan's direction. He indicated this has always worked well for the City in the past given the fact the City Forester knows what plants will and will not work.

Chair Stevenson requested a friendly amendment to Condition 3 stating the applicant would have to consult and have their landscaping plans approved by the City Forester. The Commission supported this recommendation.

Commissioner Nelson stated Condition 3 does not state a timeline for the plant installation. Community Development Director Sevald anticipated the plants would not be installed until the spring of 2021.

Chair Stevenson recommended the plants be installed one year from approval of the variance request. The Commission supported this recommendation.

Community Development Director Sevald recommended Condition 3 read as follows: Within one year the applicant shall install landscaping consisting of a continuous row of pollinator friendly shrubs and perennials along the east parking lot. The applicant shall consult and have the landscaping plans approved by the City Arborist.

Commissioner Klander feared that the Commission was putting too many restrictions on this business.

Commissioner Monn questioned if the applicant would be meeting all ADA requirements for the parking lot. Bruce stated the parking lot would meet all ADA requirements for the building.

A roll call vote was taken.

Ayes – 7

Nays – 0

Motion carried.

6. Other Planning Activity

None.

7. Reports

A. Upcoming Planning Cases & Activity

Community Development Director Sevald stated there were no upcoming planning cases at this time.

B. Staff Updates

Community Development Director Sevald provided the Commission with an update from staff. He reported work continues on Grey Stone Flats and a building permit will be issued to Tommy's Car Wash next week. He indicated the redevelopment of the Skyline Motel property

was stalled and the project would be reconsidered in 2021. Staff discussed the work being completed at Edgewood Middle School.

C. Council Updates

Council Member Meehlhause provided the Planning Commission with an update from the City Council. He reported the City recently received word that Mounds View had achieved Step 2 in the Green Steps City program. He noted the Simon's and Tires N'More properties were both for sale. He explained Amy Hodges was selected for Mounds View's Citizen of the Year. He updated the Commission regarding the noise wall being installed as part of the MnDOT MNPASS project. It was noted this was a three year project.

D. Planning Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Klander stated this was his last meeting noting he would be moving to Shoreview later this month. He explained he has enjoyed serving on the Planning Commission. He indicated he would really miss Mounds View and his neighbors.

Commissioner Monn thanked Commissioner Klander for his dedicated service to the community.

8. Approval of Minutes

April 15, 2020.

MOTION/SECOND: Commissioner Rundle/Commissioner Farmer. To approve the Minutes of the April 15, 2020 regular Planning Commission meetings as presented.

A roll call vote was taken.

Ayes – 6 Nays – 0 Abstain – 1 (Klander) Motion carried.

9. Next Planning Commission Meeting:

- A. Wednesday, July 15, 2020**
 - B. Wednesday, August 5, 2020**
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10. Adjournment

There being no further business before the Planning Commission, Chair Stevenson adjourned the meeting at 8:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jon Sevald
Community Development Director

Transcribed by:
Heidi Guenther
Minute Maker Secretarial