



## PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

May 26, 2015

7:00 p.m.

### 1) Call to Order

Heck opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

In attendance: Chair Mark Heck, Vice Chair Michael Stulberg, Planning Commissioners: Michael Molitor, Peter Vickery, and Sylvia Allen, Council Liaison Patricia Thoele; Staff: Associate Planner Nick Olson and City Clerk Kris Linquist. Absent: Commissioner Lora Sandholm, Bob Pollman

#### a) Approval of Agenda

Heck requested any changes to the agenda. Hearing no objections, Heck asked for unanimous consent of the agenda as presented.

Motion passed 5-0. Absent: Sandholm and Pollman

#### b) Approval of Minutes of April 27, 2015

Motion by Stulberg, second by Vickery to approve the minutes from April 27, 2015 as presented.

Motion passed 5-0. Absent: Sandholm and Pollman

### 2) Public Hearing

#### a) **VARIANCE: Application from Lewis & Connie Remele requesting a variance to the lakeshore setback for an addition to their home from the required 75 feet to a distance of 60.24 feet at 4795 Crane Island, R-1 Zoning, PID # 36-117-24-23-0024**

Associate Planner Olson presented the staff report found in the Planning Commission packet dated May 26, 2015. Highlights included in the presentation were:

- When the home was built in 1907, it was almost entirely within the required 75 foot setback.
- The request does not increase the non-conformity of the home and no additional variances are required. All other requirements of the R-1 Residential Zoning District will be met.
- The proposed addition is no closer to Lake Minnetonka than the home currently sits.
- Both neighboring lots are owned by the homeowners association and have no structures on them. They will likely remain that way for the foreseeable future.
- The proposed addition is for updating the kitchen.

Staff recommends approval of the lakeshore setback variance based on the finding of facts and the following conditions:

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***The City of Minnetrista will deliver quality services in a cost effective and innovative manner and provide opportunities for a high quality of life while protecting natural resources and maintaining a rural character.***

1. The Applicant obtain all necessary permits and approvals from the City and other applicable entities with jurisdiction prior to any construction;
2. The proposed grading should maintain existing drainage patterns or improve the existing drainage of the lot and adjacent lots;
3. The Applicants are responsible for all fees incurred by the City in review of this application;
4. The variance approval is valid for one year from the date of approval and will become void and expire unless a building permit has been issued for the site;
5. No building permit will be issued until all provisions of the variance are met; and
6. Any other conditions discussed by the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Vickery had a question regarding the Historical Preservation of the project. Olson stated that the City does not regulate that and the owner has to work with Historical Preservation.

There was some discussion on the encroachment of the existing structure.

Lewis Remele, Owner, spoke on the intentions of the project that they would like to do.

Heck opened the public hearing. No one was present to speak. Heck closed the public hearing.

Motion by Molitor, seconded by Stulberg to recommend the City Council approve the Variance to the front yard setback for an addition to their home from the required 75 feet to a distance of 60.24 feet at 4795 Crane Island, R-1 Zoning, PID # 36-117-24-23-0024 contingent on the conditions outlined in the staff report. Motion passed 5-0. Absent: Sandholm and Pollman

### **3) Business Items**

#### **a) Solar Energy Discussion (presentation from SolarStone Partners)**

Gordy Simanton representing SolarStone Partners, overviewed what Solar Energy has to offer and discussed renewable energy that has been introduced with the Minnesota Solar Energy Legislation.

Approximately 5 acres are needed for 1 Megawatt (4,000 panels). One solar garden would be able to service approximately 200 homes a year.

He overviewed the savings that a subscriber would save over a period of time.

He went over Solar Ordinances that other cities have implemented in their cities.

There was discussion on land purchasing or land leasing and discussion on taxation of the property.

There was discussion on the height of the panels and maintenance of them.

There was discussion on possibly putting solar panels in a secondary wetland area.

Associate Planner Olson also discussed that a resident applied to install a free standing solar panels and since the city does not have an ordinance in place so it could not be approved. He invited the applicant and his contractor to the meeting tonight to possibly talk about their project.

Jamie Borell from Innovative Power Systems explained the system that the applicant would like to do. He also talked to about community solar gardens. He commented that it would be unlikely that a solar garden should never go over 20 feet in height.

He commented that Minneapolis and Roseville have good Solar Energy Ordinances that the City may want to look into.

Councilmember Thoele spoke to the possibility of having a Solar Garden on the City Hall Campus site also about free standing solar panels for residents.

Alex Andrev, 5080 Trails End Circle, spoke about his stance on why he would like to have solar energy panels. He stated that the system he would like to put in is a low profile system that would not be intrusive. The roof he has is not an option for a roof top system.

Chair Heck requested comments from the commissioners on what they would like to see in the proposed ordinance. Commissioner Molitor stated he would like staff to take the following items into consideration when drafting an Ordinance:

- Setbacks – Front, Side, and Rear
- Hardcover - Would like to see the panels treated as a structure for calculation purposes.
- Height
- Reflective consideration
- Minimum lot size – consider the square footage of panel compared to lot size
- 3 prong approach – 1) Stand along system, 2) Residential Rooftop system, and 3) Community Solar Garden
- Solar Garden / Farm – distance between gardens / farms
- Zoning District – where would they be allowable

Chair Heck suggested to look at other cities that already have Solar Ordinances in place. He also expressed concerns about liability and safety issues should be considered.

Olson stated that staff would take all of the items into consideration in drafting a Solar Ordinance. He hopes to have a draft Ordinance for the commission to review at the next meeting in June.

b) **Consider State Statute 462.356 for Acquisition of Property by the City of Minnetrista for a Water Treatment Facility**

Associate Planner Olson presented the staff report found in the Planning Commission packet dated May 26, 2015. Highlights included in the presentation were:

- State Statute 462.356 (subd 2) requires public agencies to notify the planning agency of a city prior to purchase of any public land.
- The City is considering the purchase of 0.59 acres of land from Westonka Public School District # 277.
- The school district property is guided as Park, Public, and Semi Public on the 2030 Future Land Use Map. The property is zoned R-1 low density single family residence.
- Staff does not see a conflict in the comprehensive plan if the City were to purchase this land.

Motion by Stulberg, seconded by Vickery to recommend that the City Council adopt a resolution with finding that the purchase of the property is not in conflict with the comprehensive plan.

Motion passed 5-0. Absent: Sandholm and Pollman

**4) Informational Items:**

a) **Staff Reports**

Olson had no items to report.

b) **Council Reports**

Councilmember Thoele overviewed the request of funds from the Tree Preservation Fund. There was discussion on the direction given to staff to draft a policy for this use.

Chair Heck recommended that the Planning Commission participate in the Adopt-A-Highway program. He stated that there is an opening along County Road 15.

**5) Adjournment**

Motion by Vickery, second by Molitor to adjourn the meeting at 8:57 p.m.

Motion passed 5-0. Absent: Sandholm and Pollman

Respectfully Submitted,

*Kris Linquist*, CMC  
City Clerk