



# City Council

## Workshop

~ Minutes ~

1408 Lake Street South  
Forest Lake, MN 55025  
[www.ci.forest-lake.mn.us](http://www.ci.forest-lake.mn.us)

Karin Derauf, Deputy City Clerk

Monday, February 21, 2023

6:30 PM

City Center - Council Chamber

[City of Forest Lake - Livestream and Recorded Meetings](#)

### 1. Call to Order

### 2. Roll Call

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Mara Bain	Mayor	Present	
Sam Husnik	Councilmember	Present	
Hanna Valento	Councilmember	Present	
Leif Erickson	Councilmember	Present	6:51 p.m.
Blake Roberts	Councilmember	Present	6:42 p.m.

### 3. Pledge of Allegiance

### 4. Open Forum – Citizen Petitions, Requests, and Concerns

*The Open Forum is available for residents to express personal opinions for any item of business. Please limit your comments to three (3) minutes.*

### 5. Discussion Items

#### a. Downtown Redevelopment Concept Plan

Comments: Community Development Director provided a brief description of the Downtown Redevelopment Concept Plan from Gaughan Developers and Harriss Architects. She noted there have been other concept plans that were seen last year and the largest concern for redesign has been parking. She noted that the Comprehensive Plan requires the area to be for mixed use development. She also commented on the Downtown Plan that was completed last year and cited some of the features in the Plan. She provided a summary noting a total of 305 parking spaces with 198 interior parking ramp, 28 private parking lot, and 79 on the parkway as proposed. She also noted that the developer is allowing for 1.8 spaces per unit or 200 spaces included in the 305 spaces and commented that the current code requires 2.3 spaces per unit. Other uses of the cite are for a 10,000 sq. ft. restaurant and 2,500 sq. ft. of retail space.

Dan Herbert, Developer, was available to answer questions from the Council. Councilmember Roberts commented on the amount of retail and restaurant space. Dan commented on the barriers of parking and why they placement and limitation of space for retail was considered for the south end of the development while the restaurant with a roof-top deck will be at the north end.

John Harriss, Architect, was also available for questions and commented on the five-story proposal, noting that underground parking is not part of this particular design due to the water table.



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Mayor Bain commented on the qualifications for a PUD (Planned Unit Development) and asked what the total acres are for this downtown site. Community Development Director Wittman commented that it is approximately two (2) acres and the requirement for a PUD is a minimum of seven (7) acres. Mayor Bain asked the developer what they see as a public benefit to this concept proposal. Dan Herbert mentioned treated storm water to increase water quality and eliminating a blighted block, creating more parking, trail connections, reduction of impervious surface, and addition of a small pocket park.

Councilmember Roberts asked about the use of the restaurant and amenities. Dan Herbert commented that the current restaurant 24,000 square feet noting that the restaurant will not be a large event venue at only 10,000 square feet. John Harriss also commented on a large street level deck at the back of the restaurant.

Mayor Bain asked about the requirements for a PUD. Community Development Director Wittman commented that the PUD is a tool that the City can use, however, they are not obligated to use a PUD. Councilmember Valento commented that she appreciates green space being included in the concept. Councilmember Erickson asked about the aesthetics and how it will complement the other buildings in the area. Dan commented that they would look at using similar brickwork. Councilmember Roberts commented that he is not opposed to a five-story building. Mayor Bain commented that she is open to the PUD and will be looking for the public benefit and discussed the parking spaces as shown on the graphics. Dan Herbert commented that MnDOT is requiring the east area to be a two-way pass through. Mayor Bain commented on the design features on the back or east side of the building to make it feel like you are not at the back of the building. John Harriss noted that the east facing façade is considered the front of the building and discussed the elements along the pedestrian facilitation on this side of the building. Councilmember Husnik commented that the south end of the building doesn't lend itself to retail because of access to that section of the building. John Harriss commented that the retail location helps to hide the parking ramp. There was further discussion about the walk up units and aesthetics of the building.

Councilmember Roberts commented on design and matching the buildings on the east side of Hwy. 61. Mayor Bain commented on the aesthetics of the walk up units and ensuring that the units look like townhomes rather than an apartment unit and providing some type of buffer from looking into someone's living room. Dan Herbert commented that there would be a step up into the unit with possible fencing or area for a porch.

Councilmember Erickson commented on the parking requirements in Forest Lake being higher than other communities and noted that 1.8 parking spaces seems to be adequate over at Lighthouse Lofts. Councilmember Valento commented that she is okay with that amount as well. Community Development Director Wittman noted that 2.3 spaces per unit is standard indicated that most



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communities will have 2 spaces per unit with .3 spaces for a visitor or guest. Mayor Bain commented on the lack of overflow parking and to make sure there is an option for those spaces and surge parking in the Downtown area. She cited the July 4<sup>th</sup> event and Arts in the Park. She also indicated that she would like to know the regular everyday overflow parking available. Community Development Director Wittman commented that there is a deficit of parking with the existing conditions in the area. Dan Herbert commented on parking ratios per units noting there is a blanket 2.3 spaces per unit, however, that is not taking into account the sizes of the units. There was further discussion regarding parking. Mayor Bain commented that she would rather give up parking and have better aesthetics to walk through. Councilmember Roberts also noted that the footprint of the restaurant will be smaller offering more parking space. John Harris commented on daytime use versus night time use of parking spaces. Community Development Director Wittman commented that regardless of the design, there will be reduced parking spaces as part of this development. Councilmember Husnik asked about snow removal and where snow would be pushed to. Dan Herbert provided comments regarding snow events.

Dan Herbert commented that they have received good feedback from the Planning Commission and Council to have a better direction. Mayor Bain commented that the City needs a project of this scale that also has mixed use.

### **b. Wetland Banking Discussion**

Comments: Community Development Director Wittman provided background of wetland banking as well as a map of wetland bank service areas noting that Forest Lake is in the bank service area of 6 and 7. She indicated that developers have the option to purchase credit somewhere within the service area so the City doesn't have a great need to create new areas. She noted that 35% of the land in Forest Lake is wet. She also commented that the allowance of wetland banking within the city would create more wetland and would potentially over time reduce the tax base.

Community Development Director Wittman commented that the Planning Commission was in favor of wetland banking in the southeast area of the City. She noted that the Moratorium ends in June 2023 and indicated an ordinance needs to be created to memorialize the decision of Council to create or not allow wetland banking credits.

Councilmember Erickson commented that if this is banned, ten developers will have to go outside of City limits to buy wetland credits. Mayor Bain asked about conservancy districts and development eligibility. Community Development Director Wittman noted there are very limited development rights compared to other districts. Councilmember Roberts commented on the tax base. Community Development Director Wittman noted that if someone owns a piece of property that has wetland banking or conservancy property, this decreases the opportunity for developing that land which will inherently reduce the tax base. Mayor Bain expressed concerns that creating a



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conservancy area is permanent. Mayor Bain asked what the process is for determining a wetland banking area. Community Development Director Wittman noted that part of the ordinance will be developing the process. There was further discussion about how to determine areas for wetland banking. Community Development Director Wittman mentioned Fairview Farms in the southwest portion of the City and noted that the wetland banking credits in this area were never sold and eventually decertified. She also summed up the comments and feedback from Council noting that she will bring back information with a refined timeline and more details for policy formulation. Mayor Bain commented that she would like background information on wetland banking in terms of how long it has occurred in the City and how do these types of projects “age”.

## 6. Adjourn

Motion to: Adjourn

Comments:

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Leif Erickson, Councilmember
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Hanna Valento, Councilmember
<b>AYES:</b>	Bain, Husnik, Valento, Erickson, Roberts
<b>ABSENT:</b>	