



Planning Commission

Regular Meeting

~ Minutes ~

1408 Lake Street South
Forest Lake, MN 55025
www.ci.forest-lake.mn.us

Dawn Bugge, C.D. Admin Assistant

Wednesday, August 23, 2023

7:00 PM

City Center - Council Chamber

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

1. Call to Order

The Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Paul Girard	Commission Chair	Present	
Susan Young	Commission Vice-Chair	Present	
Kevin Miller	Planning Commissioner	Absent	
Justin Brink	Planning Commissioner	Present	
Don Stehler	Planning Commissioner	Present	
Jeff Larson	Planning Commissioner	Present	

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. Approve the Agenda

No comments on the agenda.

Commissioner Stehler made a Motion to Approve the Agenda as presented.
Motion seconded by Commissioner Brink. Motion carried 5-0.

5. Consent Agenda Considerations (Action Items)*

a. Approve Planning Commission Meeting Minutes from July 26, 2023

No comments on the minutes.

Commissioner Larson made a Motion to Approve Consent Agenda Item 5.A as presented.
Motion seconded by Commissioner Stehler. Motion carried 5-0.

6. Regular Agenda (Action Items)

a. Public Hearing: Forest Lake Apartments – Headwaters Village, PID 29-032-21-12-0017, Kuepers, Inc.

City Planner, Ken Roberts, provided a background on the request for applications from Kuepers, Inc. to allow for a 71-unit apartment complex on a vacant property north of Headwaters Parkway at Fitzgerald Trail and Headwaters Blvd. Staff reviewed the site plan proposed for the property, pointing out that the lowest level is designed for parking with three levels of residential units above. Roberts pointed out that an increase for density on the site is allowed with no proposed adverse impacts and increased amenities, which include a playground, pool area, workout facilities, and



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meeting rooms on site. Staff pointed out the accessibility to nearby public amenities, including the YMCA, County facilities and a park-and-ride, with great vehicular access to the site.

Roberts explained that the original Planned Unit Development for Headwaters Village proposed commercial development on the site, however residential development is not in place to support commercial development in the area at this time.

Staff described that the site was originally platted as an outlot, which is considered a non-buildable lot usually being held for future development. Therefore, the final plat will change the property designation to Lot 1, Block 1, Headwaters 4th Addition. Roberts noted that there are no proposed changes to the size or boundary lines of the property.

No new infrastructure is proposed with this development and staff is requesting the developer pay a park dedication fee in lieu of parkland. The proposal meets all design criteria, setback requirements, and parking standards. Staff is proposing minimal changes to the parking and landscape plans, and the submittal is in for review by the Rice Creek Watershed District.

Roberts stated that a neighborhood meeting was held with no residents in attendance and no public comments have been received.

Staff recommended approval of the project with the conditions established by City Staff.

Commissioner Young questioned how this project would benefit the City.

Staff responded that this proposal will provide many on-site amenities, which will decrease the need for off-site amenities for its residents.

Commissioner Young pointed out the lack of public amenities in the area south of 97 and east of Lake St. and was disappointed to lose a commercial opportunity on this site.

Chair Girard requested information regarding the types of proposed living units to confirm that they meet size standards.

Applicant, Steve Kuepers, Kuepers Construction, summarized the need to redesign the building to fit the unique shape of the site, and the unique building size allowed for them to include some three-bedroom units. He noted that rental prices will not be excessive and described the amenities that are proposed for the project. Kuepers stated that they are working on the potential of a shared driveway with the nearby bank. Kuepers discussed their plans to meet city requirements for landscaping, streetlighting, and the revision to make an existing crosswalk ADA compliant. Mr. Kuepers doesn't expect much fluctuation in park fees from the projected fee.



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Commissioner Young asked the applicant what plans are in store for maintaining the landscaping on site, as she noted that landscaping in other areas of Headwaters development have not been well maintained.

Mr. Kuepers responded that this project will be privately owned, and there is pride in ownership for a project such as this, as there is a competitive market for multi-family in the area. Kuepers explained that an investment of this magnitude, offering onsite amenities, is sure to be cared for.

Chair Girard questioned why the parking area is ground level and not underground.

Mr. Kuepers replied that this particular site was not conducive to underground parking. He noted that they would have preferred some underground parking, which would have reduced costs, but working with the watershed district determined that it was not possible on this site. He noted the challenge of working on a site for which infrastructure was developed more than 20 years ago.

Public Hearing was opened at 7:37 p.m.

No comments were received.

Public Hearing was closed at 7:38 p.m.

Commissioner Young stated her concern for the request of the commission to approve final plans and final plats when there are remaining items yet to be addressed or completed and left as conditions of approval.

Commissioner Stehler made a Motion to Recommend Approval of the Amendment to the Planned Unit Development, subject to the conditions listed in the staff report.

Motion seconded by Chair Girard. Motion carried 4-0. (Young abstained)

Commissioner Brink made a Motion to Recommend Approval of the Zoning Ordinance Map Amendment, subject to the conditions listed in the staff report.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Larson. Motion carried 5-0.

Commissioner Stehler made a Motion to Recommend Approval of the Final Plat for Forest Lake Apartments, subject to the conditions listed in the staff report.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Brink. Motion carried 5-0.



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Chair Girard made a Motion to Recommend Approval of the Planned Unit Development Final Plan, subject to the conditions listed in the staff report.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Stehler. Motion carried 5-0.

Young reiterated her concern for outstanding items that need resolution when approving a project.

Community Development Director, Abbi Wittman, expressed that she understands the concern for outstanding items, yet it is customary for certain items to remain outstanding at the time of action by the Planning Commission with the understanding that outstanding items will need to be finalized prior to any permits being issued for the property.

Commissioner Brink made a Motion to Approve Resolution No. 08-23-23-01 the Site Plan for Forest Lake Apartments, subject to the conditions listed in the staff report.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Stehler. Motion carried 4-0. (Young voting no)

Chair Girard noted that the items with recommended approvals will go before the City Council at their meeting on September 11.

7. Discussion

Community Development Director, Abbi Wittman, briefly discussed a staff analysis that was distributed to commissioners and councilmembers regarding multi-family residential housing. Wittman stated that the analysis is provided as a follow-up to discussions and questions regarding the amount of multi-family dwelling units in the City of Forest Lake. Wittman noted there are comparisons of this community to others within the metro region and state. Staff considered it helpful for the commissioners and council members when contemplating future multi-family dwelling units that may be proposed in the City.

Commissioner Young questioned whether City Staff had addressed concerns for the lack of inspections on multi-family buildings, especially older multi-family buildings, in regard to health and welfare. Young would like to see the City of Forest Lake to be proactive in this area.

Wittman pointed out that one of the goals of the City's Comprehensive Plan is to create a rental registration program which would include rental inspections. She pointed out that at this time, the resources are not available for the City to begin such an intensive program, especially in regard to staffing. However, staff would like to see the potential for this type of program in the next few years.

Commissioner Young pointed out the potential for dual role staffing to fill this need, such as the dual role of inspectors and firefighters in the positions needed.



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Wittman provided an update on the status of revising the City's Zoning Code, with the assistance of MSA Professional Services, to condense the existing structure into a more modern, streamlined code to help the City to achieve its goals.

City Planner, Ken Roberts, confirmed that there will be a Planning Commission Meeting on September 13.

8. Adjourn

Commissioner Young made a Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 p.m.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Stehler. Motion carried 5-0.