



Planning Commission

Regular Meeting

~ Minutes ~

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

Karin Derauf, Deputy City Clerk

Wednesday, October 26, 2022

7:00 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
Paul Girard	Commission Chair	Present	
Susan Young	Commission Vice-Chair	Present	
Kevin Miller	Planning Commissioner	Present	
Justin Brink	Planning Commissioner	Absent	
Geneva Kubal	Planning Commissioner	Present	
Don Stehler	Planning Commissioner	Present	

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. Approve the Agenda

Comments:

Motion to: Approve the Agenda

RESULT: ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: Kevin Miller, Commissioner
SECONDER: Don Stehler, Commissioner
AYES: Girard, Young, Miller, Kubal, Stehler
NAYS:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT: Brink

5. Approve Planning Commission Meeting Minutes from September 28, 2022

Comments:

Motion to: Approve Planning Commission Meeting Minutes from September 28, 2022



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RESULT:	ADOPTED [4 to 1]
MOVER:	Geneva Kubal, Commissioner
SECONDER:	Don Stehler, Commissioner
AYES:	Young, Miller, Kubal, Stehler
NAYS:	
ABSTAIN:	Girard
ABSENT:	Brink

6. Downtown Redevelopment Preliminary Concept Review

Comments: Community Development Director Wittman provided information regarding the Downtown Redevelopment Preliminary Concept Plan to obtain feedback from appointed officials. Harris Associates and Gaughan Companies was present to provide answers to the Commission regarding the preliminary plan. Community Development Director Wittman noted information about the site and building data including the building of three stories over two levels of parking, consisting of walk up units, a restaurant, retail space, and parking of 245 spaces in a two level ramp and shared surface parking. She referenced the City's newly adopted Downtown Plan that was completed by HKGI. She also provided information regarding zoning as allowed in the current code.

Community Development Director Wittman highlighted information regarding parking uses and shortages both currently and with this concept plan. She noted that overall the City would like to see high density residential and additional parking.

Gaughan and Harris Associates provided a prepared presentation for the Commission that included previous work they have done in other areas.

Commissioner Kubal asked about if there will be community rooms inside the apartment building. Gaughan responded by saying that there will be accommodations that include amenities such as a community room, fitness room, and other items. Commissioner Kubal asked about additional parking available if someone were to have an event in the community room. The contractor indicated there would be enough parking to accommodate guests as well.

Commissioner Miller expressed concern about available parking and doesn't think there will be enough spaces. The developer sited another project with the number of parking spaces available and indicated that they don't require two parking spaces per unit, noting that two



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spaces is antiquated computation for parking. There was further discussion regarding the parking spaces with road ownership belonging to the City. Community Development Director Wittman indicated that there is no requirement for parking spaces for commercial units.

Chair Girard asked about parking at 56 1st Street and why it was included in the preliminary plan. There was further discussion regarding parking. Commissioner Young commented on the parking for the restaurant and noted that the parking is not sufficient for what is currently there. She also expressed concern for studio, alcove, and 1-bedroom apartments and indicated that the City housing needs are for 2 and 3-bedroom units. She noted that she would like to see a different mix of units with more 2 and 3-bedrooms. She also mentioned the sidewalk width on the northeast corner of Lake Street and Broadway and noted that she is concerned about the walkability of Lake Street and walk up units. She also commented on the prospect of blocking views of the lake and perceived access to the park and lake area. Commissioner Young also commented on a spectrum of financial tools and asked if the expectation is for the City to contribute to the project.

The developers commented on the width of sidewalks and noted that the units would be set back from the walkway with a step up rather than street level. The developer also noted they would require financial assistance and mentioned tax credits.

Chair Girard asked about the walk-up apartments and noted that he would expect commercial units on the street surface level. The developer commented that there is a project north of the site that has struggled with retail and they don't want to fall into the same barriers. They indicated they don't see viability for commercial units on the street level.

Commissioner Young noted that we don't have transit in the Forest Lake Community and she noted she doesn't see any type of communal transportation coming into the City. She indicated that residential units cost the city more than is recuperated in taxes and she expressed concern over lack of commercial in the downtown area. She noted that the synergy of having retail in this area is very important. She also expressed concern again regarding parking. The developer commented by stating the highest tax value is high density residential. There was further conversation regarding retail challenges in this area. Commissioner Miller expressed that he appreciates the concept with street level residential units.



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The developer commented that it is not cost effective to build 3 and 4-bedroom apartments. Commissioner Young noted that she is looking for 2 and 3-bedroom apartments. The developer also commented that they build to the largest demographic groups which are the baby boomers and millennials with pets. The also commented on one plus bedroom apartments to accommodate those who are now working from home. There was discussion on working from home and the decrease of traffic flows coming and going.

Chair Girard commented on the percentage of 1-bedroom versus 2-bedrooms. Commissioner Young asked where people will be putting their boats and other “toys”. Commissioner Kubal asked if the preliminary plan accommodates electronic vehicles. The developer noted they would. She also asked about outdoor parking and if it would be assigned. Community Development Director Wittman indicated that all the additional parking is public parking. Commissioner Kubal also asked about a space for animals. The developer mentioned a rooftop amenity to accommodate dog owners. It was noted that the current regulations do not allow dogs at the park.

Chair Girard commented on the public parking spaces noting there is a shortage of approximately 100 spaces so losing the spaces would be a great loss to the City. There was further conversation regarding parking spaces. Chair Girard commented that he drove through the area at 2:30 p.m. today and the parking was completely full, noting that the Tradewinds building and the bank are not operating.

Community Development Director Wittman commented on the height of the building, parking concerns, and ground level commercial units. Commissioner Young noted she is not in favor of a 5-story building. She also commented on a two-story patio over the restaurant. Commissioner Kubal commented on the lake view and large houses on the lake side blocking those on the other side of the street. She noted that there will be residents that have access to the lake view in an apartment and will be able to afford this compared to a home on the lake. Commissioner Stehler noted that his biggest concern is parking.

7. Comprehensive Plan Code Amendments

Comments: Community Development Director Wittman commented on residential density in the MXR-1 district.



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Chair Girard commented on the garage recess design and Community Development Director Wittman provided comment on this as a potential required design element for developers.

Commissioner Young commented on 60% of residential in the City being one type of housing design noting this doesn't provide housing variation. Chair Girard asked about the 7,500 square foot lot size and the 7.5-foot side setback. Community Development Director Wittman noted that these sizes of lots are already being approved in a PUD. City Planner Roberts commented on the reduced lot size providing a reduction in housing cost. There was further discussion on the design elements of housing facades, as well as density requirements per the Comprehensive Plan.

City Planner Roberts commented on agricultural compatible or complimentary land uses. He indicated there will not be urban services for the City until potentially after 2030. He commented on rural buffer areas, agotourism, commercial recreation, religious uses, and accessory dwelling units.

He commented on ADU's (Accessory Dwelling Units) and potential placement of these in agricultural and rural residential areas with an allowance of one ADU per property with restrictions on being subdivided, use of driveway access, shared utilities, square footage, maximum number of bedrooms, and materials and finish of the ADU. He noted that the goal would be to have the property owner live in the primary unit or the ADU.

Commissioner Kubal asked about short-term rentals. City Planner commented that the intent would be to have long-term use of the accessory dwelling unit and provided examples of the intent, such as having elderly parents coming to live on the property in the ADU.

Commissioner Young commented on agotourism and the opportunities available along with an ADU on a property. She also commented on community garden opportunities.

Commissioner Miller expressed concern about ADU's and noted there are issues with enforcement, renting an ADU and the owner may want to sell their home and now there is a renter with rights to stay. He indicated he is not in favor of ADU's and doesn't feel the City should go down this path. Community Development Director Wittman commented on owner occupancy.



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Commissioner Young mentioned Harvest House which is a network of agotourism. She acknowledged she understands the potential problems with ADU's. Chair Girard expressed concern over shared utilities. City Planner Roberts noted that the homeowner may have to upgrade their septic and wells.

Community Development Director Wittman provided comments on a winery/distillery/ brewery/restaurant and/or event/wedding venues. She described the review and permitting process and the specifics of the city code for conditional use permits. She noted that a CUP would be recommended for these types of uses. She also mentioned other considerations such as hours of operation, noise and light buffering, access, and parking requirements. She noted that the Comprehensive Plan indicates these types of uses would be accessory use to the property.

8. Other

Comments: Community Development Director Wittman noted changes from the Metropolitan Council. Commissioner Young asked about the City of Forest Lake being removed from the transit taxing district. She provided history of how the transit tax came to be in Forest Lake. Community Development Director Wittman also mentioned the MnDOT Highway 97 Project Open House on November 1 at the City Center Community Room.

Commissioner Kubal asked about a bench on the city property in honor of Mike Kuehn, former Planning Commissioner. Community Development Director Wittman provide information on the bench program that she is currently working on. She indicated she would speak with Chief Newman.

9. Adjourn

Motion to: Adjourn

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Geneva Kubal, Commissioner
SECONDER:	Kevin Miller, Commissioner
AYES:	Girard, Young, Miller, Kubal, Stehler
ABSENT:	Brink