



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, August 24, 2022

7:00 PM

City Center - Council Chamber

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	
Michael Kuehn	Planning Commissioner	Absent	
Justin Brink	Planning Commissioner	Absent	
Geneva Kubal	Planning Commissioner	Present	
Don Stehler	Planning Commissioner	Present	

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. Approve the Agenda

Comments: Agenda was changed to have Item 7 as a workshop format in the Forest Lake Conference Room.

Motion to: Approve the Agenda with an Amendment to move Item 7 off the Agenda and move it to workshop format held in the Forest Lake Conference Room.

RESULT: ADOPTED [4 to 1]
MOVER: Paul Girard, Chair
SECONDER: Kevin Miller, Commissioner
AYES: Girard, Miller, Kubal, Stehler
NAYS: Young, Commissioner
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT: Kuehn, Brink

5. Approve Planning Commission Meeting Minutes from August 10, 2022

Comments:

Motion to: Approve Planning Commission Meeting Minutes from August 10, 2022



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

6. 7739 North Shore Cir N – Keehr Conditional Use Permit and Variance Request (Tabled on August 10, 2022)

Comments: Interim Zoning Administrator, Nathan Fuerst, provided information from an application that was presented at the August 10, 2022, Planning Commission Meeting. He provided the reasons it was tabled at that meeting and the changes that have been made, including removing the request for a front yard setback, and a variance of 14 feet to the wetland setback.

Motion to: Approve The Applicant Request for a Variance of 14 Feet to the Required Wetland Setback of 20 Feet with Conditions 1-6 Identified by Staff with an Amendment to Include Condition 7 that the Structure is Not Larger than 192 Square Feet.

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

Motion to: Move to Approve the Applicant Request for a Conditional Use Permit to Allow an Accessory Structure on the Non-Riparian Lot (PID: 1003221240023) with Conditions 1-7 as Amended by the Planning Commission



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

7. Comprehensive Plan Implementation – Zoning Code Changes Discussion

Comments: Agenda was amended to remove this item from the Agenda and move to the Forest Lake Conference Room for Workshop format to discuss the Comprehensive Plan Implementation.

8. Other

Comments: Community Development Director Wittman commented on parks, trails, and lakes discussions and that focus groups will be formed to engage with underserved residents in Forest Lake. Commissioner Young asked how the recruiting for focus groups is being done. Community Development Director Wittman commented that the groups will include youth, elders, people with disabilities, and multifamily housing. She noted that a paper survey will be distributed. Community Development Director Wittman also mentioned road projects and other building construction projects that will begin soon. Commissioner Young asked what commercial developments might be coming forward to add to the tax base.

Commissioner Kubal asked about a speed limit on a state highway and how that can be changed. Commissioner Miller asked about water/sewer sharing with adjacent cities. Community Development Director Wittman commented that the only shared sewer is with the City of Columbus. Commissioner Young provided historical background on the shared water/sewer line with Columbus.

9. Adjourn

Motion to: Adjourn

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



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Comprehensive Plan Implementation – Zoning Code Changes Discussion

Comments: Agenda was amended to remove this item from the Agenda and move to the Forest Lake Conference Room for Workshop format to discuss the Comprehensive Plan Implementation.

Commissioner Girard commented on the workshop portion of the meeting not being recorded. Interim Zoning Administrator Fuerst commented on overarching goals including protection of natural resources, providing for parks and recreation opportunities, guidance of land and management growth, planning for an effective transportation system, and creation and expansion opportunities for employment growth. He also commented on the zoning code changes to be discussed including mixed residential district alteration, review of Highway 61 Corridor and mixed use categories, and agricultural compatible and complimentary land uses. He highlighted the MXR-1 Area on the zoning map. Commissioner Young asked about what percentage of growth has happened in high, medium, and low density residential areas. Community Development Director Wittman estimated that the City has exceeded the predictions for the high density residential areas.

Fuerst highlighted future land use facts including low to medium density residential acreage of 3,689, emerging suburban edge residential acres of 7,391, and total low density residential and diversified rural gross acres of 7,803. Commissioner Young expressed concern over agricultural land for growing food to depend on for the future.

Community Development Director Wittman discussed the MXR-1 area with the expectations of use versus the reality. She commented on the desire to protect natural resources being in conflict with the ability to get smaller lots in developments.

John Anderson, Eternity Homes, indicated his development of Birchwood Estates stalled because of lot sizes and meeting density. He indicated that he is not able to get enough units in a development to offset costs in Forest Lake because of the size of lots. Community Development Director Wittman noted that the City has an obligation to build 3 to 6 units per acre in the MXR-1 area when the standards are currently allowing for only 2 units per acre. She indicated that this means Forest Lake is not on par with regional trends. She gave the totals for comparable cities and the number of units they have built in 2021, including Andover with 139 units, Lino Lakes with 124, Prior Lake with 132, Ramsey with 168, and Forest Lake with only 32 units build in 2021.

John Anderson commented that there are other communities that are going through similar issues as Forest Lake because they set their high density requirements too high. Community Development Director Wittman provided detailed numbers to explain how the City can get to 3 to 6 units per acre and showed that with the current standards, the City is currently at 1.89 units per acre. John Anderson indicated that the City of Rogers is currently at 65 foot lot widths and he also provided lot widths for other cities including, Cottage Grove, Lakeville, Prior Lake, and Rosemount. He noted that



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these Cities have decreased their lot width sizes and total square footage to meet density requirements. Community Development Director Wittman explained the difference between adopted standards versus using a PUD. Commissioner Kubal commented on the type of community Forest Lake. Commissioner Young noted that the promise on smaller lots has been that there will be more units. She referenced the conversation with developers on the costs of new build. Commissioner Miller commented that the reality of affordable housing is already existing homes rather than new houses. Commissioner Young commented that she would like to see more commercial development. Community Development Director Wittman noted that the lack of density is now also affecting the school district growth. She commented that she has been tasked with getting Forest Lake in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.

John Anderson commented that the majority of cities are reducing their lot sizes from 60 to 70 feet wide on average. Community Development Director Wittman noted that the City needs to be less than 8,000 square foot lots to meet at least 3 units per acre. She commented that there is virtually no difference between a single family home and a detached townhome. She also commented that she would like to have 7,500 square foot lots to meet the 3 units per acre requirement. There was further discussion on the allowable sizes of lots in the MXR-1 area. Commissioner Young noted that a residential house costs the city 1.3 to 1.6 times more than the taxes paid on those units. There was discussion regarding cul-de-sacs versus through streets. Community Development Director Wittman proposed a lot area of 7,500 square feet with 65 foot lot width, setbacks of 25 feet for the house and 30 feet for the garage, 10 foot side setbacks, 25 feet for corner setbacks, and 30 foot rear setbacks. Chair Girard noted that the idea of having the house with a shorter setback than the garage is for streetscape esthetics.

Community Development Director Wittman discussed the Highway 61 Mixed Use Corridor and the challenges of promoting multi-family development, permitted and under permitted non-residential land uses, and staged infrastructure which prevents expansion. She noted the opportunities of requiring mixed use for additional non-residential development and expansion on permitted uses with site design standards. She asked the Commissioners what other businesses or uses would be appropriate along Highway 61. She suggested several business types including outside retail sales, light manufacturing, warehousing and distribution, contractor services, and outside storage. Community Development Director Wittman mentioned that the Washington County Development Association has grant funding available for studying the Hwy. 61 Corridor to determine the most appropriate development direction in terms of commercial or residential. There was further discussion about development along Hwy. 61.

Interim Zoning Administrator Fuerst discussed the agricultural compatibility and complimentary land uses noting the challenges that included increased development pressure threatening the rural values, and lack of urban services through 2040. He also included some of the opportunities that included being able to establish rural buffering areas, providing property owners with alternative



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land use options and an increased opportunity for agricultural tourism. He provided examples of use including wineries, event venues, agotourism, greenhouse or nursery, and commercial recreation like private campgrounds or hotels. There was further discussion about acceptable uses.

Workshop ended at 9:30 p.m.