

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
LITTLE CANADA, MINNESOTA**

**MARCH 11, 2021**

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof a regular meeting of the City Council of Little Canada, Minnesota was convened on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of March 2021 in the Council Chambers of the City Center located at 515 Little Canada Road in said City.

Chair Nick Schwalbach called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m. and the following members of the Planning Commission were present at roll call:

**PLANNING COMMISSION:** Johnson, Kulousek, Kwapick, Schwalbach, Buesing, Thorson, and Quarries.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Community Development Director/ Planner Corrin Wendell and Planning Consultant Bill Weber.

*In accordance with the requirements of Minn. Stat. Section 13D.021, the City Administrator has determined that an in-person meeting is not practical or prudent because of a health pandemic or an emergency declared under Chapter 12 of the Minnesota Statutes.*

*Because of the health pandemic and emergency declaration, it has been determined that attendance at the regular meeting location by elected officials and members of the public is not feasible. Therefore, some or all of the City Council members may be participating by telephone or other electronic means. This meeting will be recorded in its entirety.*

*Members of the public may monitor the meeting on the CTV North Suburbs website (live stream) or use the meeting link provided on the city website prior to the meeting.*

**ADOPT AGENDA**

The Planning Commission Agenda as submitted.

**MINUTES**

Commissioner Buesing made a motion to approve the February 11, 2021 Planning Commission minutes as submitted. Commissioner Kwapick seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

No comments.

**MINUTES  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MARCH 11, 2021**

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

None.

**CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT – 2920 RICE STREET – GARDEN CENTER**

The Community Development Director presented a request for a Conditional Use Permit at 2920 Rice Street. She stated that was that Hardware Hank business which will be taken over by Ace Hardware. She stated that the previous business had a seasonal garden center as well, but the new business would need to apply for its own CUP for the seasonal garden center. She reviewed the proposed concept plan noting that staff prefers option B. She stated that a seasonal garden center would be allowed provided that the request meets the criteria within the standards and provided an overview. She stated that the required notification has been provided for the public hearing which will be held by the City Council. She asked the Commission to consider approving the CUP for the seasonal garden center.

Commissioner Kwapick asked if any comments have been received from the neighboring businesses within the market center.

The Community Development Director replied that staff has not received any comments from the businesses in that area. She noted that comments can still be received up until the public hearing by the City Council.

Chair Schwalbach asked if there are any members of the public or representing the applicant that would like to speak.

The Community Development Director stated that she spoke with the applicant prior to the meeting to ensure staff had all the necessary information but he was not able to attend. She did not see any persons in the audience that would like to attend.

Chair Schwalbach asked if the Commission would be approving both options A and B and the applicant would then choose or whether the Commission would be asked to approve a specific option.

The Community Development Director replied that staff recommends option B and noted that the applicant did not have a preference and was open to either option.

Chair Schwalbach commented that this seems like a straightforward request as this use existed for the previous business in this location.

Johnson introduced the following motion:

***RECOMMENDING THE APPROVAL OF A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT  
APPLICATION TO ALLOW SEASONAL GARDEN CENTER, LOCATED AT 2920***

**MINUTES  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MARCH 11, 2021**

***RICE STREET, PID 062922230031, SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING  
CONDITIONS:***

- 1. THE GARDEN CENTER OR FARMERS MARKET REGISTERS ITS DATES OF OCCUPANCY OF THE PROPERTY EACH YEAR WITH THE CITY OF LITTLE CANADA.***
- 2. PRIOR TO OCCUPANCY, THE APPLICANT MUST FILE A SITE PLAN WITH THE CITY SPECIFYING THE LOCATION OF THE FACILITY, ANY PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS (WHETHER TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT), AND A NARRATIVE SPECIFYING OPERATIONAL DETAILS AND OPEN HOURS. SUCH NARRATIVE SHALL BE CO-SIGNED BY A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE OWNER OF THE PROPERTY.***
- 3. THE APPLICANT MUST IDENTIFY ANY PROPOSED LIGHTING RELATED TO THE FACILITY, AND SUCH LIGHTING MUST BE EXTINGUISHED WHEN THE FACILITY IS CLOSED.***
- 4. THE FACILITY MAY UTILIZE A MAXIMUM OF TWO SIGNS, EACH SIGN BEING NO GREATER THAN 32 SQUARE FEET IN TOTAL AREA, WITH NO MORE THAN ONE SUCH SIGN PERMITTED TO BE FREESTANDING. SUCH SIGNS MAY REMAIN IN PLACE ONLY DURING THE APPROVED DATES OF OCCUPATION AND SHALL COMPLY WITH ALL OTHER REQUIREMENTS OF THE CITY'S SIGN ORDINANCE.***
- 5. GOODS SOLD AT SUCH MARKETS SHALL CONSIST OF FRESH PRODUCE, FOOD PRODUCTS, OTHER GARDEN VEGETATION FOR CONSUMPTION, USE OR REPLANTING, ALONG WITH ACCESSORY MATERIALS CLEARLY RELATED TO THE CONSUMPTION OR USE OF SUCH PRODUCTS. IN ADDITION, UP TO 25 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF VENDORS AT A FARMERS MARKET MAY SELL CRAFT, ART, OR SIMILAR ITEMS AS ALL OR PART OF THEIR GOODS FOR SALE.***
- 6. THE FACILITY MUST BE SERVED BY AN OFF-STREET PARKING SUPPLY EQUAL IN AREA TO THE SIZE OF THE FACILITY ITSELF.***
- 7. THE SEASONAL FACILITIES SHALL BE LOCATED ONLY ON PROPERTY THAT CAN ACCOMMODATE THE USE WITHOUT CONFLICT WITH PERMANENT FACILITIES, INCLUDING PARKING, CIRCULATION, AND OTHER ACTIVITIES.***

The foregoing motion was duly seconded by Kwapick.  
Ayes (7). Nays (0). Motion passed.

**ZONING CODE DISCUSSION**

**MINUTES  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MARCH 11, 2021**

Bill Weber reviewed proposed changes to the Zoning Code related to the commercial and industrial districts. He stated that it would be proposed that the four existing districts be reduced to two districts and provided additional details on the two proposed districts and the uses that could be found within. He noted that permitted uses would be reviewed on a staff level while conditional uses would require additional review.

The Community Development Director noted that the proposed layout would make it much easier for applicants to determine what would be allowed.

Commissioner Johnson referenced fuel stations and asked if those applicants would go through a permitted process rather than going to the Commission and Council. She noted that those uses are typically found at busy intersections and perhaps additional review would be needed by the Commission and Council.

Mr. Weber stated that new development typically has straightforward requirements within the Code and could be reviewed by staff. He noted that typically the Commission would not have much input because it is not a subjective matter. He stated that there would still be public notification, but those comments would go direct to staff rather than the Planning Commission. He stated that the one benefit of having the commentary occur at a public meeting is that people can gather and listen to all the comments at once. He stated that whether the permitted uses would be reviewed by staff or the Commission and Council could be determined later in this Zoning Code update process. He stated that the idea of having every request reviewed by the City Council goes back to when Little Canada was a small township. He noted that having this permitted use process would allow an applicant to move forward seven or eight weeks quicker.

Chair Schwalbach used the example of the Caribou Coffee development, which required a traffic study. He noted that staff would still have the ability to require that if the Commission does not review the request.

Commissioner Johnson stated that her concern was related to high traffic and highly intensive use areas.

The Community Development Director noted that if a variance were requested the entire application would still go before the Commission and Council.

Mr. Weber noted that if an applicant were not pleased with the outcome of the staff review process, they would still have the ability to appeal that to the Commission and/or Council. He noted that they will come back to that concept of permitted approval in a few months. He continued to focus on the commercial districts and areas it would be applied. He noted that front setbacks would be proposed to be reduced from the existing standard in order to allow a building to be set closer to the street with parking to the side or rear. He stated that the corridor mixed use district would allow housing and believed that would be of interest along Rice Street.

**MINUTES  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MARCH 11, 2021**

The Community Development Director noted that the reduced front setback would also promote walkability.

Mr. Weber reviewed the proposed changes to the industrial districts, noting that again he would propose to reduce the number of districts into two. He provided additional details on the two districts proposed.

The Community Development Director noted that this will be a clearer way to identify the differences between the two districts and determined the allowed uses within.

Mr. Weber provided information of the proposed changes to setbacks noting that he has proposed to shrink some of the setbacks as the existing setbacks are larger than needed. He explained that most industrial parcels have a drive lane around the edge of the property for fire lane purposes which already provides a buffer. He noted that these are not dramatic changes, but they will help to clean up the map and provide more clarity.

Commissioner Kwapick asked if the change in zoning would apply to parcels that already exist.

Mr. Weber stated that currently there are many properties identified as PUD overlays and he would propose a process to carefully determine where the districts are mapped after the zoning update is complete.

The Community Development Director noted that the businesses would be able to operate as normal and would just fall under the new zoning district. She stated that the PUD parcels could continue to operate under that PUD and if the property is sold for redevelopment, the new zoning would apply. She provided additional details on the outreach which has started with businesses and will be ongoing throughout this process.

Mr. Weber referenced the residential districts noting that during the last review there was some support to allow accessory dwelling units and he therefore drafted additional regulations that will come to the Commission to review at the next meeting. He noted that staff will also continue to review the suggestions from the Planning Commission received last month related to minimum lot size in the R-1 district, reduced side setbacks for R-2, and other suggestions.

Chair Schwalbach asked if there are opportunities for the public to provide input related to the residential changes.

The Community Development Director noted that they will be looking at the overarching changes to the residential districts and making information available on the website for residents to respond to.

Mr. Weber noted that per the draft standards staff has developed for R-1 lots that could have accessory dwelling units there would not be that many lots that would easily qualify but again

**MINUTES  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MARCH 11, 2021**

noted that will come to the Commission for review in April. He provided details on the importance of the building to street relationship within residential areas as that was a topic of discussion during the previous meeting. He noted that because Little Canada is almost fully developed this would only apply in the few undeveloped residential areas within the community. He reviewed photographs of homes and garages with different relationships and distances from the road.

Chair Schwalbach asked how the Commission is being asked to consider these concepts. He noted that in a mixed-use situation he would rather have the back of the building towards the residential rather than parking between the uses.

Mr. Weber stated that within general development landscaping there will be specific requirements for transitioning between commercial and residential uses.

Chair Schwalbach noted that property within Little Canada is almost fully developed and therefore there would not be a lot of space to create that buffering. He stated that he would want to prevent a situation in which a building burns down and cannot be rebuilt because of the new standards.

Mr. Weber noted that the reduced front setback would simply allow additional flexibility and a commercial property would not need to be set that close to the road. He noted that it would be a minimum setback and staff would not propose architectural guidelines. He noted that the parking regulations will also be loosened, which will be discussed at a later time. He noted that the possible building height will also be raised to allow for mixed use buildings within the corridor.

Chair Schwalbach asked for input as to whether the garage suggestions were merely suggestions or whether those are suggested changes.

Mr. Weber stated that if the new regulations were in place a developer would be required to visually mitigate the impact of a garage with a porch or increased setback.

Chair Schwalbach commented that he has paid attention to garages since the last discussion. He stated that it seems to be based upon personal preference. He stated that because Little Canada has such little residential development left, he would struggle with implementing that type of change. He stated that he would be interested in feedback from developers because it is a personal preference and there is little opportunity for new residential development.

Mr. Weber agreed that this would be the most radical change. He stated that they can continue the discussion and clarified that his proposal would mandate a softening of the garage to more fit in with the architectural design of the building.

**MINUTES  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MARCH 11, 2021**

Commissioner Buesing commented that if the front setbacks are reduced that would eliminate the ability to put a garage in front. He noted that perhaps there be a house setback and separate garage setback.

Mr. Weber commented that he did not propose a change in the front setback for residential properties. He stated that the change in the front setback was proposed for commercial properties.

Commissioner Buesing stated that he would tend to agree with Chair Schwalbach because there is not much residential land left for new development. He noted that perhaps a standard could be developed for new residential development of multiple lots.

Mr. Weber reviewed some helpful regulations and public improvements related to residential, commercial and industrial development.

Commissioner Buesing asked the next step for this process.

Mr. Weber stated that the Commission will continue to review new elements of the Zoning Code each month with the ability to circle back to issues that had concern. He noted that there would then be time for public input and the Council would review this information multiple times before a full draft is reviewed.

The Community Development Director noted that the first review by the Council would be done in April outlining the process and providing a highlight of the discussions that have occurred thus far by the Commission and staff. She stated that once the draft is fully reviewed and adopted, they would look further into the zoning map as discussed earlier.

**REPORT FROM STAFF**

No comments.

**REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS**

No comments.

**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:44 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Staple  
*TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*