

The Planning Commission meeting was called to order by Chair Campbell at 7:05 p.m. at the Community Meeting Room, 100 Village Center Drive Suite 150, City of North Oaks. Commissioners Dick Hara, Nancy Reid, Katy Ross, Bob Wilson, Joyce Yoshimura-Rank and City Council Liaison Gregg Nelson were present. Also present were City Administrator Michael Robertson, City Planner Ben Gozola, Videographer Kevin Scattum and Administrative Assistant Linda Hanson.

### **Approval of Agenda**

**Commissioner Nancy Reid moved to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Joyce Yoshimura-Rank and passed unanimously.**

### **Approval of Minutes**

**Commissioner Bob Wilson moved to approve the minutes from the February 27, 2014 Planning Commission meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Katy Ross and passed unanimously.**

### **New Business**

#### **1. Application #1: CUP 14-05, NOHOA, 14 West Pleasant Lake Road Warming House and Restroom Building**

NOHOA Interim Executive Director Layna Peltier reviewed the application to construct a new warming house at West Rec. The design was created to be both aesthetically pleasing as well as functional. A separate free standing garage is also proposed to house equipment that is now stored in a metal container. This will keep the equipment on site and increases staff efficiency by not having to haul equipment from elsewhere. The garage will include storage for the hockey nets, chalking machines, fair items and NOHOA office materials. A picnic shelter and small playground are also part of the application.

NOHOA Board Member John Murphy explained that the picnic shelter and small playground would only be built if the money was raised by the North Oaks Foundation. The money has been pledged for the garage by the Foundation. The existing warming house will be razed once the new building is complete. They would like to make the new building attractive as many people will see it as they drive into the community.

A gravel path will go from the building to the road crossing. Signage will be needed to show the crossing. This detail will be addressed with the City. NOHOA President Mark Azman said that they are aware that too much additional impervious surface would create the need for a new stormwater pond to handle run-off and they are working to not have to do that.

Chair Campbell asked if the lighting issue has been addressed. Ms. Peltier explained that the lights have the largest shield available but the intent is to redirect the lights to meet City code.

Commissioner Dick Hara asked how NOHOA plans to monitor the late night activity. Ms. Peltier explained they would work with the sheriff and also place a sign that shows that the park closes 30 minutes after sundown. Council Liaison Nelson asked if the area could be gated like the beach as he feels a gate would be a deterrent.

Council Liaison Nelson asked what the advantages would be to building a new structure. Ms. Peltier said the number one improvement would be bathrooms where people now have to use porta-potties. Also the equipment would be stored in a better location. The current warming house is not comfortable in the summer and the new building will be air conditioned. The new building will also have footings that would allow for expansion if needed.

Council Liaison Nelson asked if the architectural style of the building could be used to set a design standard for other park facilities. Board member John Murphy said that this style was meant to create a rustic, woody feel that could easily be replicated.

Commissioner Yoshimura-Rank asked if the benches would be permanent. Ms. Peltier stated they are removable benches so that the room could be utilized in other ways. Residents will be able to rent out this building. It has both a counter and sink and a grill will be added. The building will be open on demand and in the summer it will be open during the day so that the bathrooms can be accessed and in winter it will be open evenings and weekends. Commissioner Yoshimura-Rank stated she thought this upgrade was long overdue.

Chair Campbell asked about the septic plan. Board Member Bill McNee explained that soil borings have been completed and two sites have been established. The first site is a trench system and the second site will be a mound. They plan to monitor the system and if needed they can enlarge the drain field on the first site.

Commissioner Reid asked why fire sprinklers were not included in the plan. Ms. Peltier explained it was a cost factor and they have a limited budget. If a sprinkler system is required as part of building plan review they will do it.

Chair Campbell asked if the idea to put the NOHOA office in this building was considered. Ms. Peltier said no, that it was decided in the past that it was a good idea to have NOHOA and the City in the same building and City Hall must be at the edge of the Community to accommodate non-resident visitors.

With no further questions, City Planner Ben Gozola reviewed the staff report and the proposed buildings. The proposed buildings are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the use of the land remains the same. There are no road or utility issues. Drainage and erosion issues have been reviewed and are satisfactory. Parking meets the required setbacks and is adequate for the intended use. However, staff recommends that additional parking be identified in case the new building generates increased traffic.

The hockey rink lights are not in compliance with City code and they will need to show how they will come into compliance. The two resident concerns from the public hearing, one with

lighting and one with late night usage, have been discussed. There are 21 conditions of approval that are recommended.

Chair Campbell asked if there was a grading plan. City Planner Gozola stated that there is and the only issue would be a watershed issue that will be looked at once the plan is done. Once the older building is removed, grass will be placed where it was. Council Liaison Nelson asked about who would be doing the grading. Mr. Gozola stated that this would be done by the contractor hired by NOHOA. The Building Inspector would have to review and approve both the final building plans and the septic system before a building permit is granted.

Chair Campbell re-opened the public hearing at 7:48 pm.

Brian Hagen, 18 Blue Jay Lane

Mr. Hagen stated that he did have an issue with the lighting as his home backs up to the park area. He and his neighbors would like to see the lights re-directed so they don't shine into their back windows. Otherwise he is in favor of the new building.

With no further comments, Chair Campbell closed the public hearing at 7:50 pm.

Ms. Peltier stated that the handicapped parking spaces are shown as a hard surface but she did not see this requirement in the City Code. Board Member McNee stated that it is important that the surfaces all be the same around the area so that people can easily get to the sidewalks to enter the building. Administrator Robertson will look into the issue.

Chair Campbell questioned if the septic system would be adequate for the number of people using the facility. Board Member McNee stated that the drain field may need to be expanded if necessary and will not go into the setback. Chair Campbell would like to see a more detailed plan to be certain there is enough capacity.

Chair Campbell would also like to see a landscaping plan with plantings that could buffer or shield neighboring properties. Ms. Peltier stated that they plan to work with the Garden Club to put in landscaping near the building, but there are no plans to put additional shielding near the property lines. Many properties already have plantings that shield the adjacent homes.

Chair Campbell would like to see the lighting plan to make sure that the lights can be adjusted. Ms. Peltier explained that there are two terms for lighting: directional and spill over lighting. The spill over lighting does not appear to be the problem. Directional lighting can be adjusted so that it shines at a different angle. Chair Campbell asked if the lights could be lowered. Board Member Murphy explained that the issue seems to be the direction and that they could be redirected. Board Member Scott Coyle explained that the lights are relatively new and the plan was to evaluate the lights after the first season so that the lights could then be adjusted. NOHOA has looked at a lot of options and has also received positive comments about the lights. The lights cannot be dimmed and the wattage is standard for recreation. Administrator Robertson said that the City will work with NOHOA and a lighting expert to make certain the lights meet code.

Commissioner Hara stated that he is concerned with the late night usage. He didn't want cops to have to constantly chase people out of the park. Ms. Peltier stated that the other recreation areas do not have a problem and she does not anticipate one here. Cameras will be used on this building for further security. Council Liaison Nelson stated that this is an issue that has to be addressed. Administrator Robertson said that the issue might be that West Rec is easier to get to than the other recreational areas.

Ms. Peltier said the plan is to have the new building built and open in time for hockey season.

**Commissioner Nelson made the motion to table action on CUP-14-05 at this time until the following is supplied: a landscaping plan showing both the plants close to the building as well as some screening, a site plan which identifies which areas are concrete and which are class 5, a septic plan that shows the location of the system and confirms the capacity, a plan for security of this area, a crosswalks signage plan, and a lighting plan. Commissioner Joyce Yoshimura-Rank seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.**

**2. Application #2: Variance 14-07, NOHOA, 14 West Pleasant Lake Road to exceed the height allowed for a recreational building**

City Planner Gozola said that NOHOA would like a Variance from the 20 foot height limit. They would like a 23 foot tall building. Staff recommends that Variance 14-07 be denied based on the fact that there are no practical difficulties to allow this. Structures taller than 20 feet are allowed in other districts but not in recreational districts.

Chair Campbell suggested they recommend to the City Council to amend the Code so that this request can be approved. Commissioners liked the look of the structure and thought that 3 more feet would not be a problem. City Council Liaison Nelson stated that the Code was written many years ago and may not be appropriate for today's standards. Ms. Peltier stated that at Wilkinson Lake the pavilion is 25 feet high. This was approved under the 1999 PDA with the North Oaks Company so they were exempt in following the 20 foot high requirement.

**Council Liaison Nelson recommended to the City Council to amend the Code to approve higher structures in recreational districts. Commissioner Reid seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.**

Board Member Murphy thanked the Planning Commission for considering this change.

**3. Zoning Ordinance Update**

Administrator Robertson has started the process to update the zoning ordinances. Mr. Robertson stated that the changes to the zoning ordinances would be handled over a number of months. He hopes that each month he would bring some changes to the Planning Commission for consideration. Once the Commission has considered all possible changes a public hearing would take place to review the proposed changes they recommended.

Robertson suggested one change. At this time, driveways in the City can still be gravel. He suggested changing the ordinance to require that all new driveways would be hard surfaces. He also added a definition of driveways. This would be **for new construction only**. The reason for this request is that hard surfaces keep the dust down and are more aesthetically pleasing. If the driveway of an existing home stayed in the same location it would not have to be brought up to code even if there were changes to the house.

Council Liaison Nelson said it appears very few homes are built without a hard surface driveway. Commissioner Reid stated that when she moved in she was looking for an ordinance for driveways and could not find one. This would give more direction to those moving into the City.

Mr. Gozola suggested that Staff come up with language that would make all existing gravel driveways conforming and that the ordinance would be changed only for new construction. There was a question about driveway construction during the winter. Chair Campbell noted that with today's construction technology gravel surfaces can be compacted and do not have to go through a period of settling. Mr. Gozola stated for new construction a driveway would have to be hard surfaced before a Certificate of Occupancy is granted

The Commission directed staff to work on the language for this change.

**4. Met Council 2040 Population Estimate**

Administrator Mike Robertson explained that he sent a letter to the Met Council in regards to their initial 2040 population projection for North Oaks of 6,200 people. They reviewed his letter and came back with an estimate of 4,900 people which he found satisfactory.

Commissioner Katy Ross asked for an update on the Highway 96 resurfacing project. Administrator Robertson stated that the project is scheduled to be done this year. The bids are in and are about 2/3 of the original estimate. He is meeting with Ramsey County next week and he will find out more information. . The money will not be due until after the job is completed.

**Next Meeting**

The Next Planning Commission Meeting is April 24, 2014 at 7 p.m. at the Community Meeting Room, 100 Village Center Drive.

**Adjournment**

**On motion made by Commissioner Ross, seconded by Commissioner Reid and carried unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.**

Attest:

Respectfully submitted,

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Chair Campbell

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Linda Hanson  
Recording Secretary