Minnetonka Planning Commission

July 9, 2015

1. **Call to Order**

Chair Kirk conducted a concept plan review for Williston Woods West. A meeting could not be held due to the lack of a quorum.

2. **Roll Call**

Commissioners Magney, Odland, and Kirk were present. Calvert, Knight, O’Connell, and Rettew were absent.

Staff members present: Community Development Director Julie Wischnack and Planner Jeff Thomson.

3. **Approval of Agenda:** Agenda items requiring a vote were postponed until the next planning commission meeting, July 20, 2015, due to the lack of a quorum.

4. **Approval of Minutes:** June 25, 2015

This item was postponed until the next planning commission meeting, July 20, 2015.

5. **Report from Staff**

This item was postponed until the next planning commission meeting.

6. **Report from Planning Commission Members:** None

7. **Public Hearings:** Consent Agenda: None

8. **Public Hearings**

A. **A conditional use permit for Redstone American Grill at 12401 Wayzata Boulevard.**

This item was postponed until the next planning commission meeting, July 20, 2015.

B. **A conditional use permit for Redstone American Grill at 12401 Wayzata Boulevard.**
This item was postponed until the next planning commission meeting, July 20, 2015.

C. Sign plan amendment for Ridgedale Center.

This item was postponed until the next planning commission meeting, July 20, 2015.

9. Other Business

A. Concept plan review for Williston Woods West at 5431 and 5439 Williston Road.

Chair Kirk introduced the proposal and called for the staff report.

Thomson reported. He recommended that the planning commission provide comments and feedback to assist the applicant with future direction that may lead to the preparation of more detailed development plans.

Reid Schulz, of Landform Professional Services, on behalf of Lakewest Development, the applicant, stated that:

- John Fletcher of Lakewest Development was also present to answer questions.
- The area was previously part of Kraemer's Hardware Store.
- The proposal is for a PUD of six villa-type, detached townhomes.
- The PUD would allow flexibility with the lot widths in order to save the trees around the perimeter of the site.
- There would be a private drive with two locations off of Williston Road.
- The proposal would try to keep lot square footages above 10,000.
- There would be no land use reclassification. The density requirements would be met.
- A lot of high-priority trees would be preserved on the back half of the property and buffer the parking lot.
- He met with neighbors and will incorporate the concerns provided.
- He appreciated staff’s time and for working with him.
- Generally speaking, the neighbors seemed pretty receptive to the proposal. The proposal would provide a transition from commercial uses to single-family transitional houses.
- He and Mr. Fletcher were available for questions.
Chair Kirk asked why a PUD would be better than R-1A zoning. Thomson explained that the proposed lots would be smaller than the R-1A standard of 15,000 square feet.

Odland asked if grading could impact the trees’ roots. Mr. Schulz said that a specialist performed a tree inventory and the grade differential was considered. By pushing clustered units closer to the road, it would locate the houses on level ground and minimize the amount of grading. He was concerned with preserving the trees. Stormwater management would still need to be considered. The trees are as important to the development as they are to the neighbors and the city.

Chair Kirk asked if there are additional high-priority trees. Mr. Schulz answered affirmatively. There are an additional 35 high-priority trees. The cluster constitutes a large majority of the high-priority trees on the site.

Magney asked for the size of the proposed houses. Mr. Schulz said that has not been determined yet. He estimated that each house would have a 2,000-square-foot footprint depending on the style. He will be looking for feedback from commissioners and the city council. Those details would be refined when a builder is secured and elevations identified.

Magney confirmed with Mr. Schulz that there is an existing retaining wall. The proposal would probably have some type of retaining wall to protect the trees.

Odland asked for a sketch of the proposal in relation to the current structures. An illustration was provided. Odland said it helped to see the open area. She suggested saving as much of the buffer as possible.

Chair Kirk noted that additional parking could be accommodated on the west side of the curved drive and each of the driveways would be deep enough to fit a couple vehicles. It appears that there would be enough room for snow removal and garbage cans partially due to the shared driveways. Mr. Schulz said that staff pointed out concerns with private drives. There would be off-street parking for six vehicles. Most of the driveways would be able to accommodate four vehicles and the garages would be able to hold two vehicles. There are areas that could be expanded to provide additional parking, but it is a balance of parking space and tree preservation.

Chair Kirk confirmed with Mr. Schulz that there would be an access agreement on lots six and one.
Chair Kirk invited the audience to provide comments. No one chose to speak.

Magney liked what he saw. He was a little concerned with parking, but he liked it better than the large, multi-housing plan previously proposed.

Odland stated that the proposal would be a better fit in the neighborhood and would preserve the tree line. She agreed that the parking could be better, but it is the best plan presented so far.

Chair Kirk thought that the proposal had one unit too many for the area. He imagined that each house would be fairly large compared to the lot size. The proposal does a great job of combining lots one and two and lots three and four by orienting the driveways together. There would be enough room for snow storage, but it seems very tight. The homes would be very close together. That is not, necessarily, in keeping with the neighborhood. He has seen developments with houses this close before and it does end up seeming crowded, but he understood what is trying to be done. The proposal is much more empathetic to the neighborhood than extending a larger building into the space and is a better fit. Williston Road is a collector street. The use on the east side is business retail. The proposal is a good fit for these particular parcels. He agreed that the design is pretty solid.

Thomson explained that the ordinance relates the use of a PUD to the public benefit it would provide. Natural resource preservation is a public benefit. He asked if commissioners felt there would be enough public benefit to justify the use of a PUD. Chair Kirk noted that the application includes a list of reasons to allow a PUD. He struggled a little with mixed-use housing types and the amount the units would probably cost. Mr. Fletcher stated that a builder has not yet been selected. He anticipated the houses would be priced in the $600,000 to $850,000 range. Ideally, there would be 1 builder for all 6 lots. There would be 2 to 3 housing types.

Chair Kirk noted that diversified housing stock is a priority. Minnetonka is lacking newly constructed single-family houses. These units would not meet affordability requirements. Mr. Fletcher stated that he would classify the houses as step up or step down housing.

Chair Kirk felt that conserving the trees and the buffer would be a worth-while cause. The developer may benefit more from the buffer than anyone to provide buyers a better view.
Chair Kirk noted that the concept plan would be reviewed by the city council July 27, 2015.

10. **Adjournment**

By: ____________________________  

Lois T. Mason  
Planning Secretary