Minnetonka Planning Commission
Minutes
October 1, 2015

1. Call to Order

Chair Kirk called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Roll Call

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

Staff members present: Community Development Director Julie Wischnack, Principal Planner Susan Thomas, and Planner Jeff Thomson.

3. Approval of Agenda: The agenda was approved as submitted with a modification and additional comments provided in the change memo dated October 1, 2015.

4. Approval of Minutes: September 10, 2015

*Odland moved, second by O’Connell, to approve the September 10, 2015 meeting minutes as submitted.*

*O’Connell, Odland, Calvert, Magney, and Kirk voted yes. Knight was absent. Motion carried.*

5. Report from Staff

Wischnack briefed the commission on land use applications considered by the city council at its meetings of September 14, 2015 and September 28, 2015:

- Adopted a resolution approving a two-lot subdivision on Meeting Street.
- Adopted a resolution approving the final plat for the Buckman Addition.
- Introduced an ordinance for Williston Woods West.
- Adopted a resolution approving vacation of right of way and easements for Saville.
- Adopted a resolution approving items for Marshes of Meadowwoods.
- Adopted a resolution approving a daycare facility on Excelsior Boulevard.
• Adopted a resolution approving items for Ridgeman Avenue with an added house-size restriction.
• Held a concept plan review for Villa West.
• Held a concept plan review for an apartment building on Bren Road.
• Adopted a resolution approving a conditional use permit for Auntie Ruth’s pet boarding business.
• Adopted a resolution approving the watershed management restoration for Purgatory Creek.
• Adopted a resolution approving a dental clinic in Ridge Square North.
• Introduced an ordinance for a senior housing facility, Cherrywood Pointe.
• Adopted a resolution approving an interim use permit for a home occupation on Milbert Road.

There will be a lite rail open house at the Hopkins Fire Station on Wednesday, October 7, 2015 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Wischnack congratulated Thomson for accepting the Director of Planning and Building position with the city of Wayzata. Chair Kirk congratulated Thomson and thanked him for his good work.

6. Report from Planning Commission Members

Chair Kirk noted that all municipalities have approved the light rail plans; the League of Women Voters held a debate for candidates last night; and he saw coverage of the Nordstrom’s gala on television and feels fortunate that there is reinvestment going on at Ridgedale Center. It allows Minnetonka to be seen as a hub of retail.

Calvert found the bus tour very helpful to see the completed projects. She encouraged that to happen again. Wischnack said it would be an annual event and could be done more often. Odland would like to go on a tour in the spring also.

7. Public Hearings: Consent Agenda: None

8. Public Hearings
A. Setback variances for a detached garage at 12821 Linde Lane.

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

Thomas reported. She recommended approval of the application based on the findings and subject to the conditions listed in the staff report.

Pete Minea, 12821 Linde Lane, applicant, thanked everyone for their time and consideration.

The public hearing was opened. No testimony was submitted and the hearing was closed.

Odland moved, second by Magney, to adopt the resolution approving a setback variance for construction of a detached garage at 12821 Linde Lane (see pages A7-A10) with changes provided in the change memo dated September 9, 2015.

O’Connell, Odland, Calvert, Magney, and Kirk voted yes. Knight was absent. Motion carried.

Chair Kirk stated that an appeal of the planning commission’s decision must be made in writing to the planning division within 10 days.
B. Expansion permit and front yard setback variance for an addition to the house at 12117 Brenlyn Lane.

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

Thomson reported. He recommended approval of the application based on the findings and subject to the conditions listed in the staff report.

Chair Kirk asked why staff did not support the two-foot overhang on the second story. Thomson explained that the zoning ordinance requires less of a setback for a covered porch than a cantilevered second story. The planning commission may approve a variance to allow the cantilever, but staff felt the plan could be easily modified to meet the ordinance requirement.

Igor Yakovlev, applicant, did not think it would be a big problem to remove the cantilever. It could be reconfigured. He appreciated the consideration.

The public hearing was opened. No testimony was submitted and the hearing was closed.

Odland moved, second by O’Connell, to adopt the resolution approving an expansion permit and front yard setback variance for an addition to the home at 12117 Brenlyn Lane (see pages A9-A13).

O’Connell, Odland, Calvert, Magney, and Kirk voted yes. Knight was absent. Motion carried.

Chair Kirk stated that an appeal of the planning commission’s decision must be made in writing to the planning division within 10 days.
C. Conditional use permit for an educational institution at 5605 Green Circle Drive.

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

Thomas reported. She recommended approval of the application based on the findings and subject to the conditions listed in the staff report.

In response to Odland’s question, Thomas stated that she believed that the gym would be located in the warehouse.

Todd Kaufman stated that he works for Wellington Management, the proposed buyer. Wellington Management would make significant improvements to the site and lease it to Lionsgate. The white roof is the result of the type of materials used at that time.

Chair Kirk asked about the traffic pattern and busing. Diane Halpin, executive director of Lionsgate Academy, introduced herself and Ron Berger, director of finance and operations, for Lionsgate Academy. Mr. Berger said that half of the students would be transported by a 7-person or 10-person van. There would be a combination of short buses and maybe one regular size school bus. The rest of the traffic would be regular vehicles with students in carpools being dropped off by parents. The school would be moved from Crystal to Minnetonka.

Chair Kirk asked about event parking. Mr. Berger said that there would be parent-teacher nights and a one-act play in the spring. He is weighing the possibility of renting a theater or having the play on site. The proposed site has more parking than the current site and it would be adequate. Opportunity Partners is a next door neighbor that he will be contacting to work together to provide opportunities for individuals with special needs.

Chair Kirk asked if the lease would be to buy. Mr. Berger said that the applicant would be a good, long-term tenant.

O’Connell asked what made them choose the site and the reason for the move. Ms. Halpin explained that the school began in 2008 with 60 students. There are 160 students enrolled in 2 campuses. There are 160 students on the waiting list. There are 5 current students who live in the Hopkins School District. The school ran out of space to serve the needs of the current students. It is a very therapeutic environment. The old elementary school classrooms are too large for the class sizes. The diagnosis of Autism is now up to 1 in 70. There is a great demand. She has been looking for space for a year and a half. There is not
enough of a bank roll to buy a building, but the school is able to pay rent. The site is very attractive.

Odland asked if the space would be large enough for the long term. Ms. Halpin said that other locations would be added to serve the students traveling long distances and prevent the appearance of an institution. They did not want a school with over 200 students. Mr. Berger said that everyone from Lionsgate is passionate about what they do. The facility has had visitors from Japan and Russia to see how it operates.

The public hearing was opened. No testimony was submitted and the hearing was closed.

Mike Ramsden, 13627 Inverness Road, stated that he has a grandson who attends Lionsgate and he works there. The current building is dated. Lionsgate is a life saver. It makes a difference for the kids. He encouraged approval of the proposal.

*Odland moved, second by Calvert, to recommend that the city council adopt the resolution approving a conditional use permit for an educational facility at 5605 Green Circle Drive (see pages A13-A17).*

*O’Connell, Odland, Calvert, Magney, and Kirk voted yes. Knight was absent. Motion carried.*

Wischnack announced that the city’s open house is October 6, 2015 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. and there will be a meeting regarding improvements to Cartway Lane on Monday at 6 p.m. in the community center.
9. Adjournment

Odland moved, second by Calvert, to adjourn the meeting at 7:21 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

By: __________________________

Lois T. Mason
Planning Secretary