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## ***City of Falcon Heights Planning Commission***

City Hall  
2077 W. Larpenteur Avenue

February 28, 2012  
7:00 p.m.

### **A G E N D A**

- A. CALL TO ORDER: 7:00 p.m.
- B. ROLL CALL:      Black \_\_\_\_ Brown \_\_\_\_ Fite \_\_\_\_ Gustafson \_\_\_\_  
                         Minns \_\_\_\_ Noble \_\_\_\_ Wartick \_\_\_\_  
                         Council Liaison Harris \_\_\_\_  
                         City Administrator Fischer \_\_\_\_ Staff Liaison Jones \_\_\_\_  
                         City Attorney \_\_\_\_
- C. Approval of the minutes for January, 2012
- D. PUBLIC HEARING: Amending the Falcon Heights City Code to allow certain front porch encroachments into required front yards.
- F: AGENDA ITEMS:
  - 1. Discussion and recommendation to the City Council on proposed front porch ordinance amendment
- G. INFORMATION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS
- H. ADJOURN

*If you have a disability and need accommodation in order to attend this meeting, please notify City Hall 48 hours in advance between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. at 651-792-7600. We will be happy to help.*

**City of Falcon Heights  
Planning Commission Minutes  
January 24, 2012**

**PRESENT:** Commissioners Black, Brown, Gustafson, Minns, Noble, Council Member Harris, Staff Liaison Jones. **ABSENT:** (with notice) Commissioners Fite, Wartick

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. by the 2011 Chair, Commissioner Black, who noted that a quorum was present.

Commissioners elected Commissioners Black and Noble were nominated to serve a second year. They were elected by acclamation.

As required on a yearly basis, Commissioners reviewed the standing rules. Jones gave a brief recap of the last year's change clarifying item 2 under "Process – Public Hearings". She asked for any suggestions this year. Commissioner Noble had a question about Item 4 under Process - Regular and Special Planning Commission Meetings, regarding the seconding of motions not being required. Councilmember Harris said that the Council rarely seconds motions. After a brief discussion, the item was left as it stood, and the Commission voted to approve the standing rules for 2012.

The minutes for October 25 were approved as submitted.

**Information And Announcements:**

Jones announced that the Winterfest event has been canceled due to "lack of winter". This was just announced today. She recommended that people check the City website for confirmation of this or call City Hall for more information.

Jones announced to the public that the meeting would adjourn to the customary annual orientation and training for commissioners – brief because all commissioners are returning – and a recap of certain ongoing projects in the city. She introduced a guest, Tim Venne, one of the brokers for the Hermes property, which is for sale. He accepted an invitation to fill Commissioners in on the market status of that property. Jones said she hoped there would be "real news" of the future of Hermes some time in the new year.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:13 p.m.

Commissioners adjourned to an annual orientation/update workshop.

Respectfully submitted,



Deborah Jones, Staff Liaison

## **Minutes of the Planning Commission Workshop**

January 24, 2012

1. Staff presented a brief review of the parcel information and zoning on the three Hermes parcels, 1750 – 1790 Larpenteur. The total area is 3.44 acres. The property was formerly zoned B-2, Limited Business, but was rezoned in 2010 as R-5M, High Density Residential Mixed use, which includes B-2 uses, as part of the implementation of the 2008 comprehensive plan.
2. Guest Tim Venne, one of the brokers for the property, filled Commissioners in on the market status of the property. There have been numerous enquiries but no sale to date. The market would not currently support market rate housing on a property of that size, so there has been more interest from developers, including non-profits, in developing affordable housing on part of the site. Because these developments depend on grants for financing, the timeline can be long for the seller. There have also been inquiries from potential buyers interested in professional or research use of part of the property.
3. As all Commissioners have served at least one year, the annual orientation was omitted and staff asked Commissioners if they had any questions regarding zoning processes. There were none.
4. Staff presented a preliminary front porch amendment draft based on the St. Louis Park section Commissioners favored at the October workshop. The draft needed concrete numbers for what would be allowed before being sent to the city attorney. Commissioners agreed to use the St. Louis Park numbers, subject to change after the hearing. However they favored allowing the height of the encroachment to be limited by the roof peak of the house, rather than the first floor, as other cities do. The intention is to avoid placing impractical restrictions on the architectural design of these features. They also wanted to make sure some minimum distance (24 feet) is maintained between a front porch encroachment and the front lot line.



**The City That Soars!**

## REQUEST FOR PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

<b>Meeting Date</b>	February 28, 2012
<b>Agenda Item</b>	1
<b>Title</b>	Ordinance amending the Falcon Heights zoning code to allow certain front porch encroachments
<b>Submitted By</b>	Deborah Jones, Staff Liaison

<b>Description</b>	An ordinance is proposed to amend the City Code to allow limited encroachment of open front porches into required front yards in R-1, R2 and R-3 residential zones.
<b>Background</b>	<p>The Falcon Heights City Council adopted as one of its 2011 goals a revisitation of the rules regarding front porches as allowed front yard encroachments in Falcon Heights. Front porches were not a popular architectural feature when most of the homes in the city were built, but they have a practical value in providing shelter at a front entry. They can also have a community value in encouraging neighborhood socialization. Since most houses in the City were built right up to the front setback line, the addition of a covered stoop or porch means encroaching into the required front setback. Falcon Heights code does not presently allow a porch or covered stoop as an encroachment, but the City regularly receives inquiries from resident interested in adding them.</p> <p>The Planning Commission was charged with researching other cities' ordinances, studying the front porch issue as it might affect the residential streetscapes of Falcon Heights, and coming up with a recommendation to the Council. The commission conducted this work in a series of workshops in August, September and October, 2011.</p> <p>The general consensus of the Commission was that allowing open front porches, including covered stoops, with limits on the encroachment, would be a welcome amenity without adversely altering the character of city neighborhoods. Screening or any other kind of enclosure of such a porch would not be permitted.</p>
<b>Budget Impact</b>	None
<b>Attachment(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposed ordinance amending Chapter 113</li> </ul>
<b>Action(s) Requested</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hold a public hearing on the proposed ordinance</li> <li>Make a recommendation to the City Council</li> </ul>

ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

**CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS  
RAMSEY COUNTY, MINNESOTA**

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 113 OF  
THE CITY CODE CONCERNING PORCHES**

THE CITY COUNCIL OF FALCON HEIGHTS ORDAINS:

**SECTION 1.** Section 113-3 of the Falcon Heights City Code is amended by adding the following definition:

Porch means a roofed, open area attached to a building with direct access to and from the building to which it is attached.

**SECTION 2.** Section 113-241 of the Falcon Heights City Code is amended by adding Subsection (b)(5) to provide as follows:

- (5) Porches with open railings which do not have walls, doors, windows or screens and which do not extend above the roof line of the building to which they are attached may encroach into the required front yard six feet if they are a minimum of five feet from any interior side lot line, nine feet from any side yard line abutting a street, and 24 feet from any front lot line.

**SECTION 3. Effective Date.** This ordinance shall take effect from and after its passage.

**ADOPTED** this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2012, by the City Council of  
Falcon Heights, Minnesota.

CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Peter Lindstrom, Mayor

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bart Fischer, City Administrator/Clerk