

CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS  
Regular Meeting of the City Council  
City Hall  
2077 West Larpenteur Avenue

AGENDA  
October 23, 2019 at 7:00 P.M.

A. CALL TO ORDER:

B. ROLL CALL: Vacant \_\_\_ LEEHY\_X\_ HARRIS\_X\_  
MIAZGA\_X\_ GUSTAFSON\_X\_

STAFF PRESENT: THONGVANH\_X\_

C. PRESENTATION

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. October 9, 2019 City Council Meeting Minutes

Approved 4-0

E. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. Consider Amendment to City Code Sec. 113-211 Related to Amber Union Planned Unit Development (PUD)

City Administrator Thongvanh

Amber Union property at 1667 Snelling Avenue was rezoned in June 2019 to allow for a mixed-use of 106 apartments and retail space. They are now requesting an amendment to the PUD that would allow 128 apartments.

Pete Deanovic (Buhl GTA, LP)

The following changes to the existing PUD are:

- Increased number of affordable rental units from 106 units to 128.
  - Studio from 8 to 22
  - 1 Bedroom from 14 to 10
  - 2 Bedroom from 56 to 57
  - 3 Bedroom from 24 to 34
  - 4 Bedroom from 4 to 5
  
- Reduction of surface parking stalls to provide green space required by the State Historic Preservation Office. These parking stalls and additional stalls aimed at maintaining previously approved parking ratios are provided via an easement in the adjacent lot
- Commercial space size reduced from 1,973 square feet to 787 square feet.
- Number and size of window wells reduced from 6,460 square feet to 2,110 square feet.
- Reduced scope of rear entry addition.
- Removal of front ADA ramp which primary access point is on the inside of the chamfer.

We have received some bonds for the project. In addition, we would like to pursue the DEED and Met Council environmental remediation grants.

Council Member Miazga asked if the low-income percentage will increase because of the 128 units and where the 22 units are will be located. Pete stated that it would still be 100% affordable housing in terms of NAHA (National Affordable Housing Act) and applicants must comply with the criteria. Regarding the additional units, some will in the old cafeteria on the top floor.

Council Member Leehy asked if the additional units will change the start date and Pete said it would not change. Regarding the reduction of the parking in front of the building, Council Member Harris asked if they would eliminate the parking by the stop. Pete answers that it will be reduce and will not extend north of the bus stop. The added row of parking that was introduced will remain in the planning.

Farook Meah (1597 Hollywood Court)

Asked for clarification on where the parking will be. Will it be west of Larpenteur or west by Underwood St? He is also concerned about the right turn on Larpenteur Ave during rush hour because it is horrible and the wait time is long.

Mayor Gustafson clarified that it is west of the current development.

Valetta Gyurci (1607 Hollywood Court)

Where is the retail going to be located and the parking for customers? Where are the entrances for residents and will parking be off the service road and Larpenteur Ave? Where will residents park during snow removal? The fence between Hollywood Court and the building towards the service road is a blind spot when turning from the alley and how will it be fixed?

Pete stated that the parking for the retail will be the parking lot off Larpenteur Ave W and the retail will be located in the annex building in the northwest corner. Customers can enter through the proposed amenity area and new addition off the chimney. The guest parking will be located near the green landscape area off Snelling Ave and Larpenteur Ave. Regarding the fence and snow removal, we will look into the fence issue, and the additional parking lot will help residents park while we remove or store snow in different parts of the area.

James Bykoski (1745 St. Mary's Street)

Shows concerns about the trees because they prevent floods. If the developer were to cut down the majority of the tree, then the street will be flooded. It will generate more water flow across Snelling Avenue, which will damage the park and delaying its use, and causing more problems.

City Engineer Freihammer stated that it would continue to flow south towards the fairgrounds into St. Paul and not towards the Curtiss Field Park.

Irene Gengler (1611 Hollywood Court)

Asked for clarification on the 60% of median income in regards to low-income restriction. Do they have to make at least make a certain amount or under? How can people afford it if they

have a low paying job? What happens if they reach the threshold of the income, will the residents have to leave or can they stay?

Pete clarified that the 60% area median income for a household of one will be \$47,000, which means that anyone living in one bedroom makes no more than \$47,000 as an individual. A household of 4 cannot make more than \$60,000 a year and if they make more, then at the end of their lease they will have to move to a different facility. This is the way affordable housing works throughout the metro area, and we have seen that based on the occupancy. The metro area is in need of affordable housing and this will serve the need in this community.

Council Member Leehy stated that there is a lack of affordable and Section 8 housing in Minnesota. Citizens have full time paying jobs but are not able to afford market-rate housing. The more we have, it can prevent homelessness. City Administrator Thongvanh added that the program is to help them and not sustain. Once you exceed the program, then it will help you move on to a permanent house. This will result in a new family moving in and take advantage of the program. It will create a cycle.

Nina Fan (1608 Hollywood Court)

The biggest concern is access during the state fair time and residents trying to enter Larpenteur Avenue and Snelling Ave from Hoyt Ave. It will create major traffic. Is it possible to open another access? Lastly, since they are removing the trees, what are the plans for landscaping on the green spaces?

City Engineer Freihammer stated that Larpenteur Avenue is a Ramsey County road and Snelling Avenue is a MnDOT road; therefore, the city does not have authority over it. The county and MnDOT will not allow additional access on the road because it is safer to have it where it currently is and adding more will create unsafe access.

Pete answered that the greenspace will get additional plantings. We are also planning to build a small rain garden with additional trees and preserve the existing healthy trees.

Scott Wilson, Planning Commissioner (1889 Snelling Ave)

The trees on the east side should not be torn down because it will give coverage. In addition, half of the bedrooms are internal with no windows will not have the income to bring in natural light features. This is a huge concern for future residents and me. Also, I have concerns about the retail square footage because it will decrease the dining room space.

Pete stated that they would increase the trees. One of the challenges in preserving a historical building is that units will not have natural light and to offset that is to have transit windows and sidelights from the living room and bedroom to space.

Roger Aiken (1589 Hollywood Court)

The access issue is very important. Residents will wait about 10-15 minutes to make a left turn during rush hour. The access is bad and I suggest having a patrol officer to help with traffic.

Gary Kwong (1700 Fry Street )

I support this project because every municipality has to go through its comprehensive plan and receives an allocation from the Met Council in terms of how much affordable housing the city needs. The news building on Larpenteur Ave is not affordable. I am positive the residents at 1550 will move to the building. They are currently living in a 2-bedroom building and having additional rooms will help them. I am happy to see this building will have 2+ bedroom units because it is not common. It is also hard to be on the waiting list to get the Section 8 voucher, yet and not many places accept them.

Council Member Leehy Moved to approve Planning Application, Planning Drawings, Ordinance 19-07 - PUD Amendment, and Exhibit A - Parking Easement.

Council Member Leehy 1st Moved  
Council Member Miazga 2nd Moved  
Approved 4-0

F. CONSENT AGENDA:

1. General Disbursements through: 10/08/19 \$10,854.02  
Payroll through 10/15/19 \$19,661.56
2. Approval of City License(s)
3. Approve 2020 SCORE Grant (recycling)
4. Grant Application to State Fire Marshal for Gear Washer/Dryer Program
5. Cleaning Services-JAN-PRO
6. Grant Application to Department of Natural Resources (DNR) - Youth Programming
7. 2020 Sanitary Sewer Lining Project
8. Charitable/Lawful Gambling License Application - Falcon Heights Elementary PTA

City Engineer Jesse Freihammer

Ruggles Street was removed from lining to meet the budget. The cost on the lining on Snelling Avenue was anticipated higher than we expected. It will come back in 2021 or 2022. In addition, the sewers are on Snelling Avenue are more difficult to bypass with MnDOT permits and traffic controls.

Councilmember Harris will abstain from voting because her business is listed in the Consent Agenda - Approval of City License(s).

Council Member Harris abstained  
Mayor Gustafson moved, Approved 3-0

G: POLICY ITEMS:

1. Approve Grant Applications for Amber Union Project

City Administrator Thongvanh

Buhl GTA, LLC is applying for grants for environmental cleanup at the Amber Union property (1667 Snelling Ave). The grants will go towards remediating asbestos and other contamination

associated with seventy-plus years of use at the site, soil vapor mitigation, and asbestos abatement.

Council Member Harris Moved, Approved 4- 0

## 2. Approve Como Avenue Trail Lease with the City of Saint Paul

### Jesse Freihammer, City Engineer

The City of St. Paul is planning to implement trail, sidewalk, and bikeway improvements along Como Avenue between Raymond Avenue and Hamline Avenue. A portion of the improvements along the south side of the Minnesota State Fair Grounds is within Falcon Heights' city limits. The entire improvements are within Ramsey County Right of Way.

A portion of the project will be in Falcon Heights; therefore, the city will need to enter an agreement with the City of St. Paul. The agreement describes who is responsible for the improvements during installation and long-term maintenance of the trail. In addition, it also states that St. Paul would pay all costs to install the improvements and maintain it. The agreement also protects Falcon Heights from financial costs associated with the project.

Council Member Miazga Moved, Approved 4-0

## H. INFORMATION/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

### Council Member Miazga

- The Taste of Northeast was two weeks ago and raised over \$25,000. I would like to thank everyone who attended and donated to the organization.
- Environment Commission met and we are working on 2020 plans.
- Tuesday, November 5, is Election Day. I encourage everyone to go out to vote. If you live west of Snelling, vote at City Hall, 2077 Larpenteur Ave W. If you live east of Snelling, vote at Falcon Heights United Church of Christ, 1795 Holton St.
- Early elections locations, hours, and absentee can be found at the Ramsey County website.

### Council Member Leehy

- Monday, October 22 was my second meeting on the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council and our focus will be on bail reform and warrant reform.
- Ramsey County has a sexual violence services program and advocates for victims of sexual violence. In the future, we would like to have them make a presentation in Falcon Heights because it is new to our county. There is a 24-hour hotline if you know anyone who needs it and it is 651-266-1000.

### Council Member Harris

- No announcements.

### Mayor Gustafson

- The Community Engagement Commission (CEC) met on Monday. I was not present because I was at the Crime Prevention Association in Duluth. Human Rights Day is on

Tuesday, December 10, and the focus will be on “Food Security & Child Hunger.” It will be at the city hall. Parks and Recreation Commission will help create some activities for schoolchildren at the event while parents are in the chambers.

- November 18, will be Cultivating a Caring Community “Gray Area Thinking” with Ellie Krug from 6pm - 8:30pm at city hall.
- Ramsey County Fright Farm is every Friday and Saturday night. The funds will go towards the youth programs.
- Remember to be safe during Halloween. Remember to travel in groups, wear bright costumes or carry a flashlight, and drivers please remember to slow down.

#### City Administrator Thongvanh

- The Cleveland Reconstruction Open House is on October 30, from 4:30pm to 6pm at city hall. The project was originally supposed to start in 2020 but has changed to 2021.
- The city is continuing to advertise the ice rink attendant position. The minimum age is 16, and if you know anyone interested, please apply on the city website and city hall. If you have questions about the position, please contact the city hall and the staff will help you.
- Next week, we will start street sweeping until the first snowfall. Also, it is illegal for residents to rake their leaves to the street. Staff will try their best to do a 24-hour notice to residents on email blasts and social media.
- Early voting information is on our weekly e-newsletter and city hall.
- The new website will launch in 2020, and it will look similar to the City of Eden Prairie.

I. COMMUNITY FORUM:

J. ADJOURNMENT: 8:55 P.M.

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Randy Gustafson, Mayor

Dated this 23th day of October, 2019

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Sack Thongvanh, City Administrator