



**City of Lake Elmo
Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes of September 26, 2016**

Chairman Kreimer called to order the meeting of the Lake Elmo Planning Commission at 7:00 p.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Fields, Dodson, Dunn, Larson, Griffin, Kreimer, and Lundquist

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Haggard, Williams

STAFF PRESENT: Planning Director Wensman

Approve Agenda:

An amendment was suggested to add getting some information on Minnesota Administration rule 6120 that was brought up at the last City Council meeting.

M/S/P: Fields/Dodson, move to approve the Agenda as amended, ***Vote: 7-0, motion carried Unanimously.***

Approve Minutes: September 12, 2016

M/S/P: Fields/Dodson, move to approve the September 12, 2016 minutes as amended, ***Vote: 7-0, motion carried.***

Public Hearing – Conditional Use Permit – Wasatch Storage

Wenman started his presentation for a conditional use permit for a self-storage facility and exterior vehicle storage for the property located at 9200 Hudson Boulevard in the Commercial Zoning District, PID 34.029.21.33.0005. Wensman went through the existing site conditions. Lamperts and Boulder Ponds borders this property. They are proposing 4 new buildings and 170 spaces for RV's with 2 proposed future buildings. They are proposing security of fencing, gate keypad and security cameras. There will be 4 handicap accessible spaces. There will be 2-3 employees at a time. Office hours would be 8:30a-6:30p. Wensman went over the tree preservation requirements and the proposed landscape plan. There are 10 additional parking lot trees required. The proposal does meet setback requirements. There was some concern regarding the setback for Boulder Ponds, but the setback requirement is met. The parking stalls proposed meets the requirements and dimensional standards.

The buildings do meet the setback and height requirements. They are subject to the City's design guidelines and standards manual. Wensman went through the proposed fencing and signage proposed and what is required. The lighting plan meets the city lighting standards. The maximum impervious surface requirement is met. 70.25% is proposed with the City maximum being 75%. They need to meet all of the City standards for Drainage and Stormwater and meet the engineer comments for revisions. There are some required easements for hydrants and connections for City Standards. There might be a conflict for future buildings. They demonstrated that they meet requirements for emergency services, but they need additional fire hydrants.

Wensman stated that the 12 required findings for approval of a conditional use permit are all met. There were no comments received. Staff is recommending approval of the CUP subject to 17 staff recommended conditions.

Dodson asked about potential berming and choice of trees along the North boundary. Wensman stated that is the intent with the requested changes to the landscape plan. Dodson asked about REC counts. Wensman stated that the REC count comes from MET Council and there are probably not a lot of REC's with this application.

Dodson asked about the storage ponds and if they could be moved to one of the borders to provide more of a screening. Wensman stated that the back of the site is like a bowl and the ponds would not be able to be moved. Griffin asked if the SWWS has looked at this proposal. Wensman stated that he has no confirmation that they have looked at it.

Dodson is wondering if the Planning Commission has latitude to decide if the design meets what is acceptable to the city. Wensman stated that the Commission has the ability to enforce the design standards.

Kreimer asked if our design standards included recommended fence material. Wensman stated that in the front, the fence is compliant, but in the back it is not necessary as no one sees it.

Larson asked if there were any similar uses in the City. Wensman stated that the only other self storage is a small 12 unit facility in the Village area. Wensman stated that this is a fairly restrictive site as it is long and narrow.

Scott Wyckoff, Wasatch Storage, said they took the previous comments regarding screening, parapet height, etc. into consideration. Wyckoff showed aerial photos and street level photos showing the landscaping. Wyckoff showed pictures of buildings incorporating suggestions from the Planning Commission.

Public Hearing opened at 7:40 pm

There were no other written or electronic comments received

Public hearing closed at 7:40 pm

Fields thinks the applicant has done a nice job for this type of use. However, we have very limited area for commercial and this is along 94. Commercial property is the primary resource to bring in employment and lower the residential property tax burden. Fields feels this development makes a very limited contribution to the City in terms of employment or tax base. He is concerned that if this development goes in, it will set the standard for lower value uses for other developments coming forward in the vicinity.

Dodson is persuaded by the argument made by Commissioner Fields and struggles with the aesthetics of this project. Dunn stated it is an improvement to what is there now, however, this is our prime commercial district. She struggles with this being a good fit and the scope of it is so huge. She is not real excited about it. Lundquist does not believe that if it meets the zoning, that they can vote against it just because they want something better. Larson stated that this property has been available and no business has come forward. This is a difficult site and from a standpoint of other businesses, it will not be visible. This will serve the community and he would like to support it because it is an improvement and they will meet the recommendations.

Dunn asked Wensman to explain the differences between permitted and conditional uses. Wensman stated that it is conditional to give the City some discretion in the use of the land. It provides safeguards to the City. Fields asked if he was saying that approving a CUP is not discretionary. Wensman stated that with a CUP, you can put conditions on it to make it more acceptable, but if they are willing to meet those things, it should be granted. Kreimer stated that they were told a number of years ago that they are not tasked with fiscal impact and employment. They are tasked with if it meets the code. The Planning Commission is not responsible to make a project viable, but are tasked with making sure it meets the code. Dodson stated that he would like to see the building look more like a farm building to be more aesthetically pleasing. Kreimer pointed out that it is in the middle of the other buildings.

Dunn would like to add to condition #5 that they should try to save as many of the mature healthy trees as possible. Wensman stated that the trees on the site are not of high value species and the City does not go out of their way to save them.

M/S/P: Lundquist/Larson, move to recommend approval of the CUP for a self storage facility and Outdoor Vehicle Storage for the property located at 9200 Hudson Blvd North subject to the 12 findings of fact and 17 conditions of approval, ***Vote: 5-2, motion carried, with Dunn and Dodson voting no.***

Fields stated that they have limited ability to deny based on financial and employment issues, so he will have to support it.

Dodson feels that it does not meet the design standards. Wensman stated that they do meet the basics of the standards, while there could be room for improvement. Kreimer would like to see a little more enhancement on the front, but feels they are meeting the requirements. Dunn wanted to make sure that the SWWD looked at this project and this site for the runoff.

Public Hearing – Interim Use Permit – Common Ground Church

Wensman started his presentation regarding an interim use permit for the keeping of horses in the public facility zoning district. The Church had an interim use permit that expired at the end of 2011, and it has not been renewed since. There are 4 acres identified for the pasture of the horses. Staff is recommending approval with 6 conditions, including the date for termination for December 31, 2026.

Dawn Oswald, applicant, stated that they have been able to serve many different groups including teen challenge, Willow Health and other adult groups.

Griffin asked what they do with the manure. Oswald stated that they compost it back into the ground. Griffin stated that Washington Conservation district has plans that people can get for composting sites and there are sanitation services that will come and get the manure.

Rolf is wondering if there are ever cooperative events where other horses are brought in. Oswald stated that they have not. She stated that they are foster horses and they like to have 2. They have an electric fence that is powered by solar.

Public Hearing opened at 8:22 pm

Bob Taverna, 10174 Stillwater Lane, this is the first notice that they have received. He is concerned that when they come to work with the horses, they are parking on the road by the stop sign. He would like them to put class five on the other side of the gate to get the cars off of the road. With school buses, etc. it is very tight when they are parking on the road. The back yard of the church is his front yard. If they could make it a little more pleasant, he would appreciate it. Where the horses are, is actually supposed to be a retention pond and now the water can't get across Kelvin and is backing up behind the Church.

There were no other written or electronic comments received

Public Hearing closed at 8:30 pm

Dodson is wondering about the gate being on the corner. Is there any chance that the gate could be moved? Oswald stated that it was the flattest part of the property to put