

**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.