

**City of Falcon Heights Planning Commission  
Minutes of the Planning Commission Workshop  
September 25, 2012**

Commissioners met for the workshop at 7:00 p.m. Present were Commissioners Brown, Black, Gustafson, Wartick, Noble, Fite and Minns. Also present were Council Member Harris and Zoning and Planning Director Jones. Guests were Kevin Schleif and Ward Wollerman from Stout's Pub, Jason Adamidis from Dino's and Dave Lawrence from The Coffee Grounds.

**Special Events – Information from Businesses**

The representatives of local businesses described the events they would like to host on their property.

Stout's Pub, 1611 Larpenteur Avenue W

- "Family friendly" food service event in parking lot, tented
- 2 – 3 times per year: St. Patrick's Day, Back to the 50's, Oktoberfest
- Security is "the #1 thing"
- Alcohol served (beer/wine)
- Interested in promoting local artisan brewing, maybe a contest
- They already have catering license
- Have experience with Burnsville ordinance & application
- Goal: brand awareness
- Capacity: In building now – 185. Event: 200-300 over 8 hours
- Hours: wrap up by 9 or 10 p.m. Friday starts a little later so might end at the later time.

Dino's Greek Restaurant, 1700 Snelling Avenue N

- Has State of Minnesota event license since before the restaurant was opened – long experience at State Fair
- Seek options to enhance their business in the City and provide asset to the City
- Back to the 50's weekend is their specific interest
- Event similar to Stout's description
- Tent in parking lot, live music
- Hours: to 9 or 10 p.m.
- Parking: They have a good relationship with Wellington (Falcon Crossing) and could perhaps use TIES

The Coffee Grounds, 1579 Hamline Avenue N

- 20 year history, community oriented
- Interested in about 4 events per year, weekends only
- Summer music events
- Outdoor movies
- Art sales
- Food service, no alcohol
- Tent in parking lot
- Live music

- Capacity 100 – 200 people
- Duration 6 – 8 hours

Commissioners expressed their appreciation to the business owners for coming out to the workshop and answering all the questions.

### **Prairie Garden Ordinance**

In their final discussion of the ordinance proposed by the Environment Commission, the Commission declined to recommend any specific changes to the draft but offered a list of comments to communicate to the Council.

1. The proposed ordinance is consistent with and supports the vision, values and objectives articulated in the Falcon Heights Comprehensive Plan
2. Several Planning Commissioners (2 – 3) questioned the necessity of the ordinance. They did not agree that the existing Chapter 54 and Chapter 22 can be interpreted as not already allowing natural landscaping of the types defined in the proposed ordinance.
3. Commissioners want to be sure that traditional plantings (for example, flowers, shrubs, perennials, vegetable gardens) that are also not well defined in our existing Chapter 54 are not unintentionally “ruled out” by the language of the proposed ordinance.
4. Commissioners were divided on whether the ordinance should restrict native gardens by setback. Three were strongly opposed to all setbacks for vegetation while one Commissioner felt that non-traditional plantings should be set back from neighboring yards and/or the right of way. The Council liaison was also somewhat in favor of a setback. Two felt that the property line should be the boundary. (The proposed ordinance provides a 10 foot setback from the curb, not the property line, on a side adjacent to a right of way.)
5. Commissioners were divided along the same lines on whether the ordinance should restrict the percentage of a property that can be covered with native /prairie/meadow vegetation. One Commissioner and the Councilmember were opposed to allowing whole yards plus possibly boulevards to be converted to prairie. Three or four Commissioners objected to imposing an area restriction of vegetation by type as long as it is intentional, well-maintained and not a nuisance (i.e. not weeds or noxious plants). The remaining Commissioners pointed out merits and drawbacks of both sides.
6. Planning Commissioners felt that it is a good idea to provide some additional landscape maintenance enforcement tools, such as those provided in the proposed ordinance, to make sure that prairie gardens and natural landscaping meet a standard and are properly maintained.

The workshop adjourned at about 9:30 p.m.