

**City of Falcon Heights
Planning Commission Minutes
May 23, 2017**

PRESENT: Commissioners Williams, Larkin, Murphy, Stemper, Kotelnicki, Liaison Harris
ABSENT: Commissioners Samatar, Sunderland, Liaison Harris

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m. by Chair Larkin.

The minutes of the April 25th, 2017 meeting of the Planning Commission were approved.

AGENDA

1. Hearing Good Acre Phase II –
The Planning Commission opened the hearing to adopt Ordinance No. 17 – XX (Draft) change the PUD Section 113-209.

Chair Larkin requested an introduction to the hearing topic from Liaison Moretto.

Liaison Moretto (staff) read the submitted staff report outlining the facts of the case and all attachments and made staff recommendation to approve the submitted ordinance. Staff read the proposed ordinance out loud before all in attendance. Liaison Moretto shared the public notice that was given to all properties within 500 feet and posted in the local newspaper, in addition to a posting at City Hall. Finally, staff introduced a parking analysis, maps, a letter of Compliance from the Metropolitan Council, and a submission from the Kelly Brothers Ltd (applicant) concerning egress and a private easement.

After the staff report, Peter Austin and Jim Kelly, representatives from Kelly Brothers Ltd, presented the project before the Commission and provided details about the future of the project. Commissioners asked questions about parking and other items of possible concern.

Chair Larkin opened the floor for public comment. After three request for public comment the Chair closed the public comment section.

Staff introduced a letter submitted by Commissioner Sunderland. Chair Larkin requested to include the letter in the minutes. The Commission agreed. (Included at the end of these minutes)

Commissioner Murphy asked about density and the number of units.

Mr. Kelly stated that they focus on senior independent buildings. Units are less but they proposed three beds units and they do not. I Mr. Kelly's experience 80% of residents have cars. This is in line with their other units.

Mr. Stemper asked about the other properties Kelly Brothers have and their parking issues.

Mr. Kelly responded that they have on-street in St. Paul but it is not an issue.

Chair Larkin asked about removing affordable housing but not including senior housing.

Liaison Moretto stated that because the applicant did not request senior housing language but could be included.

Commissioner Murphy asked about controls concerning senior housing.

Mr. Kelly said generally no, but if funding is received by some sources it could include requirements.

Chair Larkin asked for any other comments.

There being none, the Chair asked for a motion to recommend approval of draft Ordinance 17-XX.

Commissioner Stemper motioned to approve the recommendation.

Chair Larkin, Commissioner Williams, Stemper, and Kotelnicki were in favor.

Commissioner Murphy abstained.

The motion passed 4 – 0 with 1 abstention.

INFORMATION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Community Forum: None

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned to workshop at 8:20p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Moretto
Community Development Coordinator

John Larkin
Chair – Planning Commission

To be introduced into the discussion of adoption: Ordinance No. 17-XX

By: Commissioner, Stephen Sunderland

Discussion:

In consideration of:

Urban Farm PUD Amendment at 1750 Larpenteur Ave W

The Planning Commission in consideration of the request for an Amendment to the Planned Unit Development (PUD) at 1750 Larpenteur Ave W to allow for a revised land-use, density, and parking.

As a Commissioner of the Planning Commission of Falcon Heights, I introduce here for consideration of this Amendment discussion of the following arguments:

1. That the Application for Amendment prepared by Paul Moretto, Community Development Coordinator, under "Analysis" **states the following consideration:**

Section 113-35 (e.) states that no amendment to this chapter shall be adopted which is in conflict with the City's Comprehensive Plan.

The City of Falcon Heights Comprehensive Plan states that it is the mandate of the city to:

Preserve and enhance the urban/rural character valued by our residents.

Does the proposed amendment preserve and enhance the rural character of the city if the proposed density substantially exceeds that of the surrounding neighborhoods.

The neighborhoods under consideration are the multi-family neighborhoods most characterized by this proposed "Senior Housing" development. I would argue that a density for the proposed project of 54.4 units per acre is an excessive density and not in keeping with The City of Falcon Heights Comprehensive Plan which is the charter of this commission.

Two "Senior Housing" properties at 1530 Larpenteur with a density of 42.42 units per acre and part of a larger Senior housing complex and 1666 Coffman with a density of 14.31 units per acre are examples of existing densities within the City of Falcon Heights.

The Planning Commission is encouraged to apply the "Vision, Values and Objectives" when considering this Amendment. The Comprehensive Plan

provides (from: section 5.COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE PROCESS) that states:

Any new retail or commercial business should be small in scale.

2. That the proposed amendment provides for one parking space per unit (68 total with an estimated 54 underground). The above ground parking spaces will compete with guest parking spaces because of land limitations.

The amendment does not specifically provide for a comparison of the number of guest parking spaces for the proposed development with other properties or with a consideration of the number of guest parking spaces that preserves the character values within our community and does not substantially contribute to traffic congestion which is a paramount consideration for this site. Cars turning left from the property traveling east on Larpenteur will need to cross potentially heavy traffic in an unregulated intersection.

3. That the proposed amendment provides for a 4 story building which is not consistent with neighboring properties and not in character with preserving and enhancing the Urban/Rural character of the City of Falcon Heights.

In considerations of what is the "Character" of the City, commissioners are asked to develop a "philosophy" of guiding principles that preserve the Open Spaces and Rural Character of the city. I offer that this is a density and character of Architecture that does not preserve the character of its Falcon Heights neighbors.

4. That the assumptions that potential 55+ residents do not own as many cars and use public transportation more is not supported by facts submitted to the Planning Commission in this report.

I personally do not believe that this assumption is supported in fact. I also believe that commissioners should consider the potential number of guests traveling to and from residents of the proposed development.

5. That the property characteristics are substantially different than those of "Senior Housing" properties used as comparisons.

The 1666 Coffman Street property has public street access from two city streets and has one private drive that accesses the property on all four sides. It is adjacent to public street parking on Coffman and has a substantial set back from Larpenteur in which guest parking is provided.

The 1350 Larpenteur property has substantial above ground guest parking and is also accessible from two public streets Arona and Larpenteur. This property also has private drive access on all four sides of the property.

The proposed property has one access point from Larpenteur with very few guest parking stalls and must be accessed by creating an easement from the Good Acre.

The proposed property is disadvantaged by being landlocked (no surrounding access points) and is in its request relying on the assumption that 55+ occupants don't drive.

6. That overflow parking for guests and visitors such as Postal service, Amazon, and other service vehicles has not been adequately considered. The proposal does not address public street access and parking.

There is no parking availability on public streets as there is no parking on Larpenteur. The only additional parking is in a private parking lot (Good Acre) or on public streets across Larpenteur. (a busy unregulated intersection)

References:

From: City of Falcon Heights Comprehensive Plan

Adopted June 24, 2009

2. VISION, VALUES AND OBJECTIVES The City of Falcon Heights' chief goal is to create and maintain a high quality of life in a community that is an aging, inner ring, fully developed suburb adjacent to St. Paul and within two miles of Minneapolis. By funding good public services and investing prudently in rebuilding and maintaining infrastructure, the City seeks not only to keep those qualities valued by today's residents but to be attractive for future reinvestment, redevelopment and renewal by residents, businesses and public institutions. This comprehensive plan is about shaping that future: a well-balanced community for all age groups to grow and prosper and to lead healthy, fulfilling lives.

Preserving and enhancing the urban/rural character valued by our residents.

Of all responses Falcon Heights residents made when asked what they value about living in the city, "open space" was by the leader.

From: City of Falcon Heights Comprehensive Plan

Adopted June 24, 2009

Residents like living here due to the quality of our neighborhoods and the central location between both downtown areas.

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1. Open spaces, mainly the University of Minnesota research fields, are a key component to our quality of life.
2. More pedestrian and non-motorized avenues of transportation are needed.
3. A mix of housing styles is important so that residents can spend their entire lives in the city.
4. **Any new retail or commercial business should be small in scale.**

From: City of Falcon Heights Comprehensive Plan

Adopted June 24, 2009

GENERAL LAND USE: GOALS AND POLICIES

General Land Use Goals

1. To protect open space and natural resources, preserving the urban/rural aesthetic that Falcon Heights residents value.
2. To improve connections between districts of the City, between City neighborhoods and the public institutions and within neighborhoods.
3. To build community identity along the main thoroughfares, especially Larpenteur and Snelling Avenues.

General Land Use Policies

1. **Adopt and encourage "best practices" to promote public health and encourage an active lifestyle for residents. Require a health impact assessment for new development/redevelopment.**
2. Adopt and encourage "best practices" to promote a more energy efficient and environmentally sustainable community.
3. Continue to protect solar access by enforcing existing city ordinances (Section 113-393) and by strengthening the ordinance, if appropriate.
4. Continue to eliminate zoning code violations and nuisance

conditions that adversely affect the appearance and value of properties and the health of residents.

5. On transit routes, where appropriate, allow the redevelopment of multi-family and commercial properties for mixed use or higher density housing, incorporating best practices for conserving green space and promoting active living. (See Larpenteur Corridor section.)

6. Enhance and upgrade the value of all properties through street maintenance and improvement programs that complement and enhance both residential neighborhoods and the City's business districts.

7. Establish design guidelines and standards to ensure that any new development promotes good health and preserves public open space.

8. Permit only compatible businesses adjacent to residential uses and in mixed commercial-residential development, and place special conditions upon business uses to assure compatibility when appropriate.

9. Require that any re-subdivision of existing lots on developed blocks in residential areas conform to other lots within surrounding blocks, and be accessed in a similar manner.

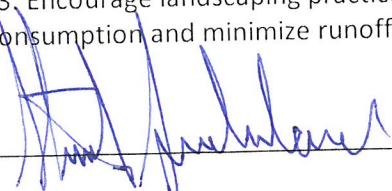
10. Continue to build the Neighborhood Liaison program, Community Emergency Response Team and other community organizations for communication and security.

11. Build community identity and encourage neighborhood connectivity by installing sidewalk systems, decorative street lighting and landscaping to make streetscapes more welcoming.

12. Continue to implement an aggressive shade tree program and replace removed trees as quickly as possible.

13. Encourage landscaping practices that reduce water consumption and minimize runoff.

Signed: _____



Date: _____

5-22-2017

Signed: _____

Date: _____