

NOT APPROVED
**ANOKA PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
ANOKA CITY HALL
TUESDAY, MAY 2, 2023
7:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER:

The regular meeting of the Anoka Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Planning Commissioners present: Chair Borgie Bonthuis, Karna Brewer, Nancy Coleman, Don Kjonaas, Shari Nemec, and Peter Rech

Planning Commissioners absent: Colin Campbell

Staff present: Senior City Planner, Clark Palmer

Chair Bonthuis and the Commission recognized former Commission member, Manley Brahs, who passed away earlier today at the age of 91.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- a. Approval of April 4, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes

MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER KJONAAS, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER COLEMAN, TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 4, 2023, REGULAR MEETING.

6 ayes – 0 nays. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

A2023-001, Preliminary Plat, Conditional Use Permit, and Site Plan Review, 637 West Main Street, Silverstar Car Wash

City Planner Palmer reported that this item is returning to the Commission from the last meeting. The applicant was asked to make revisions to the lighting plan, landscaping plan, and architectural plan. He provided a brief overview of the request and then focused on the changes made since the last meeting. He reviewed the updated details related to architecture, landscaping/tree replacement, lighting, noise, and refuse. He stated that staff recommends approval of the requests subject to the conditions noted in the staff report.

Commissioner Kjonaas asked for more details on the vacuum area and screening proposed.

City Planner Palmer identified the proposed location for the vacuum producer which is proposed to be surrounded by shrubs. He stated that while the applicant may have proposed a hard surface around that area, staff was concerned with additional hard cover.

Commissioner Kjonaas expressed concern that the sound would go through the shrubs.

City Planner Palmer commented that he was unsure how much noise is generated by the vacuum producer.

The Applicant commented that there will be buffering provided by the plantings. He noted that sounds would only be emitted when the vacuums are being used. He stated that the contours show the noise levels emitted without noise masking.

Chair Bonthuis commented that 16 vacuum stations seem to be a lot. She referenced the outlot, which could have been a coffee shop that often would have a patio and an adjacent site producing a lot of noise would not be desired.

City Planner Palmer stated that the noise levels at different areas of the property were provided and also provided some comparisons that would generate similar levels of noise. He stated that the Code requires that the noise levels not be exceeded and that has been discussed with the applicant's team. He noted that the team may be willing to provide additional plantings.

Commissioner Kjonaas commented that he would prefer to see better buffering and suggested the same screening that would be provided for the trash enclosure.

City Planner stated that typically a wall would provide better mitigation and noted that recommended condition could be amended to reflect that desire.

Commissioner Nemec referenced the use of efis versus brick or stone and asked if that requirement should apply to all four sides.

City Planner Palmer stated that if they are considering this four-sided architecture, the requirement would be 75 percent on each side. He stated that if there is a desire for an increase in the percentages on the ends, it could be decreased on the other sides. He stated that he would prefer to see a higher percentage of brick on the ends as those would be visible from the highway and adjacent residential development.

Commissioner Nemec referenced code language that requires architecture to be similar to other buildings.

City Planner Palmer commented that the applicant originally requested metal and thin brick, which have been removed. He noted that language mentioned by Commissioner Nemec would be related

to an alternative design whereas the applicant has attempted to propose something that meets the ordinance requirements.

Commissioner Nemeč commented that the bright red sticks out like a sore thumb and would not be harmonious with the other buildings in that area.

Commissioner Rech commented that the red exits and entrances are the brand identity for this company and therefore it would not make sense to request that color be changed. He stated that he is not worried about the colors on the ends as much as the side colors which would be more visible, along with the color of the brick. He noted that the adjacent Taco Bell would have similar colored brick to what is proposed. He noted that this area has more traditional commercial buildings rather than the development along East Main Street. He noted that the proposed grey brick would also better match the American Club.

City Planner Palmer commented that when the original plan came forward there was a lot of dark charcoal brick which had a strong contrast against the red and therefore the colors proposed have a less striking contrast. He noted that City Code does not regulate color.

Chair Bonthuis stated that she disagrees with Commissioner Rech in some aspect as she reviewed the other locations for this business and the colors of those structures, noting many of those do not have red. She stated that if red is the brand identity, it is not found on all the other locations. She noted that the other locations have two lanes whereas this proposal includes three lanes. He understood that this is the signature design but was unsure that was needed in Anoka.

The Applicant commented that they are using the three-lane design and reviewed the purpose of each of the lanes.

Chair Bonthuis stated that she lives near Mister Car Wash and has never noticed an issue with stacking.

City Planner Palmer replied that the City Code does dictate a requirement to allow stacking for car washes.

Chair Bonthuis asked where the snow storage would be located.

City Planner Palmer identified the area proposed for snow storage.

Chair Bonthuis noted that is not a lot of storage area for that amount of pavement.

Commissioner Rech referenced the concept of having more of a barrier around the vacuum center to provide a better barrier. He stated that while vegetation was proposed, and a sound wall was requested perhaps it be stated that the vegetation could be reduced if the sound wall were installed.

Chair Bonthuis commented that in her review of newspaper articles in Sioux Falls she found an article dated December of 2021 which provided a statement from Silverstar and read an excerpt. She asked if the rooftop elements would be screened.

City Planner Palmer stated that an exhibit was provided showing that the rooftop equipment would be behind the parapet wall.

Chair Bonthuis noted that this is a continuation of the public hearing from the previous meeting as that was not closed and invited comments from the public.

Jack Wagner, resident, stated that they have done some research and found that in a five-mile radius there are 19 car washes, with four more in the next five-mile radius. He clarified that within the first five-mile radius, nine are standalone and ten are attached to a gas station.

Resident stated that he and his wife moved to Anoka three months ago because of the cooperative and proximity to Greenhaven Golf Course. He stated that they are happy that the City had the foresight to invite a developer to construct the cooperative. He also recognized the vision of the Planning Commission for residential upgrades and with the alignment and construction of Greenhaven Parkway. He stated that a parkway is a two-lane well-appointed road that winds through a residential area. He stated that it the vision from Fairoak to the west, but east of Fairoak there are businesses that have likely been grandfathered in. He noted that those are good businesses to have along a parkway because of the low level of traffic that is generated. He stated that the vacant parcels seek the same foresight that the northwest portion of the parkway calls for. He did not believe a car wash is a good fit for a parkway and a lower traffic use would be a better fit. He stated that a car wash should be located along a commercial thoroughfare and not a parkway.

Resident stated that the cooperative community has concerns with the noise from the car wash and vacuums. She stated that the senior residents moved to this location because of the cooperative community and ambiance of the site which would be disrupted by a car wash.

Resident commented that he is retired from 37 years in the garage door business and has experience installing doors for commercial car washes. He asked if the exit door would be closed when the dryers are on, as that would mitigate some of the noise. He asked if the vacuums would be available and turned on during hours the business is not open.

Resident stated that his unit is on the third floor, on the south side of the building and directly faces the car wash location. He expressed concern with the lighting proposed for the car wash and asked if the lighting would only be used during business hours, or throughout the night. He stated that he is happy with the changes that have been made but is still concerned that the light would shine onto their property, which is at a lower elevation. He commented that they currently have lights from the medical clinic and asked if the lighting shining onto the cooperative would increase with this proposal. He referenced a recent article that he read related to light pollution which

mentioned the negative impacts of light pollution on people, animals, and the environment. He stated that there are many states, including Minnesota, that have enacted regulations on light pollution even though many municipalities have not adopted similar regulations. He provided copies of the article to the Commission.

Resident stated that they explored many options for housing before choosing the cooperative and chose this location because of the quaint, historical character of Anoka. She also appreciated the enhanced architecture in the road project. She commented that while things may look good on paper, they are often an eyesore after construction. She did not believe a car wash in this location would fit the vision for Anoka as it would be elevated, and the first thing people see when coming from the west. She did not believe this use fits with the Comprehensive Plan of Anoka.

Resident commented that his unit faces the proposed location along with the clinic. He stated that the car wash business is known to have many contaminants which bring concerns. He believed that there were other uses that would better fit into the site and adjacent uses. He noted that the golf course, meandering parkway, and other uses create an idyllic setting and stated that this use would interfere with that. He noted that the bright red building would clash with surrounding buildings and would be the thing that people see when they come into Anoka on the highway. He commented that this generation, and past generations, have done a great job in preserving the character of Anoka and hoped that would continue.

Resident commented on the difficulty in navigating the roundabouts and had concern with the additional traffic this use would add. He stated that the American Club has already added a lot of traffic to that area and this type of use could cause backing up and additional accidents. He noted that there have already been accidents on the roundabout because of the poor planning and lack of space.

Resident commented that wet vehicles coming into the roundabout during the winter would also be a concern for safety. He referenced the concept of impacts to property values and expressed concern with the impact this would have to their property values at the cooperative.

As no one further wished to appear, Chair Bonthuis closed the public hearing at 8:07 p.m.

Commissioner Kjonaas asked the applicant to address some of the questions raised by the public.

The Applicant reviewed the hours of operations, noting shorter hours during the winter months. He stated that the vacuums would not be available for use during non-business hours. He stated that during the winter the exit door would be closed during operation but was unsure if that would be done during the summer. He noted that often the exit door is open during summer because of the heat. He stated that at other locations the lights are powered down during non-business hours, but some lighting is left on for security purposes.

Commissioner Brewer commented that she feels compelled to address the residents present tonight. She stated that this is an example of the public providing input on behalf of others in their building to express their concerns and recognized that they are hoping for a sympathetic ear. She stated that the hands of the Commission are somewhat tied as it needs to determine whether a request meets the requirements of City Code and must make its recommendation based on those facts and findings.

City Planner Palmer confirmed that the actions of the Commission must be based on fact and cannot be arbitrary.

Commissioner Brewer explained that if the Commission were to deny a request because it did not like the request, but the use was allowed, it would open the City to legal action. She commended the residents for their thoughtful, articulate, and convincing input. She recognized that the residents took time to express their opinions and not repeat the comments of others. She encouraged the residents not to be discouraged by the recommendation the Commission may make, or to believe that minds have been made up ahead of time.

Commissioner Nemec agreed with the comments of Commissioner Brewer, noting that it is great to see the number of residents present and those voices need to be heard. She commented that the residents are the ones that pay taxes, live here, and will see this site every day. She commented that Anoka is small in size, and population compared to the other locations where the business operates and does not have much land left for development or redevelopment and needs to be cautious as to what it allows. She stated that unfortunately this use is allowed and therefore there would have to be reasons to deny the request. She thanked the residents for showing up and speaking up and hoped that the City Council would also hear this message.

Commissioner Rech agreed with Commissioner Brewer noting that the Commission makes a recommendation, but the ultimate decision will be of the City Council. He encouraged the residents to attend the City Council meeting and perhaps their decision could be different than the recommendation of the Commission. He thanked everyone that came to the meeting and those that spoke.

Chair Bonthuis agreed and stated that it is obvious that these residents have organized and chosen speakers to represent them. She encouraged the group to attend the City Council meeting and explained that they can repeat these comments in that meeting. She recognized that many of the cooperative residents are newer to Anoka and have made an investment in their homes and that needs to be recognized. She stated that this cooperative has attracted residents to live in this location and invest by purchasing their units, which is something the Council should recognize.

Commissioner Brewer stated that at the last meeting the group postponed the decision noting certain items to be addressed. She stated that unfortunately one of the items not included in that list was the use. She stated that the applicant did make changes to the plan to adjust the items

noted by the Commission. She appreciated the efforts of the applicant to address the concerns. She recognized the three actions before the Commission and asked staff for input.

City Planner Palmer replied that although there are three requests, they are for one application. He noted that there would need to be solid findings in order to deny a preliminary plat. He explained that under this proposal the four parcels would function as two parcels. He stated that the preliminary plat could be approved, but if the conditional use permit or site plan were denied, that would impact the ability to move forward.

Commissioner Brewer used the scenario that the preliminary plat is not approved and asked if that would make it difficult for the car wash to go forward.

City Planner Palmer stated that sometimes people will plat first and then follow with a submittal but in this case all actions have been presented together. He confirmed that an adjustment to the lot lines would be necessary to make this work.

Commissioner Brewer used the scenario that the preliminary plat is approved but the site plan is denied and asked if there would need to be findings.

City Planner Palmer replied that there would need to be a basis for denial, whether that is done with one finding or multiple findings. He stated that a condition could be placed upon preliminary plat that the plat would be contingent upon approval of the site plan and conditional use permit.

MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER KJONAAS, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER COLEMAN, TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE PRELIMINARY PLAT, SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

1. All comments of the Engineering Department dated March 27, 2023 shall be met.
2. The preliminary plat approval is contingent upon approval of the site plan and conditional use permit.

6 ayes – 0 nays. Motion carried.

City Planner Palmer referenced the discussion related to the vacuum center for a screening wall. He stated that he also liked the concept that the lighting be dimmed during non-business hours to the minimum needed for security.

Chair Bonthuis noted that the vacuums should also only be operable during hours of operation. She noted that there is also not a requirement for the screening of rooftop equipment that should be added.

MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER KJONAAS, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER RECH, TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE CONDITIONAL

USE PERMIT AND SITE PLAN REVIEW, SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

1. All comments of the Engineering Department dated March 27, 2023 shall be met.
2. The car wash and accessory equipment (e.g. vacuums, audio speakers) shall conform to the City's noise ordinance requirements.
3. All exterior lighting shall be downward directed and shielded with external glare shields and comply with the City's exterior lighting requirements stated in City Code Section 78-265(j)(5) including reducing lighting intensity, reducing height of the pole mounted lights to no more than 24' and installing shielding. Lighting shall be dimmed during non-business hours to the minimum needed for security.
4. Screening in the form of a sound wall shall be installed around the vacuum producer.
5. All landscaped and sodded areas shall be irrigated.
6. The closeable gate for the trash enclosure shall not consist of chain link and shall consist of a material allowed by the City Code.
7. The applicant shall draft, execute, and record a shared cross-access easement and maintenance agreement for the shared parking and driveway access off West Main Street.
8. All site improvements shall be completed in accordance with the approved plans. Any deviations from the approved plans shall require additional review and approval by the Planning Commission and City Council.
9. Vacuums shall only be available for use during business hours.
10. All rooftop equipment shall be screened.

Further discussion: Commissioner Kjonaas asked if the hours of operation should be included.

The Applicant replied that May through September the hours of operation would be 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and from October through April the hours of operation would be 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

City Planner Palmer asked the purpose of limiting the hours of operation.

Commissioner Kjonaas replied that he would want to prevent the situation that the business hours were extended to 10 p.m. He noted that he likes the idea of the lighting being dimmed after 8 p.m.

Chair Bonthuis confirmed that additional condition to be added as a friendly amendment.

Commissioner Rech agreed.

Chair Bonthuis noted that she will be voting against this item because the requirements are not met on the east and west ends with efis. She also commented that this use might impact property values, particularly of those facing south.

A roll call vote was performed:

Commissioner Kjonaas	aye
Commissioner Rech	nay
Commissioner Nemec	nay
Commissioner Coleman	aye
Commissioner Brewer	nay
Chair Bonthuis	nay

The motion failed.

City Planner Palmer advised this will go before the City Council on May 15, 2023.

Chair Bonthuis thanked the residents for their participation, behavior, and for not repeating comments.

NEW BUSINESS:

None

PUBLIC HEARINGS ON NEW APPLICATIONS:

A2023-004, Variance and Site Plan Review, 1201 Lund Boulevard, Graco Minnesota

City Planner Palmer reported the applicant, Graco Minnesota, Inc., is proposing to expand their existing facility with an approximate 177,000 square foot building addition. Their existing facility is about 195,000 square feet and will be expanded to approximately 372,000 square feet. The expansion project includes new factory space with supporting spaces such as office, meeting rooms, restrooms, and utility rooms. The project will also include new surface parking, a new loading dock, internal circulation drives, stormwater management ponds, and landscaping. Total estimated project valuation is \$46,500,000. The project is being master planned to allow for a potential future facility expansion to the north. Routing of site utilities, stormwater basin locates, Bunker Lake access drive, plantings, and other considerations have been located to accommodate this potential addition.

City Planner Palmer stated that the property is located within the M-1 Light Industrial District and this is a permitted use. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the use is required to obtain a site plan review approval. In addition to the site plan review, the applicant is requesting a variance from the rooftop equipment screening requirement that says, “ All buildings shall be constructed so as to screen all electrical and mechanical equipment on the roof.”.

The applicant provided more specific details on the existing site layout as well as the proposed expansion including the layout and elements within the existing building, yard and expansion. He also provided more details on the proposed architectural elements within the design.

City Planner Palmer provided details on the site plan review including zoning requirements, parking, landscaping/tree replacement, stormwater, architecture, lighting, and screening. He noted that the Enterprise Park Architectural Review Board reviewed the proposed project on April 26, 2023 and approved the project as proposed. He reviewed the variance request and related findings. Staff recommends approval of the variance and site plan review subject to the conditions noted in the staff report.

Commissioner Brewer referenced the variance noting that in the future cities will be considering and potentially requiring alternative energy sources. She stated that the requirement for screening of rooftop equipment may have impacts to future installation of alternate energy, such as solar panels. She commented that the City should review its regulations to ensure that pursuit of these alternative energy sources would be feasible for installation.

The Applicant provided additional details on the equipment that would be placed on the roof.

Commissioner Brewer asked if it would be practical for a business to convert an existing building of this nature into solar energy.

The Applicant replied that would be possible but there are certain complications. He stated that it would not be a significant hurdle to change the equipment to support that use if that were the desire of the business.

Chair Bonthuis stated that discussion is not pertinent to the discussion tonight and could be a topic at a future meeting. She applauded the representative present for their architectural views. She also appreciated that the existing building would be painted to match the new building. She commented that this is a wonderful project. She also appreciated the size of the trees proposed to be planted.

The Applicant provided more details on the trees that will be planted as part of the project.

Chair Bonthuis opened the public hearing at 9:05 p.m.

As no one wished to appear, Chair Bonthuis closed the public hearing at 9:06 p.m.

Commissioner Rech commented that this seems to be a straightforward request and variance for a nice project.

MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER RECH, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER NEMEC, TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE VARIANCE AND SITE PLAN REVIEW, SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

1. The applicant shall dedicate new public utility easements, as determined by staff, for proposed public utilities that will serve the site.

2. The applicant shall enter into a private utility easement agreement for sanitary sewer with the neighboring property to the north located at 1138 Bunker Lake Boulevard, that being part of Lots 2 and 3, Block 1, Anoka Enterprise Park Third Addition.
3. The applicant shall enter into a development agreement with the City of Anoka for installation, inspection, and dedication to the City for all proposed public utilities and associated improvements.
4. All comments of the Public Services Department dated April 28, 2023 shall be met.
5. All site improvements shall be completed in accordance with the approved plans. Any significant deviations from the approved plans shall require additional review and approval by the Planning Commission and City Council.
6. The applicant shall combine the entire development site, currently consisting of two parcels, into one parcel by submitting a lot combination request with Anoka County.

6 ayes – 0 nays. Motion carried.

City Planner Palmer advised this will go before the City Council on May 15, 2023.

A2023-005, Variance and Site Plan Review, 700 Bunker Lake Boulevard, Kittelson Marketing

City Planner Palmer reported the applicant, Kittelson Marketing, is requesting approval of two proposed building additions located at 700 Bunker Lake Boulevard. One of the additions requires a setback variance. Prior to the issuance of a building permit for a commercial addition, City Code requires a site plan review by the Planning Commission and approval by City Council. The subject property is zoned M-3 Light Industrial/Commercial Overlay. The applicant is proposing to construct a 1,156 square foot building addition which will connect the existing office building to the existing warehouse building. The applicant is proposing a second building addition of 696 square feet located at the rear of the existing warehouse. The second addition will enclose an existing uncovered loading dock located at the southeast corner of the site. The new addition that will enclose the loading dock requires a variance from the minimum side yard setback of 20 feet. The new addition will be setback 8.2 feet from the south property line, therefore the requested variance is 11.8 feet.

City Planner Palmer reviewed the site plan review providing details about the zoning requirements and architecture. He noted that the Enterprise Park Architectural Review Board reviewed the proposed project on April 26, 2023 and provided input from that meeting. He noted that ultimately the Board did approve the proposed plan with no conditions but did suggest that the vertical board on board siding located at the front of the existing warehouse be changed to horizontal lap siding to match the rest of the structure. He reviewed the variance request and related findings. Staff recommends approval of the site plan subject to the conditions noted in the staff report.

Chair Bonthuis asked if this was previously two businesses.

Jeff Kittelson, applicant, stated that he purchased the property and estimated that the warehouse was constructed around 2010 and the office building was preexisting going back to the 1960's or 1970's. He commented that it has been said that a number of businesses have come through those locations prior to his business coming in during 2013. He stated that he was encouraged to apply for the HRA grant program but determined that the project would not qualify. He stated that he worked with City staff and amendments to the grant program were proposed. He stated that the HRA approved those amendments to the program, and he will be accepting the first grant from the HRA for this type of project. He provided an overview of his family business. He stated that they will carry the siding down to make things more consistent. He stated that he has a good working relationship with the adjacent business, and they share the loading dock.

City Planner Palmer commented that the neighbor to the south has submitted a letter of support for the variance.

Chair Bonthuis opened the public hearing at 9:23 p.m.

As no one wished to appear, Chair Bonthuis closed the public hearing at 9:24 p.m.

Commissioner Rech commented that this is a straightforward variance, and he agrees with the request.

MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER RECH, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER BREWER, TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE SITE PLAN, SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

1. All comments of the Public Services Department dated April 26, 2023 shall be met.
2. All site improvements shall be in accordance with the submitted and approved plans. Any significant deviations from the approved plans shall require additional review and approval by the City.

6 ayes – 0 nays. Motion carried.

City Planner Palmer advised this will go before the City Council on May 15, 2022.

MISCELLANEOUS:

None

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER COLEMAN, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER NEMEC, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.

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6 ayes - 0 nays. Motion carried.

Time of adjournment: 9:26 p.m.

Submitted by: Amanda Staple, *TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*