



Planning Commission Minutes

December 9, 2019

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairperson Allysen Hoberg, Commissioners Bryan Pynn, Sean Hayford Oleary, Peter Lavin, Susan Rosenberg and Kathryn Quam

MEMBERS ABSENT: Commissioner James Rudolph

STAFF PRESENT: Matt Brillhart, Associate Planner
Melissa Poehlman, Asst. Community Development Director

OTHERS PRESENT: Ben Krsnak, Hempel Companies (Cedar Point Commons)
Charlie Vaughn, Terron Wright, David Knaeble – Market Plaza development
other speakers did not sign in – see Item #3 below

Chairperson Hoberg called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

M/Pynn, S/Quam to approve the minutes of the November 25, 2019 meeting.

Motion carried: 6-0

OPEN FORUM

No members of the public spoke.

ITEM #1 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

M/Rosenberg, S/Pynn to approve the agenda.

Motion carried: 6-0

PUBLIC HEARINGS

ITEM #2

19-APUD-09 – Consideration of an amendment to approved development plans at Cedar Point Commons, requesting approval of a standalone trash enclosure at 1840 66th St E.

Associate Planner Matt Brillhart presented the staff report.

Ben Krsnak of Hempel Properties described the proposal and answered questions from the Commission regarding the size and design of the proposed dumpster enclosure.

M/Hayford Oleary, S/Rosenberg to close the public hearing.

Motion carried: 6-0

M/Quam, S/Rosenberg to recommend approval of an amendment to approved development plans at Cedar Point Commons.

Motion carried: 6-0

ITEM #3

19-RZN-01, 19-APUD-08 – Consideration of a request for rezoning and an amendment to the Market Plaza / Village Shores planned unit development, requesting approval of a new building for a bank branch with a drive-up ATM.

Associate Planner Matt Brillhart presented the staff report.

Commissioner Hayford Oleary stated concerns with the building being below grade and inquired if the applicant could regrade a larger area of the parking lot so that the building entry could be at-grade with the sidewalk. The applicant responded that they could not change the grade at the center of the parking lot and they felt this was the best solution.

Brillhart stated that two residents at 6500 Woodlake Drive had phoned to state their concerns with increased traffic and parking on Woodlake Drive.

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Two residents of City Bella (did not sign-in) inquired about the zoning change and building height limitations in that zoning district, as well as the timeline for approval and construction of this proposal. Another resident inquired if the building height could change following approval.

M/Lavin, S/Pynn to close the public hearing.

Motion carried: 6-0

Brillhart stated that maximum permitted height in the Mixed Use Zoning District is 12 stories, and that any new building would require a public hearing and approval by the Planning Commission and City Council. Regarding the process for this proposal, Brillhart stated the City Council would consider the proposal on January 28; that meeting is not a public hearing.

Commissioner Hayford Oleary shared an email and exhibits he had sent to staff (attached) and read through his concerns regarding the building being below grade, pedestrian routes, and the drive-thru ATM. Regarding pedestrian routes, the applicant stated they would could include an additional pedestrian route on the west side of the building, but it would include stairs due to the grade change. Commissioner Hayford Oleary further inquired if there was a requirement that the pedestrian routes to the building be cleared of snow.

Commissioner Pynn stated support for the building design and pocket park, and inquired if additional landscaping could be added to address potential headlight spill from the ATM lane. In response to Chair Hoberg, Brillhart clarified staff's reasoning in support of varying the requirement that drive-thrus for substantially similar uses to be separated by 500 feet. Regarding the pedestrian connection on the west side of the building, Brillhart replied that the applicant stated on record that it would be possible and that staff would expect to see that connection included on revised plans.

M/Lavin, S/Hayford Oleary to recommend approval of an ordinance rezoning the property from PMR to PMU.

Motion carried: 6-0

M/Lavin, S/Quam to recommend approval of a resolution granting an amendment to the Market Plaza / Village Shores planned unit development, allowing a new bank building with drive-up ATM, and requiring an additional walkway on the west side of the building.

M/Hayford Oleary, S/Quam to amend the resolution to add a stipulation requiring that all walkways and stairways throughout the property be cleared of snow and other debris.

Amendment carried: 6-0

Main motion carried, as amended: 4-2 (Hoberg and Hayford Oleary opposed)

ITEM #4

19-APUD-5 – Cancel public hearing to consider an amendment to the Richfield-Bloomington Honda Planned Unit Development.

M/Hayford Oleary, S/Quam to cancel the public hearing.

Motion carried: 6-0

LIAISON REPORTS

Community Services Advisory Commission: No report.

City Council: No report.

HRA: No report.

School Board: No report.

Transportation Commission: Commissioner Hayford Oleary summarized the recent meeting.

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Chamber of Commerce: No report.

CITY PLANNER'S REPORT

No report.

ADJOURNMENT

M/Hoberg, S/Quam to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at **8:24 p.m.**

Motion carried: 6-0



Planning Commission Secretary

From: Sean Hayford Oleary <sdho@sdho.org>
Sent: Friday, December 06, 2019 7:19 PM
To: Matt Brillhart; Melissa Poehlman
Subject: Concerns and questions — Market Plaza

Hi Matt and Melissa:

I am very concerned about the proposed drive-thru at 66th & Lyndale. I mostly have concerns listed here, that I just wanted to state in advance of the meeting; however, I do have a couple of questions that I'll clearly note. I would appreciate a response to the questions prior to the meeting if possible.

1. Grade of building site

The existing parking lot / plaza area is roughly at grade with sidewalk -- about 6" below. The developer is proposing to lower the existing grade to about 3' below sidewalk grade. Although they provide stairs, the street presence of the building is significantly affected by it being partly underground. Critically for me: it is a much worse street presence — both for pedestrians and people driving past — than the other three corners of the same intersection.

I assume they want to lower it to make it match the height of the parking lot, while minimizing regrading of the lot. However, it seems like there are several other options that could have been pursued:

- a.) A larger area of the parking lot could be regraded so that both entrances could be at sidewalk-grade
- b.) The ramp and stairs could be provided on the parking lot side, rather than the street side
- c.) The developer could have built a vestibule at a "half-story" with ramp and stairs internal to the building — less subject to ice and snow, and providing a much more welcoming and attractive entrance.

Question: Were any of these options explored? Is there a reason they are not viable?

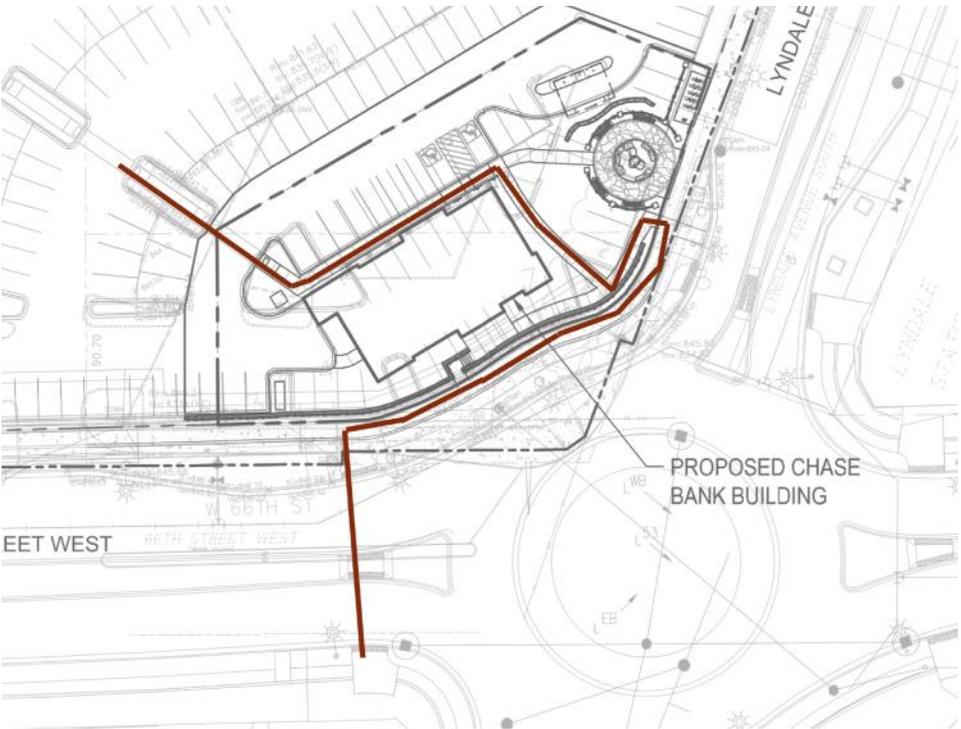
2. Pedestrian circulation through the site

When we reviewed previous changes to the Market Plaza site, I was dissatisfied with their planned pedestrian circulation to the corner. Although it aligns well with one bus stop — the #4 bus — it's very circuitous for any other destination. I have used the route many times, and always find it simpler to cut across the planting areas to the west of the proposed Chase Bank site.

In addition, the developer does maintain this route in a safe or accessible manner during the winter. This was taken this week:



Unfortunately, this proposal makes an already-bad pedestrian circulation even worse — adding two 90° turns that don't currently exist. Here is what walking from City Bella to Jimmy John's or HCMC looks like:



This is not a realistic walking route. Although I am glad staff suggest an additional access on the west side of the building, the language is pretty weak ("if grades allow").

Question: Could be more stringent in this requirement? And could the east access be modified to require fewer turns?

3. Drive thru

I am concerned about adding yet another drive-thru to this area — particularly one that isn't even close to meeting the code requirement for spacing (180 vs. 500 feet).

The staff report makes a number of suggestions of why flexibility is appropriate here: the other bank drive-thru is relatively hidden, bank drive thrus don't have as bad of impacts as some other types of drive-thrus, etc.

However, I think we need to give equal weight to the reasons why being lenient on drive-thrus is *especially* inappropriate on our most prominent roundabout, in the center of our downtown. We have an intense concentration of drive-thrus in this area — while also having a greater concentration of vulnerable pedestrians, with a great deal of senior housing and medical services centered here.

In addition, I have trouble believing the project demonstrates "superior design" we ask in return for this type of flexibility when it provides a much worse street presence than the other three corners.

I find it baffling that the city has previously prioritized not having drive-thrus visible from the Richfield Parkway roundabout — asking Plaza 66 to flip their design to shift the drive-thru to residential 16th Avenue, and rejecting a McDonalds on the NW corner altogether. Yet staff is recommending approval of this drive-thru in a much denser, "town center" portion of our city.

Question: Why is a drive-thru (one that would not be allowed by code) acceptable here, when we have not found them acceptable in similar proximity to Richfield Pkwy?

Thanks,
Sean

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Sean Hayford Oleary
<https://sdho.org>