



Planning Commission

September 18, 2024

7:00 PM

Fridley City Hall, 7071 University Avenue NE

Minutes

Call to Order

Chair Hansen called the Planning Commission Meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

Present

Pete Borman
Aaron Brom
Mark Hansen
Mike Heuchert
Aaron Klemz

Absent

Ross Meisner
Paul Nealy

Others Present

Stacy Stromberg, Planning Manager
John and Natasha Lawrence, 6677 Lucia Lane
LuAn Thronndson, 6620 Lucia Lane
John Vardas, 6546 Lucia Lane

Approval of Meeting Minutes

1. Approve August 21, 2024, Planning Commission Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Borman to approve the minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Brom.

Upon a voice vote, all voting aye, Chair Hansen declared the motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing

2. Public Hearing to Consider a Comprehensive Plan Amendment, CPA #24-01 to Change the Future Land Use from Single Family Residential to Multi-Family Residential for the Property Located at 6677 Lucia Lane N.E.

Motion by Commissioner Borman to open the public hearing to consider the Comprehensive Plan Amendment. Seconded by Commissioner Brom.

Upon a voice vote, all voting aye, Chair Hansen declared the motion carried unanimously and the public hearing was opened at 7:06 p.m.

Stacy Stromberg, Planning Manager, asked that the Chair also open the public hearing for the rezoning as she would be presenting the two requests together.

Motion by Commissioner Borman to open the public hearing to consider the rezoning. Seconded by Commissioner Brom.

Upon a voice vote, all voting aye, Chair Hansen declared the motion carried unanimously and the public hearing was opened at 7:07 p.m.

Ms. Stromberg presented a request for a Comprehensive Plan and Rezoning request from Natasha Lawrence, the applicant. She reviewed the current Comprehensive Plan designation, noting that the request would change the designation from single-family to multi-family, with a similar change to the zoning. She provided background information on the property and stated that the applicant would like to construct a duplex on the property. She provided the analysis of the Comprehensive Plan amendment and Rezoning requests, stating the staff recommends approval of the requests as presented and reviewed the suggested stipulations.

Chair Hansen commented that it would appear the garages would be oriented towards the rear of the structure and asked if that is correct.

Ms. Stromberg believed that it how the structure would be oriented but noted that the applicant could provide additional details.

LuAnn Thronson, 6620 Lucia Lane, commented that she has lived on this street for 40 years and the subject property has not been well maintained since the property was purchased, noting that trash and that the snow is not cleared. She commented that when the property was sold, the residents were told that the property would remain as a single-family home property. She believed that if the property were cleared out better it would be more appealing for a single-family home to be constructed. She stated that there are a lot of Spanish speaking residents on Lucia Lane and stated that perhaps they did not understand the notice that was mailed.

Natasha Lawrence, applicant, stated that they purchased the property about one year ago with the intention to construct a single-family home that they would live in. She stated that they cleared it out, cleaned it up and were told by their builder that they could not build their home on the property. She stated that their property is vacant land and therefore there is not anywhere to clear snow from, noting that they would need to construct their own driveway.

John Lawrence, applicant, stated that the property to the south has the driveway with the grill and desk out at the end of the driveway and clarified that is not their property. He stated that they

cleaned up the trees and planned the layout for the home they hoped to construct. He stated that they could not obtain financing for the project because of the large payment that would be necessary out of their pocket and because the home would not be valued at its cost because of the surrounding area.

Mrs. Lawrence replied that they wanted to live on the property in the home they had hoped to build. She asked that the Commission consider this request for a duplex on the property.

Mr. Lawrence commented that they liked the trees and wooded setting with the wetlands, which is why they chose the lot.

Commissioner Klemz asked if there is an existing structure that would be removed as part of the project.

Mrs. Lawrence commented that there was a previous garage that had been removed and the foundation remains.

Commissioner Brom asked for clarification on why the duplex would be allowed versus the single-family home.

Mrs. Lawrence commented that they can build the duplex for the same price as the single-family home, and they could either rent both units or live in one unit and rent the other. She explained that either option would allow them to recoup some of the costs to build.

Chair Hansen asked if the orientation is correct to have the garages facing away from the street.

Mrs. Lawrence commented that the goal would be for the garages to face the street.

Mr. Lawrence stated that the existing home at 6663 Lucia Lane has a long driveway that cuts in with the garage facing the neighbor, while their plan would be for everything to face the street. He stated that he did do some cleanup work on the property, and he could tell that people were cutting paths to dump their compost and lawn clippings. He stated that you can also tell that the wind blows trash that collects in the treed area. He stated that they do not live on the land, which makes it hard to prevent trash or lawn clippings from collecting on the site.

Ms. Thronson stated that the Islamic University is located at the end of the street and perhaps the applicants noticed how much traffic was coming down the street when they decided not to build a single-family home. She commented that the property has not been completely cleared and trash has remained on the site for at least six to eight months. She stated that two single-family homes would be better suited than a duplex. She noted the number of apartment buildings and duplexes that already exist in that area and would prefer to have single-family homes.

Chair Hansen noted there are three emails that have been received from other residents on Lucia Lane expressing concerns with the rezoning (attached).

John Vardas, 6546 Lucia Lane, stated that he would agree with a duplex but would not want anything above that as there are already three apartment buildings in that area. He stated that with the cul-de-sac already limits traffic and would not want to add more than a duplex. He stated that without a size limitation, he would think that once the rezoning is completed an apartment building would be constructed instead.

Commissioner Klemz recognized the difference between R-1 and R-3 and asked if stipulations can be added that would limit the number of units that could be constructed on the property.

Ms. Stromberg stated that with a rezoning it would approve a multi-family use and the Code is dependent upon lot size as to the number of allowed units. She was unsure if a size requirement could be stipulated and therefore would need to check with legal counsel.

Commissioner Klemz stated that he understands the limitation of the wetlands on the site, but a wetland can also be filled if credits are purchased.

Commissioner Borman asked if there is a zoning district between R-1 and R-3 that would limit to just a duplex.

Ms. Stromberg stated that there is an R-2 district but because there is not another R-2 property in this area, an R-3 zoning would be a better fit. She clarified that R-2 would allow a duplex. She noted that the buildable area of the lot would be limited because of the wetlands as they exist today.

Chair Hansen commented that in order to fill a wetland there would need to be a demonstrated benefit other than economic reasons alone. He stated that the soil conditions in that part of the property would make it very impractical to build on that area.

Motion by Commissioner Klemz to close the public hearing to consider the Comprehensive Plan Amendment. Seconded by Commissioner Heuchert.

Upon a voice vote, all voting aye, Chair Hansen declared the motion carried unanimously and the public hearing was closed at 7:32 p.m.

Motion by Commissioner Klemz to close the public hearing to consider the Rezoning. Seconded by Commissioner Heuchert.

Upon a voice vote, all voting aye, Chair Hansen declared the motion carried unanimously and the public hearing was closed at 7:33 p.m.

Commissioner Borman asked what would prohibit the City from rezoning to R-2. It was noted that would be considered spot zoning as that zoning does not exist in this area.

Chair Hansen noted that they would still need to build something that fits into the surrounding area. Ms. Stromberg commented that there is an apartment build across the street. She stated that was built years ago and therefore does not have stormwater treatment or likely sufficient parking and therefore having a structure of that size would not seem feasible on the subject property. She stated that the applicant is proposing to build a duplex but once the rezoning is completed, something larger could be constructed but it would need to meet all the requirements of the City.

Commissioner Brom commented that his concern would be with contiguous use, as he would think the street is a buffer from the apartment use. He recognized the clear opposition of the existing residents to having another apartment. He stated that all the properties on this side of the street are zoned R-1.

Commissioner Heuchert stated that it seems reasonable to allow a duplex on the property, as it is between single-family and larger multi-family and therefore it would seem a likely transition. He stated that he would not want to see something larger than a duplex on the property. He asked if that stipulation could be placed on the recommendation of approval and the opinion of the City Attorney could be gained prior to the City Council meeting. Ms. Stromberg stated that she would be comfortable adding that condition and could verify if that would be allowed prior to moving it to the City Council meeting if the Commission wanted to proceed with that.

Commissioner Borman stated that the applicant purchased the property with the intent to build a single-family home but then changed to a duplex. He stated that perhaps once the rezoning is completed, they would change again to a fourplex. He stated that he could only support this is there is a stipulation that only a duplex could be constructed.

Chair Hansen agreed that a duplex would be a good fit for the lot and did not feel an additional condition would be needed as the size of the lot would dictate what could be built on the property. He understood the concern of the residents about what could be built on the property but noted that the property was listed for sale and any resident could have purchased the lot if they did not want to see it developed. He stated that he is comfortable moving forward, acknowledging that there would be many restrictions that would come into play as for what could ultimately be built on the property.

Commissioner Klemz agreed with the comments of the Chair.

Commissioner Borman asked where the additional stipulation would be placed, limiting construction to a duplex. Ms. Stromberg replied that would seem most appropriate for the rezoning if that is desired.

Chair Hansen asked the opinion of the additional stipulation.

Commissioner Brom commented that it does not seem enforceable.

Commissioner Klemz stated that the opinion of the City Attorney would ultimately be needed, and it would be the ultimate decision of the City Council as to whether that stipulation is necessary.

Motion by Commissioner Klemz, to recommend approval of a Comprehensive Plan Amendment, CPA #24-01 to Change the Future Land Use from Single Family Residential to Multi-Family Residential for the Property Located at 6677 Lucia Lane N.E. with Stipulations. Seconded by Commissioner Heuchert.

Upon a voice vote, all voting aye, Chair Hansen declared the motion carried unanimously.

3. Public Hearing to Consider a Rezoning, ZOA #24-01 to Change the Zoning of the Property Located at 6677 Lucia Lane from R-1, Single Family to R-3, Multi-Family

Motion by Commissioner Klemz, to recommend approval of a Rezoning, ZOA #24-01 to Change the Zoning of the Property Located at 6677 Lucia Lane from R-1, Single Family to R-3, Multi-Family Seconded by Commissioner Heuchert.

Upon a voice vote, all voting aye, Chair Hansen declared the motion carried unanimously.

Other Business

Ms. Stromberg provided an update on recent activity of the City Council on planning related matters and also noted anticipated future meetings for the Commission.

Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Brom to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Borman.

Upon a voice vote, all voting aye, Chair Hansen declared the motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy Stromberg, Staff Liaison