



**City of Newport
Planning Commission Minutes
April 11, 2013**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Lund called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

2. ROLL CALL -

Commissioners present – Dan Lund, Matt Prestegaard, Janice Anderson, Susan Lindoo, Anthony Mahmood

Commissioners absent –

Also present – Deb Hill, City Administrator; Tom Ingemann, Council Liaison; Sherri Buss, TKDA Planner

3. APPROVAL OF PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

A. Planning Commission Minutes of March 14, 2013

Motion by Prestegaard, seconded by Anderson, to approve the March 14, 2013 minutes as presented. With 5 Ayes, 0 Nays, the motion carried.

4. APPOINTMENTS WITH COMMISSION

A. Public Hearing – To consider an application from Newport-St. Paul Cold Storage for Approval of a Variance for Property Located at 2233 Maxwell Avenue, Newport, MN 55055

Sherri Buss, TKDA Planner, presented on this item as outlined in the April 11, 2013 Planning Commission Packet.

The Public Hearing opened at 7:19 p.m.

The Public Hearing closed at 7:20 p.m.

Vice-Chair Prestegaard – I'd be interested in hearing more about the alternative storm water plan.

Andrew Greenberg, Newport-St. Paul Cold Storage – If you take a look at the plans, we need to have these ponds and it becomes a restriction with the tractors. One of alternatives we're looking at is an underground system. We're currently looking at that option.

Vice-Chair Prestegaard – Where are the ponds?

Mr. Greenberg – They are on the property line that we share with the MnDot property.

Ms. Buss – The underground chambers are things that people are using more and more. They are large, underground chambers where the water is held and they slowly infiltrate the ground from the bottom up. It's an option on commercial sites where space is valuable.

Commissioner Lindoo – Is the water funneled into these things?

Mr. Greenberg – I believe it works through manholes. The water flows through these chambers.

Commissioner Lindoo – Does it seep into the river?

Ms. Buss – The sediment is cleaned out before going into the river and only clean water goes into it. They'll be sized so that they meet the same requirements.

Commissioner Lindoo – Are they sized based on the 100-year flood?

Ms. Buss – No, they're sized to deal with water quality.

Commissioner Anderson – And you're working with the Watershed District and MPCA?

Mr. Greenberg – Yes, the company that we're working with is in contact with the Watershed and MPCA, as well as Sherri and John Stewart.

Ms. Buss – They'll need to obtain a City permit and MPCA permit.

Chairperson Lund – We seem to be an important group to evaluate the stormwater and I'm not comfortable approving this without seeing a specific plan in regards to the stormwater.

Commissioner Anderson – There's a condition that it's subject to the engineer's approval.

Admin. Hill – Our engineer has been working with Mr. Greenberg already in regards to the stormwater.

Chairperson Lund – Does anyone have any comments on the building itself and the visibility from the river? From the pictures, you can see the building from the river already.

Mr. Greenberg – The current building is about 37 feet.

Vice-Chairperson Prestegaard – These pictures are from across the river?

Ms. Buss – Yes and I don't believe you could see it from the river itself due to all of the vegetation. That was part of the DNR's comment, that this whole area is very industrial and there are several other buildings in that area with less screening. The DNR believes the Cold Storage's screening is better than some in that area.

Commissioner Lindoo – The berm will hold right?

Mr. Greenberg – It's solid.

Commissioner Lindoo – You believe that you'll go ahead with the expansion now?

Mr. Greenberg – Yes, four years ago we had a customer pull out of an agreement which was why we weren't able to complete it then.

Chairperson Lund – How far is the setback from the river?

Ms. Buss – It looks to be about 100 feet from the top of the berm, so I'm guessing it's like 150 feet from the river itself.

Vice-Chairperson Prestegaard – The new height of 59 feet is for the addition?

Ms. Buss – Yes.

Vice-Chairperson Prestegaard – And you don't believe that will be visible from the river?

Ms. Buss – I don't think so. Dan, I think you could certainly talk with the engineer about the stormwater issue.

Chairperson Lund – Yea, I'm skeptical that the underwater system will work with being so close to the river.

Commissioner Lindoo – I think you could have the same issue with ponds.

Commissioner Mahmood – Isn't that what the engineer will evaluate? That's not our concern.

Chairperson Lund – It's concerning because the Watershed District gave it to us.

Ms. Buss – The Watershed District doesn't deal with redevelopments and by giving it to us they're stating that they trust our judgment.

Chairperson Lund – That's why I'm concerned, because it's our job now.

Commissioner Mahmood – You don't trust the engineer to do the right things?

Mr. Greenberg – The underground system serves the same purpose as the ponds, it's just a different way of doing it.

Vice-Chairperson Prestegaard – Do we know a lot about the stormwater standards? Maybe it's because we don't understand the standards that we don't know whether or not they're sufficient.

Commissioner Lindoo – I believe we had to go through a training of some sort a couple of years ago.

Ms. Buss – You did because the Watershed plan was revised. Whenever that happens, each city has a couple years to bring it up to the same standards. Your ordinance is pretty recent due to that. I think part of the issue is that the sediment that is generated from a flood is not easy to clean out of the underground system. It is typical for some of these issues to linger and that's why there are conditions for that.

Commissioner Lindoo – How long does this typically take to get resolved?

Ms. Buss – It depends on the issues.

Commissioner Lindoo – Dan, do you want to talk with John about this?

Chairperson Lund – Yes.

Ms. Buss – The Watershed District did review the original application a couple years ago and didn't see a significant change in impervious surface so they felt it was ok and didn't feel a need to review it again.

Admin. Hill – The engineer, as well as MPCA, need to review and sign off on it, so you're putting it in their hands since they are the experts here.

Mr. Greenberg – We did have all of the permits years ago.

Chairperson Lund – Can you speak about how the underground chambers discharge to the river?

Ms. Buss – I believe there's additional filtration, it depends on how the system is designed. The City does have requirements about the size that it needs to handle, the quality of the discharge, etc. We won't change the standard. The MPCA's permit is in regards to erosion control. The Watershed District allows the City to handle redevelopments up to a certain size.

Vice-Chairperson Prestegaard – If the impervious surface isn't changing, why are there different standards now?

Ms. Buss – The standards aren't different, he just needs to deal with the issue and is doing it a different way.

Vice-Chairperson Prestegaard – I'm talking about the standards when they built.

Ms. Buss – They didn't have to deal with the stormwater when they built in 1958.

Mr. Greenberg - Anything we're doing now will be better than before.

Chairperson Lund – If we were to table it, how would that delay the project?

Mr. Greenberg – It would delay us at least a month. We're anxious to get started on it.

Chairperson Lund – Can they get started without the stormwater plan?

Ms. Buss – No.

Chairperson Lund – When do you plan on getting a building permit?

Mr. Greenberg – Six weeks or so.

Chairperson Lund – I'd prefer to see the plans before approving. I'd be a lot more comfortable if we knew the engineer approved the plans before approving the variance.

Admin. Hill – I would recommend having the engineer come to a meeting to explain the process.

Commissioner Lindoo – I'm going to trust what the engineer says because he is the expert. I'm comfortable with it since the condition stating that the engineer needs to approve the plan before issuing the permit is in the variance. I know it costs money to wait.

Ms. Buss – There isn't a problem having John come to a future meeting to discuss the plan and how it works.

Motion by Lindoo, seconded by Mahmood, to approve Resolution No. P.C. 2013-3 recommending the City Council approve the Variance as amended. With 4 Ayes, 1 Nay, the motion carried.

Commissioner Anderson – I would still like to have John come to our next meeting to discuss stormwater issues.

Admin. Hill – I think that's a good idea, I'll set it up.

B. Red Rock Corridor Update from the Red Rock Corridor Commission

Andy Gitzlaff, Washington County, and Antonio Rosell, Community Design Group, presented on this item as outlined in the April 11, 2013 Planning Commission Packet.

Vice-Chairperson Prestegaard – Is there potential development between Newport and Bloomington along 494?

Mr. Gitzlaff – It's been discussed but there has not been an official analysis done.

Vice-Chair Prestegaard – We don't seem to have a lot of strong evidence that Newport has strong ridership.

Mr. Gitzlaff – I believe it's due to the lack of availability for riding. Hopefully ridership will increase once the transit station is built.

Commissioner Lindoo – The thought with the park-and-ride was that folks would be coming from Woodbury and other areas which is why it's at the old Knox Lumber site.

Vice-Chair Prestegaard – I guess I was just trying to figure out how we can achieve the ridership that we want.

Commissioner Lindoo – You had a list of ways that the situation has changed since 2007. What are 2-3 of the biggest things that have changed?

Mr. Gitzlaff – I think we know more from 2007. There really wasn't one smoking gun but I guess it would be the Northstar Commuter Rail, the law changes, and the updated capital cost estimates.

Commissioner Lindoo – So the new criteria might put heavier weight on BRT?

Vice-Chairperson Prestegaard – Why is the new direction going towards BRT?

Mr. Gitzlaff – The intent of the study is to take a broader look and do a comparison based on the technical data and what the market needs. There's not a perceived outcome.

Vice-Chairperson Prestegaard – It just seemed like the focus tonight was on the positives of BRT.

Mr. Gitzlaff – I think that's because it's newer and it takes more time to explain that.

Chairperson Lund – Was the Red Rock Corridor going to expand to Minneapolis?

Mr. Gitzlaff – The Commuter Rail option had it going all the way to Minneapolis staying on freight rail tracks. It's pretty messy with the rail right now and putting commuter trains on freight tracks. The ultimate goal is Minneapolis. A lot of riders from this corridor are heading to Minneapolis.

Councilman Ingemann – Has there been a study on how many commuters are going to Bloomington from this area?

Mr. Gitzlaff – There was a study completed years ago and it shows that there are several individuals from this area going to Bloomington. The issue is that there isn't just one stop in Bloomington because it's pretty spread out. Additionally, there's a ton of free parking in that area, which isn't true in Minneapolis and St. Paul, which is another incentive for transit. I think it's worth looking into it.

Chairperson Lund – From my perspective, the most important thing is getting people to Minneapolis as quickly as possible. If the current express bus service was replaced with a commuter light rail to St. Paul and they were expected to hop on the light rail from St. Paul to Minneapolis that would probably be a disappointment for people who use the express bus all the way to Minneapolis.

Ms. Buss – The LRT is going to be half as fast as the existing express bus service to Minneapolis.

Chairperson Lund – I don't think we should do anything to prevent people from getting to Minneapolis as fast as possible.

Vice-Chairperson Prestegaard – How does the BRT compare in regards to travel times?

Mr. Gitzlaff – It depends. I'm guessing it would be better than what is out there today for the express bus.

Ms. Buss – Doesn't it have to do with the number of stops as well?

Mr. Gitzlaff – Yes, so it may be premature in taking a guess now.

Commissioner Lindoo – It would still be stopping in St. Paul so it wouldn't help people going to Minneapolis.

Mr. Gitzlaff – We're taking a step back here and figuring out what we would like the options to do. The one thing that did come out is that it's important to go to St. Paul and Minneapolis. We've also heard a lot about the frequency of service.

Commissioner Lindoo – I'm glad to hear that.

Mr. Rosell – Through the public process we're asking about amenities as well such as parking, frequency, etc. The consensus priority has been frequency of service throughout the day and being able to use the transit for access to other cities along the corridor.

Commissioner Lindoo – I would look at safety, cleanliness, and how comfortable the buses are.

Mr. Rosell – We have heard that, as well as having the ability to conduct work while in transit.

Chairperson Lund – I suppose if you were to improve the amenities and maintain the amount of time to Minneapolis then that may increase the desirability to live in this area. I think we should consider if it's desirable to foster more development or if we like it being a little quieter.

Vice-Chairperson Prestegaard – I like the idea of sheltered stations with kiosks so that we could pay in advance with credit cards or large bills. If we have that then we don't need to deal with having the exact change.

Ms. Buss – I think it would be nice if the buses could accommodate more bikes.

5. COMMISSION AND STAFF REPORTS

Admin. Hill – I was wondering if it would be fine to move the meetings to 6:00 p.m.?

Commissioner Lindoo – That would be fine.

Vice-Chairperson Prestegaard – That would be fine.

Admin. Hill – Great, I'll bring that forward to the Council.

6. NEW BUSINESS

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Upcoming Meetings and Events:

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|--------------------------------|----------------|-----------|
| 1. City Council Meeting | April 18, 2013 | 5:30 p.m. |
| 2. Park Board Meeting | April 25, 2013 | 7:00 p.m. |
| 3. City Council Meeting | May 2, 2013 | 5:30 p.m. |
| 4. Planning Commission Meeting | May 9, 2013 | 7:00 p.m. |

8. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Anderson, seconded by Mahmood, to adjourn the Planning Commission Meeting at 8:55 P.M. With 5 Ayes, 0 Nays, the motion carried.

Signed: _____
Dan Lund, Chairperson

Respectfully submitted,

Renee Helm
Executive Analyst