

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES - CITY OF INVER GROVE HEIGHTS

Wednesday, November 7, 2018 – 7:00 p.m.
City Hall Chambers - 8150 Barbara Avenue

Chair Maggi called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Brett Kramer
 Armando Lissarrague
 Elizabeth Niemioja
 Joan Robertson
 Tony Scales
 Jonathan Weber
 Dennis Wippermann
 Pat Simon
 Annette Maggi

Commissioners Absent:

Others Present: Allan Hunting, City Planner
 Heather Botten, Associate Planner

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the October 16, 2018 Planning Commission meeting were approved as submitted.

SANDRA PEREZ – CASE NO. 18-58C

Reading of Notice

Commissioner Simon read the public hearing notice to consider the request for a conditional use permit to allow a daycare facility to operate in the lower level of River Heights Vineyard Church, for the property located at 6070 Cahill Avenue. 35 notices were mailed.

Presentation of Request

Heather Botten, Associate Planner, explained the request as detailed in the report. She advised that the applicant is proposing to operate a daycare facility for preschool age children in the lower level of the church. Daycare is a permitted conditional use in the Institutional zoning district. No changes or additions are proposed to the exterior of the building or property. Peak hours for the daycare will be during the morning drop-off and the afternoon pick-up of children. The center will be open Monday-Friday, so staff does not believe there would be any conflict with the church operation and/or peak times for traffic. Staff recommends approval of the request with the five conditions listed in the report. Staff did not hear from any of the abutting property owners.

Commissioner Robertson asked if there were other criteria in place for the oversight of daycare centers.

Ms. Botten replied in the affirmative, stating daycare centers must be licensed by the State and abide by their rules.

Commissioner Robertson questioned whether there would be any traffic impacts on Cahill Avenue during drop-off or pick-up times.

Ms. Botten replied they do not anticipate any traffic issues, adding that the traffic generated from the daycare center would be less than the normal traffic for a Sunday church service.

Opening of Public Hearing

Sandra Perez, 108 – 4th Ave S, South St. Paul, advised she was available to answer any questions.

Chair Maggi asked Ms. Perez if she read and understood the report.

Ms. Perez replied in the affirmative.

Chair Maggi closed the public hearing.

Planning Commission Recommendation

Motion by Commissioner Scales, second by Commissioner Wippermann, to approve the request for a conditional use permit to allow a daycare facility to operate in the lower level of River Heights Vineyard Church, for the property located at 6070 Cahill Avenue, with the five conditions listed in the report.

Motion carried (9/0). This item goes to the City Council on November 26, 2018.

CITY OF INVER GROVE HEIGHTS – 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Reading of Notice

Commissioner Simon read the public hearing notice for the Planning Commission to receive comments from the public on the Draft 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

Presentation of Request

Allan Hunting, City Planner, explained that the Planning Commission is to hold a public hearing and then make a recommendation to the City Council to submit the draft comprehensive plan to the Metropolitan Council for their action and review. The City Council will then be updated on the comprehensive plan at their December 3 work session, and on December 10 they will take action to submit the plan to the Metropolitan Council. After Met Council review, City Council will hopefully adopt the plan in Spring 2019.

Brad Scheib, Hoisington Koegler, gave a brief presentation highlighting the process, why a comprehensive plan is necessary, the Metropolitan Council's role, and key proposed changes. He explained that the process began in early 2017 and included public engagement, as well as meetings with the Planning Commission, Park and Recreation Commission, Housing Committee, and the Economic Development Authority. City Council authorized distribution of the plan to adjacent communities and effected agencies in May 2018.

There are seven components of the comprehensive plan including vision/guiding principles, land use, community development, parks and recreation, transportation, water resources, and implementation.

He discussed the areas of change from the last comprehensive plan, including the Northwest Area, Pine Bluffs Area, Arbor Pointe and Concord, Cahill and 65th Street, 'Pinkville' in the southwest area of the City, the west side of Robert Trail, and I-494/Highway 52.

Commissioner Weber noted that a portion of Argenta Hills had been rezoned.

Mr. Hunting replied that the City Council conditionally approved a comprehensive plan amendment for a portion of Argenta Hills to allow an apartment building. That will not become effective; however, until a plan is approved.

Mr. Scheib explained that the area known as 'Pinkville' is an awkwardly platted small lot area that does not have sewer, water, or access. The ownership of these lots is hodgepodge, with the City owning a number of lots that they received through tax forfeiture. The 2030 comprehensive plan guided this area as Park; however, it is not a park and there are no plans to make it a park. Because there is no public use for these properties, they re-guided this area from Park to Rural Residential.

The draft plan includes strategies for developing and maintaining housing diversity. In order to have more retail in the City, we need people that can work at those jobs and afford to live in the City.

An option for the City is to do a small area study. One possibility would be to do a small area study of 'Pinkville' to try to determine a resolution.

Chair Maggi asked Mr. Scheib if the proposed change in density moved mildly or significantly towards higher density across the City.

Mr. Scheib replied it would be mildly increased towards higher density because of the higher density assumptions within the mixed-use nodes.

Chair Maggi asked what the smallest ownership was of the 'Pinkville' lots acre-wise.

Mr. Hunting replied that all the lots were extremely small, perhaps 6,000-7,000 square feet in size.

Chair Maggi asked if the City could change the designation if the current lot structure does not fall within that designation.

Mr. Hunting replied in the affirmative.

Chair Maggi stated the question may be whether it made sense to.

Commissioner Robertson asked if the 'Pinkville' lots had owners on record that were still actively engaged in the ownership of those properties.

Mr. Hunting replied in the affirmative, stating they were owned individually by people on the tax rolls. The City acquired their lots through tax forfeiture.

Commissioner Robertson asked about the impact of the growth projections on the school district.

Mr. Scheib replied that they share the development projections with the school district so they can plan for enrollment projections.

Commissioner Robertson noted that portions of the City were served by the Eagan school district and questioned whether there were discussions about how they would maintain high-quality educational opportunities to keep the students in Inver Grove.

Mr. Scheib replied they can support quality education with guiding principles, including collaborating and working with the school district to help them achieve a great educational team, making sure that the park, trail, and roadway systems function well, and providing a diversity of

land uses where people can live and grow in the community throughout their life cycle.

Opening of Public Hearing

Jeff Mains, 11676 Aileron Court, advised that he lived just west of 'Pinkville' and would like to see some deliberation by the Planning Commission as to why the property should be changed to Rural Residential rather than retaining its Park designation. He recommended that a small area study be done of this area and that they consider not changing the land use designation until there was a strategy for this area. He added that he would be happy to be involved with the study.

Paul Mandell, 8320 Cleadis Avenue, advised that all the changes recommended by the Housing Committee have been incorporated into the draft comprehensive plan and therefore they recommend approval of the Housing Chapter of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

Chair Maggi closed the public hearing.

Planning Commission Discussion

Commissioner Niemioja agreed that a study of the 'Pinkville' area would be helpful, but she believed they could still move forward with changing the plan. She questioned how leaving the property guided as Park would affect the Parks Department.

Mr. Hunting replied that the proposed land use change would not have any impact on the Parks Department since it is not proposed as a park.

Chair Maggi asked what the benefit was of changing the land use designation to Rural Residential.

Mr. Hunting stated that changing the designation would make the property consistent with the park plan which does not envision a city park and therefore would allow for residential development. The current designation of Public Open Space does not allow for residential development.

Chair Maggi asked how long the properties had been under their current designation of Park Open Space.

Mr. Hunting replied he was not sure, but at least since the 2030 Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Weber asked what the minimum lot size was in Rural Density Residential.

Mr. Hunting replied 2.5 acres.

Commissioner Weber replied there was one landowner who had at least ten lots and could potentially qualify for a buildable lot if he were to get an easement agreement from the southern landowner.

Mr. Hunting replied that if someone were able to consolidate enough lots they would still have to deal with the issues of sewer, water, and road access. City review and action would also have to take place for any project in that location.

Commissioner Wippermann advised he would prefer to maintain the property as Park Open Space, stating it would be consistent with the guiding principles of the comprehensive plan regarding protecting and enhancing open space and natural features as a reflection of the communities' rural heritage. There is no cost consideration for the City to maintain these lots as is.

Chair Maggi asked if it would be unusual to have individual owners of Park designated land.

Mr. Hunting replied that typically open space park property is owned by a government agency as it would be for public purpose.

Commissioner Weber asked if the City could get in trouble with the landowners by not changing the designation to something that would allow them to develop and use their property.

Mr. Hunting gave the history of the lots, explaining that in the early 1970's a developer came to the City with this plat. The City denied the plat, but they got it recorded at the County anyway. If someone came forward with a plan to build on their lot, the City's argument would be that they never approved the plat in the first place.

Commissioner Weber asked if the City should contact the County and request that they contact the landowners and clear this up.

Chair Maggi stated Commissioner Weber's suggestion is something that would be done as part of a small area study.

Commissioner Wippermann did not see this as being different from somebody coming to the City with a request to change the land use designation for any other property in the City and he did not believe the City would incur any liability by leaving it designated as Park Open Space.

Chair Maggi questioned whether they should 1) leave the designation as is and request a study be done, 2) change the designation to Rural Residential and request a study be done, or 3) do one of those two things and not request a study.

Commissioner Lissarrague preferred to leave it as is and request a study.

Commissioner Niemioja was not opposed to changing the land use as recommended, but did not think it made sense to have multiple ownership.

Commissioner Robertson asked if the City as a property owner would be liable should someone get hurt on the land while riding a recreational vehicle, horse, etc.

Mr. Hunting replied he was not sure as that was beyond his expertise.

According to a hand vote, the majority of commissioners felt the property should remain as Park Open Space (5/4).

Commissioner Scales stated the property had limited use as a park as no one but the private land owners around that space had access to it. He would prefer changing the land use to Rural Density Residential; hopefully people familiar with developing could put together a plan if given the ability and tools to do so.

Commissioner Niemioja stated in her opinion changing the land use to Rural Density Residential would still comply with the guiding principles of open space.

Chair Maggi noted that according to Mr. Scheib the City is only slightly increasing the density of the City long-term. A concern is that the lack of density has been an issue in our city for the economic development that residents want. She felt that as a Commission they should acknowledge that they are recommending a plan to the City Council that is not truly addressing the density issue.

Commissioner Weber advised that in his opinion changing the property to Rural Density Residential provided more protection for the neighbors as it would kind of force a developer to

come in through the south rather than through their neighborhood. Rural Density Residential required a 2.5 acre minimum, and currently there was only one individual that appeared as if they owned enough land to meet that requirement.

Commissioner Wippermann recommended that the two requests be voted on separately.

Planning Commission Recommendation

Motion by Commissioner Wippermann, second by Commissioner Lissarrague, to leave the area known as 'Pinkville' in its current designation as Park Open Space in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

Motion failed (3/6 – Weber, Niemioja, Robertson, Kramer, Scales, and Maggi)

Motion by Commissioner Niemioja, second by Commissioner Robertson, to recommend approval of the Draft 2040 Comprehensive Plan as presented with a recommendation that there be a study done for the 'Pinkville' area.

Commissioner Kramer asked what Commissioners were hoping to conclude from the study.

Commissioner Robertson replied that they are recommending a broad study to look at the current challenges and potential opportunities.

Mr. Scheib added that the study can also look at what the public benefit would be and whether the City would have any liability. The landowners can also be part of the process since they are stakeholders. He noted that any development proposal would include some type of City approval.

Commissioner Weber stated that doing a study would give the City the benefit of being able to notify the landowners that there is going to be a discussion about this property.

Chair Maggi stated it seemed to her that it would be irresponsible to not address the 'Pinkville' issue.

Motion carried (9/0). This item will go to the City Council on December 10, 2018.

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Fox
Recording Secretary