

## WEST ST. PAUL PLANNING COMMISSION

**The regular meeting of the West St. Paul Planning Commission was called to order by Interim Chair Kavanaugh on Tuesday, March 15, 2022 at 6:30 pm in the Municipal Center Council Chambers, 1616 Humboldt Avenue, West St. Paul, Minnesota 55118.**

ROLL CALL: Alex Dahlquist, Tori Elsmore, Maria Franzmeier, Liz Gillen, Tim Haubrich, Morgan Kavanaugh, Lance LaRue, and Dan McPhillips.

Commissioner Lisa Stevens was absent from the meeting.

Also Present: Ben Boike, Community Development Director; Melissa Houtsma, City Planner; Dave Schletty, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director; John Justen, City Council Liaison; and Amanda Johnson, Assistant City Attorney.

**ADOPT MINUTES** - The minutes from the January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022 regular Planning Commission meeting were approved as written.

### **PUBLIC HEARINGS -**

#### **PC Case 22-04 – Site Plan Review for a Building Expansion at 60 Emerson Avenue West (Ice Arena) – City Of West St. Paul and West St. Paul Youth Hockey**

City Planner Houtsma presented a minor site plan review for the expansion of the Ice Arena. Assistant Parks and Rec. Director Schletty came before the Commission to give background information. In 2019, the Hockey Association and the high school Hockey Booster Club began discussions with the City to add to the arena; however, the pandemic had delayed the planning. The plan is to conduct the renovation this summer; the City would maintain operations throughout the construction. The facility would be more user friendly with dedicated locker rooms. The parking lot improvements would be paid by the City and are scheduled for 2025, (when funding becomes available.)

McPhillips commented about there being few public skating hours. Schletty said there is public skating, 5 days a week and open hockey, 2 days a week. There is no public skating on the weekends because the arena is fully programed, as the association needs the ice time. The skating hours are typically reduced in the summer season. A long term possibility that might be of interest would be installing an open sheet of ice to the east of the building that would be able to be covered when not in use, similar to what the City of Edina has.

Franzmeier asked about the site traffic patterns and how children typically get into the arena. She also inquired about sidewalks around the building. Schletty and Houtsma reviewed the parking counts and dimensions, and where the sidewalks would be located. Community Development Director Boike said that it was likely that the parking lot improvements would need a separate site plan review and pedestrian traffic details could be more closely reviewed at that time.

The public hearing was opened at 6:55 p.m.

West St. Paul resident Thomas Pavek came forward to speak generally in favor of the project, and asked a few questions relating to the logistics of the site such as lighting, parking, and asked if the

lighting could be focused more downward. Pavsek closed by saying he hopes the project is successful.

With no other comments or questions from the public, the public hearing was closed at 6:59 p.m.

Commission members continued the discussion. McPhillips asked if the City was removing the only light pole at that end of the building. Schletty said there are four light poles in the parking lot as well as additional lighting within the entrance overhang. There is one being removed and possibly being replaced with building lighting. He will ensure that the lighting meets code requirements.

Franzmeier asked if the Planning Commission had previously reviewed a building expansion separately from an adjacent parking facility. Houtsma said plans are submitted together, typically in one package. However, this instance was different because of the funding delay for the parking lot in that construction of the parking lot will be either 2024 or 2025. Franzmeier is concerned with reviewing the building expansion and the parking lot separately. Kavanaugh is concerned with a “sea of parking”, stating that there are areas that could be improved from a pedestrian access standpoint. Boike said that the City has a precedent with site plan review with building renovations without “touching the parking lot.” The current plan is unique in that the building extension expands into the parking lot. The parking lot is nonconforming. The thought process is the City will bring the parking lot into conformity and make sure that the sidewalk connections are there at a later date.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Elsmore to recommend approval of the site plan as recommended by City Staff, with an amendment to condition number one regarding the parking lot reconstruction be changed to 2025 instead of 2024. Commissioner Haubrich seconded the motion.**

**Votes: 8 ayes, 0 nays. The motion carried.**

#### **PC Case 22-05 – Ordinance Amendment to Code Section 153.349 Regarding Off-Street Loading And Unloading Regulations – City Of West St. Paul**

City Planner Houtsma summarized the proposed amendment by stating that presently loading berths are not allowed in front yards or in side yards that are adjacent to a street. The proposed change would allow loading berths in the front yard and the side yard adjacent to a street if the property were zoned industrial and if the front/side yard does not face a different zoning district. The change would be limited to a case of “industrial to industrial.”

The public hearing was opened at 7:15 p.m. With no comments or questions from the public and no one calling in, the public hearing was subsequently closed at 7:15 p.m.

**A motion was made by Commissioner McPhillips to recommend approval of the ordinance amendment as written and presented by City Staff. Commissioner Haubrich seconded the motion.**

**Votes: 8 ayes, 0 nays. The motion carried.**

**OLD BUSINESS – N/A**

**NEW BUSINESS – N/A**

**OTHER BUSINESS – N/A**

**ADJORN**

**A motion was made to adjourn the regular Planning Commission meeting at 7:16 pm.**

**All ayes. The motion carried.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Sharon G. Hatfield**