

**CITY OF ST. FRANCIS
ST. FRANCIS, MN
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
September 15, 2021**

1. **Call to Order:** The Planning Commission meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm by Chair Women Fairbanks.
2. **Roll Call:** Present were Todd Gardner, Colleen Sievert, Liz Fairbanks, Tara Kelly. Absent: Alan Lauermann, Deborah Humann and Dustin Pavel

Others in attendance: Kate Thunstrom- Community Development Director, Kevin Robinson - City Council, Beth Richmond – City Planner

3. **Adopt Agenda:** Motion by Sievert to adopt the agenda with changing the order of discussion for items #6 and #7, second by Gardner. Motion carried 4-0.
4. **Approve Minutes:** Motion by Sievert, second by Kelly to approve the August 18, 2021 minutes. Motion carried 4-0.

5. **Public Comment:**

6. **Regular Business Items: Discussed as item #7**

a. City Acquisition of Real Property

Thunstrom identified the City is looking to possibly acquire the property located at 22708 Rum River Blvd. As a comprehensive plan city, the Planning Commission is to review the purchase and determine its compatibility with the adopted comprehensive plan. Thunstrom identified that the purchase would be for the possible expansion of Community Park. Commission asked if there was a pre-determined use for the property. Staff identified that the City is in the process of a Park Plan to identify what the residents are looking for and what would best fit in that space. Commission was supportive of the purchase and agreed that it would be a benefit to the City.

Motion by Sievert identifying the acquisition complies with the City Comprehensive Plan 2nd by Fairbanks 4-0 pass

7. **Public Hearing: Discussed as item #6**

a. Green Valley 2nd

Richmond presented staff packet and presentation identifying development components. Green Valley 2nd is a 14-lot cluster development with a public road and large wetland. This property is guided Agricultural. These 14 units are being developed on 146 acres with a 62-acre conservation easement. This development would be a rezoning to a PUD overlay for the lot area and width sizes. This side has frontage on Ambassador Blvd with a north/south public street for a single access point onto Ambassador. The road created would be a temporary dead end to allow for the extension of development to the west.

Staff is still working with Engineering on the road requirements to determine the need for curb and gutter. Details are not yet finalized. Sidewalks are typically required in a development but due to the rural location it is not recommended by staff. The proposed conservation is property

made up of wetland and woodland. This easement would provide an indirect public use but not an active use. An easement is in place to allow the City to access for maintenance reasons. Landscaping includes two trees per site and that they maintain as many significant trees as possible through the development. A buffer is required between the collector road and residential property along that road. This project is outside of the urban service utilities and all lots require the ability to have well and septic. Development has submitted to Engineering soil information which is still being reviewed. Staff is also waiting for the final written comments from Anoka County.

With those pending pieces, (final comments from Engineering and Anoka County) staff requests that tonight's action be to table the development until the October 20th Planning Commission meeting.

Kelly requested clarification on the property that this development surrounds and the access to that the property. Richmond identified that the property belongs to a property owner that owns the parcel to the north and has direct access to Ambassador.

Fairbanks requested clarification on current use and is he wishing to sell. Richmond and Thunstrom clarified that this is farmland and open space. This is the current owner and his team working to develop as they have developed other properties within the city.

Public Hearing Opened: 7:21 p.m.

- Gene Rechtzigel 6533 160th St NW, Apple Valley (property owner to west of property in discussion). - Survey created is not legal and would like clarification as to why this is not a "Retracement" survey. Presented the difference between the two types of survey the other being a subdivision survey. What the city is doing is illegal and sighted US Gabler VS Fedoruk case. City is not transparent only got letter and limited information.
- Philip and Emily Thompson 6448 Ambassador Blvd – hand out provided and attached in minutes. Property is currently an active farm and feel this development is a liability for the farming practice. This development has several housing making crops and the issues of irrigation an issue with concerns of the wells going dry. Concerns over livestock, the odors of farming, application of fertilizers and anticipated calls about being a nuisance to the neighbors. Concerns regarding the possibility of people entering his property or leaving items on the property that may damage his equipment. Preservation to gain density when the preservation is already in place does not make sense. Is opposed to the rezoning.
- Jan McCalister 6416 Ambassador Blvd - moved to the area for the 10 acres lots. This is a calm area but project will bring more traffic to Ambassador which is already a dangerous road. The size of the new lots is too small. Opposed to the project. Participates in shooting trap on his property as well as having deer stands and does not find that safe for children.
- Cheryl Kipela 23525 Variolate St – boards horse in the area and is dependent on some of the properties off Ambassador. Has concerns with the trailer on Ambassador and the increased traffic. Ambassador gets dangerous. Did not receive a letter. Concerns on road and S turn and people try to pass her. Only 14 driveways off road now adding 14 more.
- Jesse Jones 7038 Ambassador Blvd – Doesn't mind lots getting small if anyone can do it. Everyone should get the same rule. Gets calls when spreading manure already. Dangerous corner off Ambassador and see where many things could go wrong.

- Carolyn Thompson 6938 Ambassador – long history in area with family. Development impacts the farms and hunting. Have lived by the rules of 10 acres and feel other should do the same.
- Jonathan and Meghan Anderson 6231 Ambassador Blvd – this owner knew what he was buying. Dangerous road already and adding more traffic. Accidents are already getting more severe. Stick to the 10-acre minimum and keep it fair. Passed up on an opportunity to do the same thing because was following the rules.
- Keith Lipinski 7559 245th Ave NW, Zimmerman – uses Ambassador everyday to get to work at the School District. There are a lot of deer and accidents are already increasing with the increase in traffic. Hunts in that area, land owner has harassed him and his son. Look at other cities running out of land, this one isn't and does not want to end up there.
- Rebecca Curtis 6481 Ambassador Blvd – moved here for the quiet rural setting to have acreage. Every car from this street will shine a light in her windows. Severe accidents including a recent motorcycle fatality and several deer accidents. Fear kids and families on Ambassador. Moved here to be further away.
- Jeffrey Tener 23003 Spring Hill Rd – question/clarification that lot sizes are based on public benefit? Only two lots will enjoy the public benefit from the easement. MnDNR has a snowmobile trail down the proposed road. Any consideration for the trail? Who decides if the public benefit is enough?
- Mike Watroba 23580 Nacre St – requests that lot minimums stay to 10 acres. Do not want to see that changed.
- Kelsey Slaughter and Jordan Demorrett 6445 Ambassador Blvd – Concerns regarding traffic and safety issues, destroying the natural space and an increase in lot value. Increasing traffic to Ambassador is dangerous. Concerns if PD and Fire will have the capacity for the increased development along with schools or how the county will maintain the road.
- Don Slaughter 6445 Ambassador Blvd – keep to 10 acres and shut this down now!
- Bob Olson 7175 245th Ave, Isanti – active farm in Isanti and in St. Francis. Real estate agent in the area as well. Feed the Developer, planner and attorneys have had months to prepare and the people had days. Agricultural, social and environmental aspects to this preservation. Discussed the understanding of a variance. City doesn't have a shortage of property developable property. Discussed there is no financial benefit to the city for doing this in the rural area. Easement does not provide access to the residents. Already a snowmobile trail and the easement is land locked. Agricultural and residential property doesn't mix. Thompsons have a small vegetable stand. If they need to apply any chemicals there is a distance requirement on each type of chemical. PUD's have been rejected on this property and others he has tried to pursue with owners. This property two owners ago got rejected by Hylen. Good common sense to deny this.
- Megan Anderson– ask to vote it down and not table this. We have children and hunt there and vote this down and make it go away.

- Cynthia Hiller 24217 Seelye Brook Dr – when you get the developments you get the snowmobilers and 4-wheelers and as ag property have to call the cops a lot because they are on your property without permission. Les we have, keep them in St. Francis. We are rural we are not with St. Francis. St Francis thinks we are all residents and we are not. The more residents the more theft and issues. I say no way.

Public Hearing Closed 8:28 p.m.

Fairbanks – I votes to deny, not in the right spot and do not agree with the development. Believes we need to keep the 10 acres in place. Makes a motion to deny this development.

Kelly – I live in a development now that was one of these. If it wasn't for something like this I wouldn't be living int his community. Understand concerns, do not know anything about road situation. Would have requested to table this.

Gardner – Agree, I also live in a community that was agricultural and still live next to agricultural property. At end of road is all farmland. Come out of the community to a cornfield. Also suggest to table to get applicant here and collect additional information. Curious on road going in and what the county will say. County errors on the side of safety so feel they will have a big say in this. Sounds like we need to collect DNR comments as well. Want to see all the information and do not like to make decisions on partial information.

Sievert – live on acreage and on a county road and also see dangerous traffic issues. Given the fact the application was not available and all the information is not before us vote to table it as well.

Sievert makes a motion to table the land use and subdivision request pertaining to the Green Valley Preserve 2nd Addition subdivision and direct the applicant to refine plans and provide updated information related to the public street, lot buildability and landscaping. – 2nd by Kelly. 3-1 passed (Fairbanks)

8. Planning Commission Discussion

- a. On track for the October meeting
- b. Resident notices – notices are sent to properties that are 350' from the property involved in a land use application. This is Statute for these types of applications. The City has the ability to increase that distance understanding the financial implications associated with this action. Staff will discuss with Council.

9. **Adjournment:** Motion by Gardner, second by Sievert to adjourn. Motion carried 4-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:54 pm.

Website Link to Packets and Minutes for the Planning Commission:

<https://www.stfrancismn.org/meetings>

Recorded by: Kate Thunstrom

DATE APPROVED: October 20, 2021