

VI. Community Comment

None.

Motion was made by Commissioner Thorsen to close Community Comment. Motion was seconded by Strauss. All voted aye. The motion carried.

VII. Reports/Recommendations

B. Sketch Plan Review – 5109 – 5125 49th Street West, Edina, MN

Planner Introduction

Planner Teague reported that the Planning Commission is asked to consider a sketch plan request to redevelop three lots at 5109-5125 West 49th Street. Teague explained that opinions or comments provided to the applicant shall be considered advisory only, and shall not constitute a binding decision on the request.

Teague noted that the applicant is proposing to tear down the existing two apartments and single family home on the site and build two new 3-4 story condominiums with a total of 27 units. The applicant is proposing six units or 22% of the units for affordable housing. The property is 1.43 acres in size. The density proposed in the project would be 19 units per acre.

Teague informed the Commission this site was rezoned to PUD in 2013; however, the approved project for the site was never built. The site was approved for a 16 unit townhome development that had a density of 11 units per acre. To accommodate that request a Comprehensive Plan Amendment was granted to re-guide the site from LDAR, Low Density Attached Residential (1-4 units per acre), to MDR, Medium Density Residential, which allows up to 12 units per acre.

Teague explained that this new request would require another Comprehensive Plan Amendment to re-guide the site to HD, High Density Residential. A High Density Residential designation would allow the site to be developed with over 12 units per acre. A Zoning Ordinance Amendment to the existing PUD would also be required.

Concluding, Teague said the applicant is present to share their vision.

Appearing for the Applicant

Edward Briesemeister, Great Oaks, Dan Ionescu, Architects & Planners

Applicant Presentation

Mr. Briesemeister addressed the Commission and explained that their vision includes a significant increase in greenspace. Briesemeister said they believe their proposal calls for empty nesters not

the younger population the previous project was designed for. With graphics Briesemeister pointed out the viable pedestrian connection to Vernon Avenue and usable open space. He added their objective was to have an inclusive project that includes an affordable housing component. With graphics Briesemeister highlighted the following aspects of the project:

- Tear down the existing two apartments and single family home.
- Construct two new 3-4 story condominium buildings with a “wedding cake” design and a total of 27-units.
- Provide six units (22%) for affordable housing.
- Two parking spaces for each conventional unit and one parking space for each affordable unit.
- Classic Nordic features will be incorporated into the building design.
- 11 guest parking spaces are provided along West 49th Street (inside the curb).
- Preserve as many large trees as possible to include the wooded area along the RR tracks.

Mr. Briesemeister told the Commission they held a neighborhood meeting with good response and thanked the Commission for this opportunity.

Discussion/Comments

- Commissioners asked what the site was previously zoned. Planner Teague responded the house was zoned R-1 and the apartment buildings were zoned PRD, adding the current zoning is PUD.
- Commissioners asked if setbacks would be met. Planner Teague responded that would have to be looked into at the time of formal application.
- Commissioners asked the applicant if he knows how much taller the new building would be when compared to the R-1 house to the east. Mr. Briesemeister responded he believes the new structure would be roughly 10-feet taller than the existing house.
- Commissioners acknowledged the openness of the site and the effort to provide a pedestrian experience; however, there was concern with ADA standards and bike mobility. Briesemeister acknowledged that the topography of the site doesn't lend itself well as a thoroughfare; however, it is designed for pedestrian access to Vernon Avenue. Briesemeister noted the slopes and their intent to retain as many large trees as possible.

A discussion ensued on the recent information that the sound wall could be continued along Vernon Avenue behind the subject property. It was acknowledged that until it is known how far the sound wall would extend it is difficult to design access from the subject site to Vernon Avenue.

The discussion ensued with Commissioners acknowledging the concept was interesting; however, more density is being placed into smaller buildings. Commissioners expressed some concern with traffic.

Mr. Briesemeister acknowledged the increase in density adding he believes traffic levels will be equal to the levels calculated for the townhouse development. Briesemeister further acknowledged there is only one way in and one way out of this neighborhood and that includes having to cross a railroad track and that needs to be studied. With graphics access into and out of the site was viewed along with the 11 visitor parking spaces built into the curb.

Commissioners further expressed the following:

- Acknowledgement that this parcel is unique and as the past indicates a challenge to redevelop. It was noted the site is a small site with a topography challenge, access challenge, and use challenge. The location of this multifamily site in an R-1 neighborhood is another challenge that makes it important to get redevelopment of the site correct.
- As previously mentioned the sound wall could pose a problem. The applicant will need to work with the City and MNDOT to get clarity on where the wall will end and if a "gate" could be added to the wall. It was pointed out that there is an existing informal pedestrian path that runs along the tracks opening to Vernon Avenue; however a more formal access would be preferred.
- The railroad tracks are also an issue not only for safety reasons but for vehicle stacking during the time a train crosses.
- It was further reiterated that this project increases the density. Mr. Ionescu said their design is community based adding they really want to work with the City and the neighbors to integrate this project into the neighborhood.

Chair Platteter thanked the applicant for their presentation and encouraged them to bring their proposal to the City Council.

C. Sketch Plan Review – 7200 France Avenue, Edina, MN

Planner Introduction

Planner Teague reported that the Planning Commission is asked to consider a sketch plan proposal to redevelop the 3.51 acre parcel at 7200 France Avenue. The applicant is requesting consideration of a proposal to tear down the existing office building on the site, and redevelop it with a six-story, 241 unit apartment building with parking on the first two levels. The applicant is proposing 10% of the units to be affordable

To accommodate the request, three amendments to the Comprehensive Plan would be required for: Building Height – from 4 stories to 6 stories. Housing Density – from 30 units, per acre to 69, and Floor Area Ratio (FAR) – from .5 to 1.58.

Teague further noted that a rezoning to PRD-5 with FAR and building height variances, or rezoning to PUD, Planned Unit Development would also be required.