



Minutes  
City Of Edina, Minnesota  
Planning Commission  
Edina City Hall Council Chambers  
June 26, 2019

**I. Call To Order**

Chair Olsen called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

**II. Roll Call**

Answering the roll call were: Commissioners Miranda, Berube, Mangalick, Nemerov, Bennett, Lee, Douglas, and Chair Olsen. Staff Present: Cary Teague, Community Development Director; Kris Aaker, Assistant Planner; Jackie Hoogenakker, Support; Kaylin Eidsness, Senior Communications Coordinator.

Absent from the roll call: Commissioners Thorsen, Strauss, Melton.

**III. Approval Of Meeting Agenda**

**Commissioner Berube moved to approve the June 26, 2019, agenda. Commissioner Miranda seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.**

**IV. Approval Of Meeting Minutes**

**A. Minutes: Planning Commission, June 12, 2019**

**Commissioner Berube moved to approve the June 12, 2019, meeting minutes. Commissioner Douglas seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.**

Director Teague introduced Commissioner Douglas as the new Planning Commissioner. Commissioner Douglas reviewed his background with the Commissioners.

**V. Public Hearings**

**A. Variance Request B-19-10 – 4213-4215 West 50<sup>th</sup> Street**

Assistant Planner Aaker presented the request of the applicant for a variance to permit a 10.3-foot setback for a garage and carport from right-of-way and variance from the minimum two-car garage requirement at 4213-4215 West 50<sup>th</sup> Street. The subject property is zoned R-2, double dwelling unit district, and is approximately 10,074 square feet in area, located south of West 50<sup>th</sup> Street consisting of a side-by-side double dwelling with a detached two-car garage accessing from West 50<sup>th</sup> Street.

Staff recommends approval of the variance requests as requested subject to the findings and conditions listed in the staff report.

### **Discussion/Comments/Questions**

- Commissioners asked if the City had requirements or guidelines for garage access. Aaker responded she was not aware of any requirements. The garage would either need to access a street or alleyway.
- Commissioners wondered if the City would see any issue in the future with use of the right-of-way for the driveway access to the alleyway. Aaker stated it has not been a concern of the City Engineer and was one of the first questions that was asked when this proposal came in.
- Commissioners noted there was mention of eventually subdividing this parcel and wondered what that meant. Aaker explained there would be a party wall division with two legal descriptions and at some point in time the two units could be sold and owned separately. It should be noted that the subject lot is one lot.
- Commissioners asked for confirmation that there was no subdivision before the Commission at this time. Aaker indicated that was correct.
- Commissioners asked how a car will access the easement area on the property and which stalls would need to be removed from the existing parking lot. Aaker showed an aerial of the area and indicated two parking spots behind the garage that would need to be removed. She noted there was no objection when discussing this with the City Engineer and also indicated the same would be done for the property owner to the east.

### **Appearing for the Applicant**

Steve Springrose, owner, introduced himself and explained he and his wife have owned the property for two years. The building was built as a duplex in the 40's and did not have a lot of improvements through the years. He explained there is nowhere to park unless they park on Jay Place. Springrose said he is attempting to put in four resident parking and four guest parking spaces on the existing property. Nothing would change on the southside of the property. Springrose stated he wanted to maintain a good relationship between the duplex and the church behind them. He mentioned that in addition to the church he has spoken to the four adjacent landowners on Jay Place and to the property owner to the east and all are in support of what is being proposed.

Springrose noted the garage as drawn on the south side has a fifteen-foot setback and in discussion with City staff it was indicated that twenty feet might be what is required there. He did not know if there was an administrative way to add a fifteen-foot setback capability to the variance, as the garage would be built to the south, even though it is not what was put into the information before the Planning Commission. Assistant Planner Aaker responded because it is an alley to the south, it is considered differently than a City street and actually a three-foot setback is required, not 15 or 20 if it were a street. Aaker stated Mr. Springrose is fine with what the drawing shows.

### **Discussion/Comments/Questions**

- Commissioners had a concern with who would be maintaining the alleyway behind the garage. Springrose indicated there have not been any past concerns with the maintenance of the alleyway but if there were future concerns it would be brought forward to the City to see what could be done.
- Commissioners asked how long Springrose has lived in the home. Springrose indicated his family does not currently live at the residence, it is being rented out to single individuals; however, they are planning on moving into the house in a few years.

- A Commissioner asked Springrose to expand his points regarding affordability. Springrose indicated this is naturally occurring low income property in the City of Edina. The rent charged is at the twentieth percentile of Edina incomes. Continuing, a Commissioner wondered if the renovations go through as proposed would the rents have to increase. Commissioners stated that those issues were not within the purview of the Planning Commission.
- Commissioners wondered if there was a way to consider a different paving materials choice other than hardscape. Springrose stated he has been working with City Engineering related to that, adding they are trying to stay under six hundred square feet of pavement addition. The front area paving can be removed because it will not be accessed by a vehicle which will reduce the amount of hardscape. He noted he has looked at various types of paving that would limit the footprint and runoff.

### **Public Hearing**

None.

**Commissioner Berube moved to close the public hearing. Commissioner Nemerov seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.**

### **Discussion/Comments/Questions**

- Commissioners discussed the concerns with single car garage and carport, the maintenance of the alleyway and the affordable housing aspect.
- Commissioners were in support of the variance.

### **Motion**

**Commissioner Berube moved that the Planning Commission recommend approval to the City Council of the variance request B-19-10 for 4213-4215 West 50<sup>th</sup> Street as outlined in the staff memo subject to the conditions and findings therein. Commissioner Lee seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.**

### **B. Variance Request B-19-11 – 4439 Garrison Lane**

Assistant Planner Aaker presented the request of the applicant for a 3.36-inch foot first floor height variance for a new home at 4439 Garrison Lane. The proposed first floor elevation of the house is proposed to be at 878.36, which will be 3.36 inches higher than the 1-foot increase allowed by ordinance. Aaker explained the proposed survey indicates a first-floor elevation for a new home at 878.36 with the existing first floor at 877.37, which is less than the allowable 1-foot increase (complies). The survey, therefore, specifies compliance with the 1-foot maximum increase rule. The survey also specifies that the basement will be a 9-foot poured walk-out. Aaker stated the property will be re-graded to accomplish a walk out. Given the survey, it appears the project can be accomplished without the need for a survey.

Aaker concluded that staff cannot support the variance as requested given conforming design options and recommends denial of the variance as requested.

### **Discussion/Comments/Questions**

- Commissioners wondered why there is a variance on an elevation if the aggregate house is still lower than the maximum. Aaker indicated the City has a rule that requires that you do not go higher than one foot above the existing entry elevation of the home that is currently there. It is a variance from the required 1-foot rule; not from building height.
- Commissioners asked if the previous house had been compliant with the today's floodplain regulations in terms of basement elevation would there still be this issue. Aaker stated what they are proposing could comply and also comply with the floodplain elevation. The current home, if it was non-conforming could be kept that way as long as there was no tear down and rebuilding. If that would be done, it would need to be elevated. Aaker noted this is a problem the City has run into. Basements are required to be elevated 2 feet above the flood ordinance; however, the zoning ordinance limits the elevation to no more than 1-foot above the existing first floor elevation. It should be noted that most of the homes were built prior to standard and are lower.
- Commissioners asked if there would be any aesthetic differences when the property is built between the trusses the builder is using and the trusses the City thinks they could use. Aaker stated visually it may not be apparent adding she has been told trusses could affect ceiling height and where duct work can be placed. She said it can be done but is not generally the standard solution. Expanding, Aaker said higher ceiling height is what is seen on new builds.

### **Appearing for the Applicant**

Alex Swiggen, 4439 Garrison Lane, applicant and Dale Perrault, Perrault Construction, explained they are asking for 3.36 inches for the variance with the basement height due to the one-hundred-year flood plain being at 866.2 and having to have a basement floor at 8.68.2. He noted there are some other things with the property he would like to do down the road with his job and having to stay within a certain fitness level, he does a lot of things overhead and needs a certain height of ceiling for that. If the trusses were to be changed that would be slightly problem some to him. He did not think from the street there would be any way to tell that it is three inches higher than others.

### **Discussion/Comments/Questions**

- Commissioners indicated it was not about the inches and clarified this would be going up a foot and is not staying the same. The applicant is already taking twelve inches and wants three inches more. Swiggen stated without the hundred-year flood plain they would be able to get that with the twelve inches and would not have to come for a variance.
- Commissioners thought the roof height had been at a consistent maximum height throughout the City but if the applicant is open to taking suggestions, they could look at using some hip roof forms as a way of bringing down the overall building height which would make the house look less massive. Swiggen was under the impression that roof height had nothing to do with the variance requested because the proposed house is four feet lower than what is allowed. Aaker agreed that the overall building height is not an issue of this request.

### **Public Hearing**

None.

**Commissioner Bennett moved to close the public hearing. Commissioner Miranda seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.**

### **Discussion/Comments/Questions**

- Commissioners did not think this variance was hurting anyone and noted the change is the ordinance.
- Commissioners agreed the applicant is stuck at a bottom limit based on the floodplain and with all of the support from the neighborhood the majority of Commissioners felt that the plans as presented would not alter the character of the neighborhood.
- Commissioners discussed the staff recommendation, and some were in support of this and some thought it was pretty clear that this is about process and could not vote in support of the request.
- Commissioners suggested that the Planning Commission “come up” with a number that could be accepted on items like this, so it is consistent throughout (ceiling height). This topic should be placed on the Commissions “to do” topics.
- Commissioners thought there should be consistency. The houses are not out of sync with the character of the neighborhood and the aggregate height is a more important number within those floors. Three and a half inches in a basement is huge and can make a person either feel they are in a cave or in a room and can make the whole house more livable. It makes sense to approve this. It was expressed that the duty of the Planning Commissions is to also consider the spirit of the law, how the neighbors feel and what it does for the community. It will also be a more valuable home because there will be a livable basement.
- Commissioners thought precedent was something very important to consider; however, in the past the Commission has approved a variance for someone in order to get a hot tub because of the physical demands of their employment and in the past variances in subdivisions were approved in order to enhance the resale value of the land. This was not out of character of past actions by the City of Edina.

A majority of the Planning Commission indicated support for the variance.

### **Motion**

**Commissioner Berube moved that the Planning Commission recommend approval to the City Council of Variance B-19-11 for 4439 Garrison Lane as outlined in the staff memo subject to the conditions and findings therein including The hardship is caused by the high water elevation and an 8 foot 9 inch basement is considered reasonable in this instance and would not negatively impact the character of the neighborhood. Commissioner Nemerov seconded the motion. The motion carried 5 ayes, 1 nay (Lee).**

### **C. Subdivision with Variances – 5841 Oaklawn Avenue**

Director Teague presented the request of Steve Sandberg to subdivide his property at 5841 Oaklawn Avenue into two lots. The existing home on the lot would be torn down and two new homes built on

the new parcels. Both lots would gain access off Oaklawn Avenue. Teague noted the home to the south is shaped the same as the proposed south lot, due to the vacation of a portion of 59<sup>th</sup> Street. There is an existing pedestrian and utility easement located over the vacated right-of-way. Teague noted the overhead power line and stairway/sidewalk access to the park located in the easement, which would remain in place.

Staff recommends approval of the subdivision with variances, as requested subject to the findings and conditions listed in the staff report.

### **Discussion/Comments/Questions**

- Commissioners asked Teague if Engineering looked at these as building pads because it looks like the topography is pretty steep. It works right now for the single house that is there right now and seems to stay pretty clear of that but once it is subdivided into two lots it might have to start cutting into the steep slope, especially on Lot 1. Teague indicated Engineering did not have an issue with that.
- Commissioners thought there will need to be a retaining wall on Lot 1 on the southside in the future because it currently naturally slopes down. By subdividing there could potentially be some topography and water drainage related issues once two separate houses are built.
- Commissioners asked in regard to a technicality that was brought up in some correspondence the Commission received, six of the ten lots are larger than fifty percent, which is the majority unless the lots on the other side of the street are included then it would be thirty percent. Does the guideline actually pertain to one street or did it specify the neighborhood. Teague indicated there is no specific wording for this and is a judgement call for the Planning Commission and Council to look at.
- Commissioners asked for clarity on the drawing where the property lines and easement area would be. Teague showed the drawing and indicated within the two dotted red lines it is a utility easement and no building could be constructed there, which is thirty feet from line to line. He noted the blue outside lines were the property lines.
- Commissioners asked if Engineering was ok with a building pad being so close to the utility easement. Teague indicated Engineering was fine with that. The original proposal did extend into the easement but given the easement that is there and the potential to put in additional utility lines, protection of that pedestrian path it is very important to the neighborhood to preserve the easement area.
- Commissioners stated one of the residents expressed water run off on one of the stairs during winter and did Engineering have any concerns about that or is there enough distance from the new proposed pad to avoid that. Teague noted Engineering did not mention any concern they had on that. That is something, should this go through to draw to Engineering's attention.
- Commissioners thought it was significant for the Engineering report to state that the proposed plan does show with redevelopment of the property that the impervious surface is now increasing from 25.4 percent to 43.7 percent. It does mention that there may be retaining walls required on the southern side of Lot 1, in which case, if over four feet will need to be designed and by the conduits those walls will be over four feet.

- Commissioners asked if there was a concern for flooding because at 5845 Kellogg there was issues with the drainage and neighbors were experiencing flooding because this is increasing the impervious coverage by a lot. Teague did not recall that. He noted a drainage area on this plat and thought there might need to have something like this done to the north when a specific building is proposed for that site.
- Commissioners stated one of the proposals the Commission recently denied was that lot had a lot of old trees and that factored into the consideration a little bit and was not aware of any trees on this lot. Are there any trees relevant? Teague did not hear about any tree issues but there were a number of large oaks on the north parcel and is not a consideration on this lot.

### **Appearing for the Applicant**

Steve Sandberg, 5841 Oaklawn Avenue, introduced himself and his siblings and explained that they grew up at 5841 Oaklawn Avenue. The combined two lots were purchased by his father in 1949 and contractors were hired to finish off what had been started as a foundation. Sandberg noted his father lived on and took care of that property and loved Edina. It was his father's wishes to split this back into two lots.

David Kenably, Civil Site Group, Civil Engineer working on the subdivision with the Sandberg's. In regard to the topography and grading on the property, these are preliminary plans and once approved the engineering work will need to be done. Currently retaining walls are not being shown and the current house is being used as a retaining wall with landscaping along the house. The slopes are standard 3 to 1 slope through there. The drainage all flows to the City right-of-way, nothing flows to any adjacent properties. Both block one and two drains to the east but there is a low spot and swale on this property that ultimately drains to 59<sup>th</sup> and will be no increase or impact to drainage on adjacent properties.

### **Discussion/Comments/Questions**

- Commissioners asked if the connection of the driveway to 59<sup>th</sup> is going to be eliminated, providing some more permeable cover. Kenably stated that is the current intent. Having the two driveways come off Oaklawn and the driveway in the back would be eliminated.
- Commissioners asked if the drainage to 59<sup>th</sup> is above ground drainage or is any of it below ground. Kenably indicated it is currently above ground drainage with swales but apparently the engineer at the City indicated a drain at 59<sup>th</sup> that it could potentially be connected into. Commissioners thought that was a good idea.

### **Public Hearing**

Robert Braun (property owner to the rear) commented that he respected the wishes of the family and wants to carry them on. He indicated he has been a resident since 1993 and his grandparents owned his home since the beginning, in 1952. Some of the main issues he believes has to do with aesthetics and drainage. The change to the neighborhood has been wonderful but now it is personal because he is going to sit in his backyard, as he did eight years ago and allowed his neighbor to build, and this project will do the same. He noted there is no drainage and there is the potential for that to become an issue. He expressed concern with the loss of some old growth trees that are directly a shade path from his house and his patio, which is something he would like to conserve. Concluding Braun stated he does not have a problem with the progress and improvement to the neighborhood but with this case, it will unfortunately

change everything about his property and might squeeze him out. The flooding is real, every spring he has a stream in his backyard. There is not a lot of drainage. Retaining walls and drainage tiles are great; however, reiterated he still believes there could be issues.

Scott Armstrong, 5844 Brookview Avenue, commented he purchased his mother's property and his concern was with the fifty-foot lots and over building. He pointed out originally when this neighborhood was established the fifty-foot lots were built for ramblers and now there are six-thousand-square foot homes on these same lots. He added one concern is with the kids using the walkup to the bus stop, adding if a new six thousand square foot house were built on Lot 1 that could create a wind tunnel. He noted he is directly below that. Concluding Armstrong stated he was also concerned with drainage and that some beautiful oak trees could be lost as a result of this subdivision.

**Commissioner Bennett moved to close the public hearing. Commissioner Berube seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.**

### **Discussion/Comments/Questions**

- Commissioners stated the Planning Commission has seen a number of subdivision requests and the Commission has a certain set of principles that are adhered to as to how a proposed redevelopment might alter the essential character of a neighborhood. Commissioners noted that the subject property was not similar to the requests that were denied and for that reason it was not believed the subdivision would alter the essential character of the neighborhood. (majority of lots are 50 feet) It was noted that house "aesthetics" are not reviewed by the Planning Commission. The neighbors' comments are duly noted. Drainage is a concern to the neighbors, adding it might not hurt to add another drainage element on the lot(s) especially Lot 1 to help with drainage and further support the project.
- Commissioners asked for clarification that this is being approved with the variances and the Commission will not see this again. Teague indicated that was correct.
- Commissioners thought about the character of the neighborhood and this is the only lot that is larger than the others. The subdivision makes sense. There is concern about the trees and drainage.
- Commissioners thought if the property were sold without subdivision the concern of an overly large home could become a reality; adding there is an uncertainty either way. The subdivision of the lot is rational because it started out as two lots and two lot vs. one lot fits in with the rest of the neighborhood.
- Commissioners wondered if there was any consideration of having a six-foot setback between each home to honor that cumulative twelve feet (was that not discussed). Teague stated it was looked at and if it was ten feet on the south side it seemed reasonable to allow a little closer on the north side but because of the variances, if the Commission does not think the five foot separation is appropriate, there could then be a ten foot separation between the two and the variance could be modified or not grant the variance to the north lot line then there would need to be a ten foot setback.
- Commissioners concern was the more these homes are squeezed together the higher up the structure could go - which is an aesthetic concern of the neighborhood.



- Commissioners indicated it was hard to understand the variances without knowing what was going to be built. A subdivision is a different standard of approval than a variance and those two could be separated. Teague stated the Commission could and if no variances were granted, lot two is essentially unbuildable, which would make it a little more challenging. The Commission would be approving a subdivision with a lot that is unbuildable.
- Commissioners thought there were issues that by subdividing situations could be created that impact the surrounding areas. Not every lot is necessarily buildable and here the City is helping the applicant create a buildable lot as part of the subdivision.
- Commissioners were not sure about approving the variances and leaving that for a later date in the process.
- Commissioners were supportive of the overall character of the neighborhood and the lot widths to the north and south, this seems to be a reasonable fit. Variances at this time are an unknown for approval at this time.
- Commissioners thought the neighbors brought up a lot of good points about drainage and trees. From what the Commission has been told, it sounds like drainage will be addressed and there will be no drainage onto neighbors' properties. Assuming that is true then the drainage issue has been addressed. The City needs a stronger tree ordinance, and this cannot be voted against because of the trees at this point. In terms of altering the character of the neighborhood, splitting the lot would perfectly fit the neighborhood. There is nothing unusual about it.
- Commissioners asked for clarification on the variances. There are three variances to be considered, lot area variances and setback variances for Lot 1. Teague indicated that was correct. There is no setback variance for lot two, it is the two setback variances on the south lot.
- Commissioners asked why there were not any setback variances needed for lot two. Teague indicated the square that is drawn meets all of the City's setback requirements.
- Commissioners asked why a variance is needed for Lot 1, why are different setbacks applied for the two lots. Teague stated it is because of the lot width. The south lot is eighty feet wide and requires greater setbacks compared to the fifty-foot lot. That is part of what staff is showing as a hardship. The City is applying eighty-foot-wide setback standards to essentially a fifty-foot-wide lot because of the drainage and utility easement.
- Commissioners were surprised how close the 5901 building is to the stairs. The City should look at that; however, was not sure what could be done at this time. Teague said in hindsight the City should have taken a larger easement on the south lot when the right of way was vacated. Teague noted the subject property has some redevelopment hardships.
- Commissioners wondered if there was any value in, or possibility or considered reasonable to have a lower height requirement on Lot 1 as a condition of approval to avoid any kind of 'wind tunnel' effect. Teague noted this lot is eighty feet in width and lot width determines building height. Teague noted as a condition of approval the Commission could recommend that building height on Lot 1 be limited to a lot width of fifty feet. That could be considered as a reasonable condition.
- Commissioners questioned if Engineering was comfortable with the drainage and storm water management plans for the properties. Teague indicated Engineering did not express any issues in conversations with him. Teague suggested that another condition of approval could be added

requiring tie into the existing drain tile. Commissioners expressed support for that condition adding it would not exasperate any possible problems.

- Commissioners wondered how many trees would be impacted and removed. Teague stated trees would be removed and clarified per the City Tree Ordinance, any tree that is removed within the building footprint or driveways do not have to be replaced but any tree that is removed outside of those areas would have to be replaced.
- Commissioners thought it made sense to grant the variance for the five feet because there is no existing house to worry about the distance.
- Commissioners were comfortable with the variance request for Lot I after understanding that the requirement it is being held to is for an eighty-foot lot and in agreement if there is something that can be done regarding potential height it might be a fair trade off. Teague agreed.

### **Motion**

**Commissioner Berube moved that the Planning Commission recommend approval to the City Council of the subdivision with variances for 5841 Oaklawn Avenue as outlined in the staff memo subject to the conditions and findings therein in addition adding the stipulations that the height on Lot I would be as though it were a fifty-foot lot versus an eighty-foot lot and analysis and studies be done to reduce damage due to drainage and connect to the drain tile and eliminating the driveway to 59<sup>th</sup> Street. Commissioner Miranda seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.**

### **VI. Community Comment**

None.

### **VII. Reports/Recommendations**

#### **A. Sketch Plan Review – 7001 & 7025 France Avenue**

Director Teague presented the sketch plan to redevelop the southeast corner of 70<sup>th</sup> and France (7001 and 7025 France Avenue). The applicant would tear down the existing 66,200 square foot office and bank and build a 5,500 square foot US Bank building with drive-through; 4,000 square foot retail building with drive-through; 7,000 square foot multi-tenant retail building; 120-unit market rate apartment (181,000 square feet); and, 80-unit affordable housing apartment (75,000 square feet).

### **Discussion/Comments/Questions**

- Commissioners asked Teague if there were any challenges presented by the sub-soil with developing underground parking on this site. Teague indicated he was not aware but is often an issue. There is a relatively high-water table issue so guessed that could not go down too far with underground parking.

### **Appearing for the Applicant**

Kevin Meyer, Corporate Real Estate at US Bank, was in support of the sketch plan submission for 70<sup>th</sup> and France Avenue. He introduced Rich Mariano, leading the Redevelopment Group. He stated together with Ryan Companies and RSP Architects they are excited to discuss the redevelopment proposed forward thinking redevelopment for the site, inspired by the Greater Southdale District Plan. He stated US Bank has a long-valued history at this location and feel proud to be a part of the Edina community. This is a big decision for the bank to make. The proposal is being made because they recognize it is the right thing to do and no longer need this size of a facility to support their customers and as a member of the Edina community, recognize that the property is a key parcel for the Greater Southdale District Plan. Knowing this, they have been seeking the right partner for this redevelopment for several years and really believe it has been found with Ryan Companies and the proposal before the Commission. However, the development does need to meet some key criteria for US Bank to make this worthwhile. US Bank Criteria is based around their purpose and core values at the bank. The development needs to really strike a balance between the four key constituents that US Bank serves. One is the customer, two is the colleagues, three is the community and four is the shareholders. For US Bank to support the development it must balance all four of these.

Meyer stated starting with the customer, the bank proposes to build a new branch on the southwest corner of the site to reinvest in the experience for the branch customers and also by sacrificing the corner location the development proposal allows US Bank to provide uninterrupted service to support the customers throughout the redevelopment. The colleagues will benefit through the new branch that provides the right employee experience for them to better support the community in their customer base. The community of Edina will benefit from a redevelopment of the US Bank parcel to a newer high-density mixed-use development neighborhood. The Branch will also contain a community room that will be able to be used for local events for charities, financial seminars that will be open for public use. The new branch, as proposed needs to maintain high visibility and easy access with the newest technology and key customer amenities to support the business. Drive thru and parking access is needed along with signage in order to stay competitive in the Edina market. US Bank believes this proposal strikes that balance well. US Bank feels that the sketch plan as presented is a win, win, win for the City of Edina, US Bank and Ryan Companies and looks forward to partnering with the City further to bring this vision to reality.

Student Commissioner Mangalick left the meeting.

Carl Ruggs, Ryan Companies reviewed some of the key themes of the proposed plan.

Director Teague reviewed with the Commission the requirements for a sketch plan review and to focus on the design experience guidelines, the big picture items and not getting down to the details of the project.

### **Discussion/Comments/Questions**

- Commissioners indicated their overall general thought was that this was moving in the right direction; however, they would like to see more of everything (landscaping, connectivity, etc.), except parking. Commissioners noted the location of the subject property is great; one of the best in the Southdale area, but as presented this evening it does not quite live up to its potential. Commissioner encourage more engagement in the big quadrant and the meandering path throughout the project. The affordable housing is great, the crosswalk to the Galleria and community room and public space in general is wonderful; however they would like to see more of it.
- Commissioners wondered why in an area like this, where the City invites a developer to have more than one story on France, that there are not more stories. Staggered building height would allow US Bank to be better “showcased” and create more of a presence.
- Commissioners stated there is a lot of asphalt. Consider designing the meandering path to go both ways. Reduce asphalt. This is going in the right direction but needs more.
- Commissioners thought the project was exciting. Noting there are many great concepts in this proposal; reiterating some could be taken further. Commissioners indicated that the lack of a fifty-foot setback on France was somewhat of a concern. For the retail component, if more stories were added would that could offset the cost of adding underground parking and using the surface parking for more greenspace. Commissioners stated in their opinion the east/west pedestrian walkway seemed to be lacking in greenery compared to some of the conceptual drawings shared. Commissioners stressed that the applicant consider adding more greenspace along the walkways thereby creating a project that adheres more to the concepts stipulated in the Greater Southdale Area Plan. This would also create more interest.
- Commissioners thought the concept was unique and that in some ways works and matches what is in the Greater Southdale District Plan. However, viewing the elevation, do more to carry out the “vision” and have create something great on this corner pointing out it is a very busy corner.
- A lower scale could potentially work here; however it lacks something that ties the whole thing together. The City is looking for that greenspace. Commissioners reiterated that there pieces of everything here, some are great, but doesn’t tie in together well.
- Commissioners expressed the opinion that the housing was in the right spot. In essence a street wall is being created which is what is in the Greater Southdale Area District Plan. The “Plan” is not all about the height and it is nice to see the progression and the housing in the back and not looming over the intersection.
- Commissioners commented that the apartment buildings themselves appear to resemble the Byerly’s apartment buildings. Do more to make these buildings stand out there needs to be something added that creates high quality.
- Commissioners noted this is a great addition and great compliment to what was already there, acknowledging the plans as presented are a vast improvement; however, may not have gone far enough.
- Commissioners wondered what type of height was being considered and was more height ever considered, and if not, why. Ruggs stated they are not really looking at doing condominiums and for an apartment building they find this is the right solution. He noted that the project work seen behind this was approved one year to two years ago and is still not launched. Ruggs said they felt

this was the highest and best use and was something that works for empty nesters because of its walkability and connectivity.

- Commissioners wondered what other kind of guardrails are on this project. They pointed out there is retail only buildings on France Avenue that is lower, adding that type of retail experience already exists in the area. Commissioners questioned if there is there potential for a different use at this time or is this what Ryan Companies is focused on. Ruggs felt with urban type sites they have previously developed that small block retail is usually located underneath the building (s). Ruggs said the development team felt on this project residents would prefer to live to the east side of the site and not on top of France Avenue, adding they believe the retail component can survive and thrive better with its own pads. Ruggs stated they reviewed many options on the highest and best use of this site.
- Commissioners thought this is a catalyst type of site and is on a very prominent corner and whatever is done they want to see more “wow”. The Commission asked the development team to consider moving the street closer to the 200 block. Commissioners stated the project as presented is moving in the right direction with retail, residential and public realm; however, more thought and intensity is required to fill in the gaps that exist in the present offering.
- Commissioners indicated the project appears to be done in more of a suburban style, especially from France Avenue. This is something the City is not looking for as proposed the project does not follow the guidelines stipulated in the Greater Southdale Area Plan. Commissioners indicated that it would be a mistake having low density on this side of the street to match the low density on the other side of the street. If built as presented that could leave France Avenue feeling very much like a highway (which is what the City is trying to get away from with the Southdale Guidelines). Anything that can be done would be great. There needs to be something much more substantial on France to make it feel like it is a comfortable place to be.
- Commissioners thought the potential for more pedestrian traffic due to the addition of the E-line in the future - so limiting the parking would not be a big deal. There are other ways of getting people in and around the Southdale District. It was stressed that the future needs to be looked at now. The future for the whole area is going to be much denser with more transit. The France facing side feels completely wrong.
- Commissioners thought parking could be in a ramp with retail facing on each side rather than underground if the water table is too high. The project needs to be set back father from France Avenue. The sidewalks need to be wider. Any addition of a drive thru is a huge mistake. It is important for any kind of connectivity to build a regular pattern of where the external and internal roads are. Regular spacing is really important.
- Commissioners felt the project needs to be better than what is currently there.
- Commissioners stated it is exciting to see Ryan, US Bank and RSP come forward with this project. The project as presented in the opinion of some Commissioners was not that impressive and looks like one big development with some sidewalks and drive-thru’s going through it, not four separate quadrants. Commissioners indicated they would like to see something that is much more of a 4-unit grid. It was acknowledged that what was presented was an improvement over the current state, noting that five years ago, this would have been a great project but five years from now the City would feel bad that it did not ask for something closer to the design guidelines laid out in the Greater Southdale Area Plan.

- Commissioners thought there was a difference with the development across the street because those properties are closer to residential, adding the proximity to residential created unique issues for developments on the other side of the street. The size of the lots were bigger challenges unique to that site.
- Commissioners wondered if parking could be done underground. Meyer indicated parking is underground for the residential apartment building. For retail it is harder and they thought this was a good move because it is screened. Meyer stressed that convenience parking is essential because retail tenants would not want to sign a lease if there is no available parking.
- Commissioners would like to have this plan proceed; however are looking for better design that adheres to the guidelines established in the Greater Southdale Area Plan. They suggested that the development team review the Memo from Mic Johnson along with the feedback from the Commission and staff.
- Commissioners indicated they want to see a fifty-foot setback from France Avenue. Do not match what is currently there or across the street from this. Commissioners indicated they liked seeing the opening onto France Avenue from the inside. Commissioners suggested more density with height and more public open space. Make it cohesive from within with the ability to connect to other areas. Reconsider parking with less open parking areas. Would like to see this developed as one whole site.

Chair Olsen and the Commission thanked the applicants for their presentation. Adding they look forward to seeing the development team again.

### **VIII. Correspondence and Petitions**

None.

### **IX. Chair and Member Comments**

Commissioner Bennett stated he sent an email to everyone about checking out the Master Plan. He thought it was a reminder to be open and accepting of bold, creative things because it is doable and could be done in Edina. He noted the Master Plan is really inspiring. Commissioner Berube agreed and brought to mind the potential for the Hennepin County Library site because that is the equivalent of four large square blocks and will be empty. That might be a really good space to do something innovative that is really planned that can be really stellar if done right.

Commissioner Miranda stated he was a huge fan of technology but was not a fan of the Toronto project at all. The main reason is privacy and that is huge. All of the platforms and business models have huge implications on politics, society and privacy. Going gung-ho on this is a mistake. He thought they needed to be really careful on how they do this even though he loved technology and what it can do.

Commissioner Bennett thought what was cool was a lot of the thinking was done outside of the box. He stated there is technology that does not harm and was a good way to see how you can present something

pretty complicated and he thought Edina had a lot of great opportunity with great partners. He thought if they owned a part of the project development could be great.

**X. Staff Comments**

None.

**XI. Adjournment**

**Commissioner Douglas moved to adjourn the June 26, 2019, Meeting of the Edina Planning Commission at 10:33 PM. Commissioner Bennett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.**

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**Respectfully submitted**  
**Jackie Hoogenakker, TimeSaver**