

Meeting Minutes
New Prague Planning Commission
Wednesday, July 27, 2011

1. Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. by Planning Commission Vice Chair Jay Nuhring with the following members present: Council Representative David Bruzek and John Roos. Absent: Bob Gilman and Ryan Peltier.

City Staff Present: Ken Ondich – Planning Director

2. Approval of June 22, 2011 Regular Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Bruzek seconded by Roos to approve the June 22, 2011 regular meeting minutes as submitted. Motion carried (3-0).

3. Old Business

None

4. New Business

A. Concept Zoning Ordinance Amendments – 50% Parking Limit Between Buildings and Roads for Commercial and Industrial Sites

Planning Director Ondich presented the staff report. He stated that at the June Planning Commission meeting Chair Bob Gilman had inquired about amending the zoning ordinance regulation which states that no more than 50% of the parking shall be located between a building and a street in any zoning district. He stated that since the provision went into effect in February of 2000 that there have been variances issued for six of eight new commercial building projects including Walgreens, ALCO, Memories and Milestones Academy, Church of Latter Day Saints, Mixed Use Building at 1405 1st Street NE and East Town Plaza. He stated that the Drug Express Building which did meet the requirement ended up with its back facing two streets. He stated that he believes the intention of the ordinance was to encourage commercial buildings to be closer to the street, but such situations are often contrary to how commercial retailers and food establishments set up their sites. He stated that he believes having buildings close to the street is certainly important in the B-1 Central Business District and in such district there could actually be a provision that there be no off-street parking between a building and a street. He stated that staff suggests a reduction in the provision maybe allowing no more than 70% and potentially have an exception for buildings on corner lots or through streets. He also noted that the provision should not apply to residential properties except for maybe apartments or assisted living complexes. He stated that he recommends the planning commission discuss possible amendments.

Commissioner Nuhring stated that he understands the figure was probably implemented to provide a consistent standard and to help with aesthetics for development sites. He

also felt it was probably to make site more pedestrian friendly, but that all the variances clearly show the common standard does not work for all sites, particularly corner lots where all the variances to the standard have been issued.

Commissioner Roos stated that he does not think the parking restriction is practical for commercial sites, particularly in the B-2 District.

Commissioner Nuhring stated that he believes parking lot or site entrance design could achieve a similar result to the parking requirement by making seem as though the building is closer to the street by using landscaping, entrance signage and maybe even short walls to help with the appearance of the site and break up parking lot appearance.

Commissioner Bruzek stated that he does not believe the parking requirement is appropriate for the Industrial Zoning District. He also asked what some of the sites ended up having for parking between their building and the street.

Planning Director Ondich stated that he would check the percentage of parking on each of the sites which were issued variances as well as check with neighboring cities to see if they have similar requirements and report back at a future meeting.

Commissioner Nuhring stated that there is likely a need for different parking standards between the downtown area and the newer developing areas of the City. He noted places such as the "West End" in St. Louis Park and the newer developments in Maple Grove that have created downtown like areas with separate parking requirements from the remainder of the cities.

5. Miscellaneous

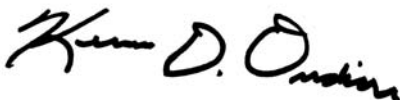
The following miscellaneous items were reviewed as information only:

- A. Industrial Park Final Layout Concept Alternatives – Planning Director Ondich presented two concept alternative drawings which were provided to City Staff to comment on to develop a final design for the completion of a feasibility for the future industrial park. He stated that the feasibility report would be presented to the EDA and City Council in August and provided to the Planning Commission as information in August as well.

6. Adjournment

A motion was made by Bruzek, seconded by Roos to adjourn the meeting at 7:13 PM. Motion carried (3-0).

Respectfully submitted,



Kenneth D. Ondich
Planning Director