

**CITY OF ST. FRANCIS
ST. FRANCIS, MN
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
OCTOBER 16, 2024**

1. **Call to Order:** The Planning Commission meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chairman Dustin Pavek.
2. **Roll Call:** Present were Dean Becker, Gail Genin, Dustin Hingos, Deb Humann, Marc McMullen, and Dustin Pavek.

Others in attendance: Jessica Rieland, Community Development Director; Beth Richmond, City Planner; and City Council Liaison Kevin Robinson.

3. **Adopt Agenda:** Motion by McMullen, second by Humann to approve the agenda. Motion carried 6-0.
4. **Approve Minutes:** Motion by Genin, second by Humann to approve the September 18, 2024 minutes. Motion carried 6-0.
5. **Public Comment:** None
6. **Public Hearing:**
 - a. Rum River Preserve PUD

City Planner Richmond reviewed the Staff report in regard to the Rum River Preserve PUD request.

Commissioner Becker noted that he did not see any proposed trails in the packet and suggested the City and developer ask the County to have a trail going north instead of west.

Public Hearing was opened at 7:23 p.m.

Stephanie Ewals, 5120 241st Avenue, came forward and shared that she is one of the applicants hoping to be on the end caps of the development with a drive-thru. She stated they signed a franchise agreement with Scooter's Coffee two years ago and they were finally granted permission to move forward in the St. Francis area. She noted that Scooter's is a family-owned business which is why they chose this company. She said that as a St. Francis resident, she would love to have this kind of small business in the City.

Public Hearing was closed at 7:25 p.m.

The Commission shared that in previous discussions, they were in favor of allowing a drive-thru with front parking at this site.

Commissioner Becker shared concerns with safety and traffic if there were to be more than one drive-thru.

Chairman Pavek shared his concern with having two drive-thrus and noted that it depends on the kinds of businesses. He said he would be concerned with having two drive-thrus with similar offerings which could both be busy at the same time.

Commissioner McMullen noted that six-foot screening landscaping can be dangerous as it can affect sight and he thinks this is too high. Richmond shared that the screening would be located on the north side. She stated there would be shorter vegetation at the front of the site.

Commissioner McMullen shared that he does not have an issue with the two drive-thrus.

Commissioner Humann said she trusts that this setup has been done before and done well in other locations.

Richmond shared that they can reach out to Anoka Staff to see how this setup has worked for them. She asked the Commission's thoughts on Phase 2 of the proposed drive-thru.

Commissioner Humann noted that there are other businesses in the City that have a similar setup, such as Subway.

Community Development Director Rieland shared that they want the orientation of the front of the buildings to be on Bridge Street.

Commissioner Hingos said his concerns are not with the parking, but with the additional drive-thrus. He noted that the Subway location is relatively pedestrian-friendly, while this does not appear to be. He stated he would like to see more information on some of the conditions that are attached to this PUD before they see it move forward.

Richmond noted that some of the conditions have already been met with these updated plans.

Commissioner Genin shared that she has concerns with traffic. She asked where the entrance for Phase 2 would be. She noted that if one of the end caps is a coffee shop in later phases, this would have a lot of morning traffic which could cause issues.

Richmond shared that they will be looking at traffic concerns as they continue to move through the phases to ensure that there is enough traffic circulation. She added that the applicant would also want there to be good circulation.

Rieland added that the Planning Commission does have the authority to recommend conditions to have a better idea of what future phases would look like.

Councilmember Robinson asked if there will be any competing businesses within this development. Grady Kinghorn, Kinghorn Construction, shared that the businesses will complement each other, but not compete.

Councilmember Robinson asked about a crosswalk in front of this development. He said the school students will likely be crossing the street in this area. He asked if the In-N-Out was supposed to have a right-in-right-out rather than a turn lane. Richmond

explained that she does not recall any discussion around a right-in-right-out in this area.

Mr. Kinghorn, Kinghorn Construction, came forward and gave a brief background of this project. He shared that he met with City Staff last week and they made the proposed changes to the original PUD. He outlined the changes they made based on their discussion with Staff. He shared that the reason they need the drive-thru in this area is because businesses that had drive-thrus are more successful after COVID-19 and they want to make sure their tenants can survive.

Councilmember Robinson asked if there are two accesses to the development that was done in Anoka. Mr. Kinghorn said yes and explained there are accesses on Main Street and 7th Avenue.

Commissioner Becker asked if there were any issues at the Anoka development with pedestrians. Mr. Kinghorn said no.

Ms. Ewals shared that Scooter's Coffee's business model is to get their customers their coffee within 30 seconds of them getting to the menu board. She noted that this will help with traffic concerns as they will get people in and out so fast.

Mr. Kinghorn stated he was hoping to get feedback from the Commission on how they feel about this plan now that they have made these updates. He asked if they are interested in allowing more than one drive-thru.

Commissioner Hingos shared that he is in favor of only one drive-thru unless they can get more information on traffic flow and impacts.

Chairman Pavek said he would be okay with two drive-thrus since they would be complementary businesses that would likely have different peak hours of operation. He added that he likes the idea of the exit being changed to two lanes. Commissioners McMullen, Genin, and Humann agreed.

Commissioner Hingos shared that he would be in favor of moving forward with one drive-thru in each of the first two phases.

Commissioners McMullen, Humann, Becker, and Chairman Pavek were okay with all drive-thrus.

Commissioner Genin said she is okay with one drive-thru and has concerns about a second, but she is not saying no at this point.

Richmond explained that they can adjust the conditions of the PUD approval to say that three drive-thrus are appropriate on this site; however, this would likely lead to some changes in the St. Francis Forward Plan and the Comprehensive Plan to reflect this. She asked if there were any other thoughts or conditions the Commission would like to add.

Commissioner McMullen shared that he likes that they removed the other apartment complex from the plan as he did not see this as appropriate.

Richmond shared that Staff's recommendations are the proposed conditions which were found in the Staff packet. She noted that there may be more changes that come out of the revised plan as this goes along.

Motion by McMullen, second by Humann, to recommend approval of the Rum River Preserve PUD with conditions and findings of fact by Staff. Motion carried 6-0.

7. Regular Business Items

None.

8. Planning Commission Discussion

None.

9. Adjournment:

Motion by Becker, second by McMullen, to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed 6-0

Meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Website Link to Packets and Minutes for the Planning Commission:

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

Recorded by: Jessica Rieland

DATE APPROVED: 12/18/24