

City of Columbus
Regular Planning Commission Joint Meeting
June 19, 2013

The June 19, 2013 regular meeting of the Planning Commission for the City of Columbus was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Chair Barbara Hvass at the City Hall. Present were Commission members Andy Anderson, Myron Organ, Pam Wolowski, Jesse Preiner, and Jody Krebs; joint with City Council members Bill Krebs, Jeff Duraine, Jessie Messina, Denny Peterson and Mayor Dave Povolny (7:10); City Administrator Elizabeth Mursko and Recording Secretary Karen Boland.

Also in attendance were Pat Preiner, Mary Preiner, Kevin Dunaway, Susan and Roger Nelson, Brian Hansen, and Colleen Orde.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Motion by Krebs to approve the Agenda as presented. Second by Anderson. Motion carried.

APPROVAL - REGULAR PC MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 5, 2013

Motion by Krebs to approve the minutes of the June 5, 2013 regular Planning Commission meeting as written. Second by Anderson. Motion carried.

PUBLIC HEARING – 5027/(5043) 190TH LANE VARIANCE (ROGER AND SUSAN NELSON – OWNER) (PC-13-104)

At this time a public hearing was held to receive testimony regarding a variance request for 5027/(5043) 190th Lane, Columbus, MN. The property owners and applicants are Roger and Susan Nelson. Separate minutes are prepared.

5027/(5043) 190TH LANE VARIANCE DISCUSSION

The following questions were considered by the Planning Commission in determining whether the variance request meets the criteria to cause a practical difficulty:

1. The landowner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner.

Question: Does the proposal put property to use in a reasonable manner?

Finding: Do the requirements in the Zoning Ordinance prohibit the property from being used in a reasonable manner? Yes or **No**

2. The plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner.

Question #1: What are the unique physical characteristics of the particular piece of property? **Narrow lot, and non-conforming**

Question #2: How is it not like other pieces of property? **It is like other lots in the vicinity.**

Question #3: Did the landowner create the circumstances? **No.**

Examples:

- Topography
- Wetlands
- Trees
- Irregularly shaped or sized lot
- Shape or size of existing buildings
- Placement of existing structures on lot

Finding: Are the circumstances unique to the property? Yes or **No**

3. Granting the variance is in harmony with the purpose and intent of the Zoning Ordinance.

Question: Will the resulting use or structure be compatible with the underlying purpose and goals of the Zoning Ordinance? **Yes.**

Finding: The variance, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood or City. **Agree** or Disagree?

4. Granting the variance is consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Finding: The variance will not create a conflict between the Comprehensive Plan and the proposed use or structure. **Agree** or Disagree?

5. The variance if granted, will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood or City.

Question: Will the resulting structure be out of scale, out of place, or otherwise inconsistent with surrounding area? **No.**

Finding: The variance, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood or City. **Agree** or Disagree?

6. The practical difficulty is not created solely by economic considerations.

Finding: Economic considerations are not the only reason for the practical difficulty. **Agree** or Disagree?

A variance shall not be granted unless the Planning Commission makes specific findings of fact based directly on the particular evidence presented to it, and the City Council determines that these support conclusions that the standards and conditions as stated above have been met by the applicant.

Planning Commission Recommendation:	Approval: 6/19/13
(Insert dates of action)	Denial:
City Council Action:	Approval:
	Denial:

Motion by Krebs to forward to the City Council the application for a variance for the property at 5027 190th Lane N.E., from the required minimum sideyard setback of ten feet to a five-foot sideyard setback on the east side of the property with a recommendation for approval based on the findings that the Zoning Ordinance causes a practical difficulty. Second by Anderson. Motion carried.

PUBLIC HEARING – 8503 178TH LANE N.E. VARIANCE (GARY AND COLLEEN LYNN ORDE – OWNER) (PC-13-105)

At this time a public hearing was held to receive testimony regarding a variance request for 8503 178th Lane N.E., Columbus, MN. The property owners are Gary and Colleen Lynn Orde. The applicant is Kevin Dunaway. Separate minutes are prepared.

8503 178TH LANE N.E. VARIANCE DISCUSSION

The following questions were considered by the Planning Commission in determining whether the variance request meets the criteria to cause a practical difficulty:

1. The landowner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner.

Question: Does the proposal put property to use in a reasonable manner? **Yes**

Finding: Do the requirements in the Zoning Ordinance prohibit the property from being used in a reasonable manner? Yes or **No**

2. The plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner.

Question #1: What are the unique physical characteristics of the particular piece of property? **High water table.**

Question #2: How is it not like other pieces of property? **Small lot size.**

Question #3: Did the landowner create the circumstances? **No.**

Examples:

- Topography
- Wetlands
- Trees
- Irregularly shaped or sized lot
- Shape or size of existing buildings
- Placement of existing structures on lot

Finding: Are the circumstances unique to the property? **Yes** or No

3. Granting the variance is in harmony with the purpose and intent of the Zoning Ordinance.

Question: Will the resulting use or structure be compatible with the underlying purpose and goals of the Zoning Ordinance? **Yes.**

Finding: The variance, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood or City. **Agree** or Disagree?

4. Granting the variance is consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Finding: The variance will not create a conflict between the Comprehensive Plan and the proposed use or structure. **Agree** or Disagree?

5. The variance if granted, will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood or City.

Question: Will the resulting structure be out of scale, out of place, or otherwise inconsistent with surrounding area? **No.**

Finding: The variance, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood or City. **Agree** or Disagree?

6. The practical difficulty is not created solely by economic considerations.

Finding: Economic considerations are not the only reason for the practical difficulty. **Agree** or Disagree?

A variance shall not be granted unless the Planning Commission makes specific findings of fact based directly on the particular evidence presented to it, and the City

Council determines that these support conclusions that the standards and conditions as stated above have been met by the applicant.

Planning Commission Recommendation: (Insert dates of action)	Approval: 6/19/13
City Council Action:	Denial:
	Approval:
	Denial:

Motion by Krebs to forward to the City Council the application for a variance for the property at 8503 178th Lane to permit and construct a mound type septic system of “other construction” with a recommendation for approval based on findings that the Zoning Ordinance causes a practical difficulty. Second by Anderson. Motion carried.

PLANNING COMMISSION AND CITY COUNCIL JOINT DISCUSSION

Last year the City Council decided to eliminate attendance of a CC liaison at PC meetings and instead hold joint meetings on a quarterly basis between the PC and the Council. The Mayor would like to see less redundancy and better communication between the CC and PC. He would like the PC to help formulate plans for the direction the City will take. Where and how should Columbus grow? What is best for the community?

The two groups discussed ways to stimulate both residential and business growth, and balancing the two. A suggestion was made to consider an overlay on the north end of Hornsby, east of the freeway, to allow for a higher density residential development. Consideration of going to a 2.5 acre minimum on new developments was suggested. Lot-size changes could be proposed in a limited, specified area.

The challenges of areas with no sewer and water hook-ups, and the large amount of land in the City that isn't suitable for development was discussed. Another challenge is making changes without knowing whether developments or businesses will actually come in, based on economic conditions. Also, we are a small community with limited resources.

Mursko stated that a number of businesses have been lost to neighboring communities because of lack of available sewer and water, and the inability to obtain needed land. Another criticism from developers has been that we have too much commercial retail zoning. In the freeway district we have a lot of transient traffic, but very few rooftops.

One suggestion was that Plan Unit Development be considered. This allows more tailored development of large acreage. For instance, if 100 acres are being developed, some lots may be less than five acres while others would be more, as long as the average size equals five acres.

The Mayor emphasized the importance of considering fiscal disparity. There is an underlying set of rules that will burden the taxpayer whether you are a commercial or residential owner. There's a line between number of dollars in commercial/industrial value and the number of people in

your community. It's a balance. If you fall off that balance it becomes a burden on one side or the other. The EDA is trying to get an idea of where that ideal balance lies. It will never be exact.

Mursko said that in 2010 and 2011 two houses were built each year in the City. In 2012 we built six. This year there are two commercial developments in the works on Lake Drive.

The Mayor asked that when the PC does not have any applications, they meet anyway to have open discussion on planning topics. What can be done to increase the C/I base? What can be done to increase rooftops? Where can these things be done? How could we step outside the box and take different approaches?

PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

Pat Preiner gave an example of the need for rooftops. She said they just spent three months trying to work with a senior facility and they can't justify bringing in even 20 units, because the banks, etc., look at studies that rely heavily on the number of rooftops. They also do not take into account rooftops in neighboring communities.

Denny Peterson said that the City's S-10 truck was sold.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mursko reported the PC meeting scheduled for July 3, 2013 will be cancelled.

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS' REPORT

Organ complimented PC Chair Hvass and Mayor Povolny on their composure through the meetings involving the IUP application by Forest Lake Contracting and John's Black Dirt.

ATTENDANCE - NEXT CC MEETING

Krebs is scheduled to attend the City Council meeting on June 26, 2013.

Motion by Krebs to adjourn. Second by Organ. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:24 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Karen Boland, Recording Secretary