

**City of Columbus
Regular Planning Commission Meeting
October 1, 2014**

The October 1, 2014 regular meeting of the Planning Commission for the City of Columbus was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Garth Sternberg at the City Hall. Present were Commission members Mark Daly, Pam Wolowski, Jesse Preiner, and Jody Krebs; City Administrator Elizabeth Mursko, and Recording Secretary Karen Boland.

Also in attendance were City Council members Denny Peterson and Bill Krebs; Kevin Dunaway, Pat Preiner, Mary Preiner, and Frank Wagamon.

AGENDA APPROVAL

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

APPROVAL - REGULAR PC MEETING MINUTES OF AUGUST 20, 2014

Motion by Krebs to approve the minutes of the August 20, 2014 regular Planning Commission meeting as written. Second by Preiner. Motion carried.

PUBLIC HEARING – 7615 CAMP 3 ROAD VARIANCE APPLICATION (PC-14-108)

At this time a public hearing was held to receive testimony regarding a variance request for 7615 Camp 3 Road, Columbus, MN. The applicant is Kevin Dunaway; property owners are Bryan and Stephanie Behn. Separate minutes are prepared.

7615 CAMP 3 ROAD VARIANCE DISCUSSION

Krebs noted that the City Building Official submitted a letter date 9/26/14, indicating that he is in favor of and recommends the variance. He feels the “other construction” system would be acceptable on this property.

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? **There is not enough native soil.**

Question #2: How is it not like other pieces of property? **Same as above.**

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: 10/01/14 Denial:
---	--------------------------------------

City Council Action:

Approval:

Denial:

Motion by Krebs to forward to the City Council the application for a variance for the property at 7615 Camp 3 Road, 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 Sternberg. Motion carried.

PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

There was no topic raised for discussion for Open Forum.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mursko reported that public hearings on two applications for plats will be heard at the PC meeting on November 5th. One is on Broadway, called Broadway Acres. The other plat is a combination of lots for a small business.

Mursko also said the City has been getting more phone calls inquiring about the area. She recently learned Forest Lake is going to be building around 130 homes this year. So, there are many positives. She heard from a commercial developer that the biggest issue holding them back from Columbus is not zoning or land costs, it is not being certain where the roads near the interchange are going to go, and what access will be.

There was discussion about the unknowns of the freeway interchange. If the bridge goes down and takes two years to build, that could have a big impact on a business. Impending special assessments for road improvement is also a big issue. Developers know it’s a good intersection, but they don’t want those two things to happen. The re-decking of the bridge is scheduled for 2019. Whether that turns into construction of a new bridge or it is re-decking, it will still have an impact on the area. The City needs to make sure alternate roads are good and provide business access. Mursko will be meeting and talking with developers to try to find ways to address those concerns.

There was discussion about re-decking the bridge vs. constructing a new bridge with more lanes. The bridge re-decking is currently in MN-DOT’s pool for safety projects. There is such a huge difference in cost to build a new bridge (estimated at \$30,000,000), that it would deplete MN-DOT’s available money for all other safety projects. To advance it from a safety project to new construction, the community would need to advance money toward the project. Surrounding cities put money toward the Broadway and Hwy. 14 bridges.

In an effort to keep the budget down, Mursko said 3-4 years ago the City reduced the transportation budget, and has not set aside money to put towards a replacement project. Krebs asked if MN-DOT has determined the bridge to be structurally sound. Mursko said they have, which is why it is in the safety repairs pool, rather than new construction. Sternberg suggested the City survey its citizens about putting money toward this.

Mursko reported that blacktop projects are moving forward and will get started the end of this week or next. Another petition for blacktopping has come in for next year.

Mursko said the website is currently being updated and will have a new template within the next few weeks.

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS' REPORT

KREBS COMMENT:

Krebs thought Fall Fest was great, and the whole staff did an excellent job. The new bridge was awesome. It appeared to be a good turn-out.

Mursko thanked Sternberg for donating and serving ice cream.

STERNBERG COMMENT:

Sternberg added that the festival had good attendance. The Lions had good sales.

ATTENDANCE - NEXT CC MEETING

Krebs is scheduled to attend the City Council meeting on October 8, 2014.

Motion by Krebs to adjourn. Second by Preiner. Motion carried.
Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Karen Boland, Recording Secretary