

**City of Columbus**  
**Regular Planning Commission Meeting**  
**October 7, 2015**

The October 7, 2015 regular meeting of the Planning Commission for the City of Columbus was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Chair Garth Sternberg at the City Hall. Present were Commission members Jim Watson, Pam Wolowski, Jesse Preiner, and Jody Krebs; City Administrator Elizabeth Mursko, Planner Dean Johnson, and Recording Secretary Karen Boland.

Also in attendance were City Council member Bill Krebs, Mike Nelson, Mike Rogers, and Pat Preiner.

**AGENDA APPROVAL**

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

**APPROVAL – KINSELLA PROPERTIES – PRELIMINARY/FINAL PLAT & CITY VIEW ELECTRIC CUP AMENDMENT APPLICATION PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 16, 2015**

*Motion* by Wolowski to approve the minutes from the Kinsella Properties Preliminary/Final Plat and City View Electric CUP amendment application public hearing held on September 16, 2015 as written. Second by Krebs. Motion carried.

**APPROVAL - REGULAR PC MEETING MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 16, 2015**

*Motion* by Watson to approve the minutes of the September 16, 2015 regular Planning Commission meeting as written. Second by Preiner. Motion carried.

**PRESENTATION RAMSEY COUNTY REGIONAL RAILROAD AUTHORITY – (MIKE ROGERS)**

Mike Rogers is Transit Project Manager with Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority. Ramsey County is the lead staff for the Rush Line Corridor Project. Rush Line has been doing a pre-project development study focused on the southern 30 miles of the larger 80-mile Rush Line corridor. Currently there is no market north of the Columbus/Forest Lake area. The purpose of the study has been to look, from a long-term perspective, at satisfying mobility needs in the corridor for both residents and businesses, and to consider it from an economic development standpoint.

Rogers reported that population in the corridor, between now and 2040, is estimated to increase by 24%. Employment is estimated to increase by 30% over that same time period. The study found that, in the corridor, the number of people over age 65 has increased by 1300 between 2000 and 2012. They also found that the number of people living below the poverty line has increased by 55%, along the corridor, over that same time period. Transit ridership within the corridor is growing wherever it's available.

From initial idea through construction and operation is a 10 to 12-year process. The study has been done to be consistent with the federal transit administration process, in order to get about 50% of the construction cost for this project from the federal government. Rush line staff have gone out in the community, in a number of different arenas, to get input from citizens.

There are three tiers to the process. The first has been to identify all vehicles you could have operating, and identify all routes they could take from the northern part of the corridor to downtown St. Paul. This tier is completed and recommendations from this initial analysis will move forward for more detailed analysis. So, at this first tier, poor alternatives were eliminated, and all other possibilities will go forward to tier two. This is where individual alternatives are examined in more detail, combining a vehicle and a route. In tier two, staff determine cost to build, maintain and operate these individual alternatives; what kind of ridership there will be; and what kind of benefits and impacts will occur. After that, at tier three, a single route and vehicle is looked at to determine the best alternative.

Rogers outlined alternative modes of transportation that were considered, and alignments and routes that were considered. Public input at this level resulted in looking at Highway 61 and White Bear Avenue. It was determined that the regional connectivity is the most limited in the middle of this corridor – places like White Bear Lake and Vadnais Heights. The technical and policy sides were considered. This involved consideration of right-of-way, existing and future land use, capital cost (if the cost would exceed \$1 billion without doing any engineering, that alternative was dropped), and travel time (if travel time exceeded 75 minutes, it would not be competitive). If it passed both of those considerations, it was recommended as a tier two alternative.

The alternatives that came forward were: arterial bus rapid transit, light rail transit, the diesel version of light rail, and dedicated guideway bus rapid transit – which is a road specifically for busses, so you have really good travel times. From an alignment or route standpoint the ones that came forward were: the dedicated guideway bus rapid transit along Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority property otherwise known as the Bruce Vento Trail, Highway 61 Washington County Rail Authority property or the Hardwood Creek Trail between downtown Forest Lake and downtown St. Paul; and the light rail option between downtown White Bear Lake and downtown St. Paul. Arterial bus rapid transit would use White Bear Avenue, Maryland Avenue and Arcade into downtown St. Paul. From Arcade and Phalen there are still many options in the running that require further analysis.

Rogers said even though Rush Line is not going to look at 35E anymore, there should still be efforts to improve transit service on 35E, including a MN Pass lane.

Rush Line's next step will be to go to the Policy Advisory Committee and ask them to finalize these recommendations. That Committee is made up of elected officials of cities and counties, educational institutions, chambers of commerce, MN DOT staff, and Met Council staff. The detailed analysis will take place, and in spring of 2016 the best option will be advanced. Again, public input will be sought. In summer of 2016 this process will be done and affected cities and counties will be asked to pass a resolution of support for the chosen alternative. It will then be adopted by the Met Council into the regional plan.

PC members asked about public turnout. In Forest Lake, approximately 10-15 people attended the meeting. In Maplewood there were about 50, and there were 40-50 people in St. Paul.

Mursko asked how the trails would be affected. Rogers said there are 100 feet of right-of-way that Ramsey County owns on the corridor. Typically that is plenty of room to put both a trail and a transit investment in the same corridor. A trail needs about 20 feet. The transit alternative would need roughly 30-35 feet. The trail would move to one side of the corridor and the transit component would be on the other.

PC members asked for cost estimates. The capital and operating costs are not yet known. That cost analysis would be available to the public at the next round of open houses, in spring of 2016.

## **CONTINUED DISCUSSION - CITY VIEW ELECTRIC CUP AMENDMENT APPLICATION – 14331 LAKE DRIVE**

Mike Nelson was present to represent City View.

Building elevation plans and a floor plan for the existing home renovation were reviewed. The new building will be about 20,000 square feet total, with the office being approximately 9000 square feet, and the warehouse occupying the remaining 11,000 square feet.

Planner Johnson said he thought the applicant responded very well to the further information requested by the PC. The make-up of the renovated existing home will be virtually identical to the office/warehouse facilities. The color combinations and appearance will be consistent among buildings. The City code does not require identical materials, but basically says accessory structures need to be compatible with the principal structure. This is very consistent and compatible. The interior of the home will be gutted to create a large training room, a small office, a small break-room type area, and a toilet room with no shower or tub. The Building Official will look at ADA accessibility as part of an inspection. Nelson said the entrance will have a ramp, and the bathroom will be ADA compliant.

Based on earlier discussion, Johnson pointed out that a recommendation was added to this revised memo to address concerns about illegal dumping. He also added a provision that the City Building Official will need to verify that the new use of the existing home can be accommodated by the existing well and septic system.

Nelson has read the revised Planner's memo and can agree to its findings and recommendations. *Motion* by Krebs to forward to the City Council the City View Electric CUP amendment application at 14331 Lake Drive, with a recommendation for approval based on the findings of fact and recommendations from the revised Planner's memo dated October 7, 2015. Second by Watson. Motion carried.

### **Findings of Fact**

1. City View Electric, Inc. ("City View") acquired property located at 14331 Lake Drive, legally described as the south 200 feet of Lot E3 and all of Lot E4, Will's Addition, in 2013 to operate a contractor shop under an existing CUP.
2. The Property is zoned C/I Commercial/Industrial.
3. The C/I District allows building trades and contractor offices, including storage of vehicles, equipment, and materials, as a conditional use.
4. City View is a commercial electrical contractor with a home office in St. Paul and the CUP property is currently used for modest office space, vehicle and equipment parking, parts storage, and minor company equipment and vehicle repair. There is typically one full time employee currently at the CUP property.
5. The CUP was amended on July 23, 2014 to allow City View to construct a 5000 square feet equipment and materials storage building (Phase 1 addition) on the CUP property, north of the existing building.
6. The CUP was amended on November 12, 2014 to allow City View to construct a 5000 square feet storage building (Phase 2 addition), located to the north of the Phase 1 building addition.
7. City View has also acquired Lot 10, except the northerly 25 feet, and Lots 11 - 13, Will's Addition, adjacent to the Property on the westerly side and has applied for plat approval to combine all properties ("Property").

8. The current CUP amendment application, dated July 6, 2015, is to construct a new office/warehouse on the Property for the corporate relocation of City View to Columbus.
9. The 60-day review deadline is September 4, 2015. The 120-day review deadline, as extended, is November 3, 2015.
10. Proposed development on the Property includes a new 9670 square feet office building and attached 11,250 square feet warehouse/shop building.
11. City View proposes to retain three of four existing accessory buildings on the westerly portion of the Property for storage.
12. City View also proposes to remodel the existing residence on the westerly portion of the Property for company training conference use purposes.
13. The City has required the removal of existing residences with the permitting of new business uses.
14. There are currently three driveways providing access to the Property: an off-site private driveway easement on Lot 8, Will's Addition that is the only access to the current CUP property; an existing driveway to the existing residence on the Property; and a driveway on the southerly portion of the Property that is proposed to be improved for access to the new office/warehouse.
15. The proposed new office/warehouse building exceeds minimum setback requirements.
16. Approximately 18 employees will be on-site on an average daily basis. All other employees visit job sites directly and only occasionally visit the Property for supplies or meetings.
17. City View proposes to add 27 new parking spaces at the office/warehouse. Parking setbacks are consistent with ordinance requirements. There are at least 12 additional existing parking spaces adjacent to existing storage buildings. Three of the parking spaces illustrated are handicapped accessible, which is consistent with ADA requirements.
18. Strict code interpretation requires at least 63 parking spaces on the Property. City View has requested a "variance" to parking requirements (no formal variance application has been submitted), based on their actual use of the Property, including the typical number of on-site employees and limited visitor traffic.
19. The Zoning Ordinance provides that the Planning Commission may recommend and the City Council may approve a reduction in required parking, provided there is sufficient room on the Property for additional required parking and provided the CUP includes a provision to require additional parking, when needed. There is sufficient room on the Property for additional required parking spaces.
20. The proposed office building is wood-framed construction (revised elevation plan sheet P3.1, dated October 1, 2015), which is in front of and attached to the warehouse building, as viewed from Lake Drive. The building elevation facing Lake Drive is consistent with the design standards of the C/I District.
21. The proposed warehouse building is a wood-framed building with steel siding and roofing. There are two overhead doors located on the southerly side of the building and a loading dock on the easterly side. Future overhead doors and driveway connection may be added on the northerly side of the building.
22. A dumpster location is identified near the loading dock and includes a partial block wall screen on the westerly and southerly sides.

23. A landscape plan has been submitted, including the retention of the majority of existing trees and the addition of new deciduous, coniferous, and ornamental trees, as well as foundation plantings. The landscape plan is consistent with ordinance requirements.
24. A letter has been received from Anoka County Transportation regarding access consolidation, right-of-way clearance and potential turn lane and bypass lane construction.
25. The City Engineer has recommended that one driveway be dedicated to serve the Property and that vegetation be removed from right-of-way for site distance improvement.
26. The City Engineer has also given the opinion that a turn lane and bypass lane are not necessary, based upon the proposed use of the property.
27. A new SSTS is located on the site plans provided, consistent with SSTS requirements.
28. A new well is proposed to serve the office/warehouse, but is not located on any plan submittals.
29. Three stormwater infiltration basins are proposed on the Property. Existing and proposed impervious surface areas are approximately 1.67 acres, which is less than 10% total site coverage.
30. A CAPROC has been issued by Rice Creek Watershed District.
31. General City View hours of operation are 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on weekdays and occasional weekends and evenings.
32. Outdoor vehicle, equipment, and material storage by City View will be located between the easterly storage buildings and east of the buildings.
33. Parts and equipment will be stored in the new warehouse and may also be stored in other existing accessory buildings.
34. Minor company equipment and vehicle repair may be conducted on the Property.
35. There are no proposed signage plans at this time.
36. The relevant conditions of the 2003 Buetow CUP, 2004 CUP Amendment, 2012 CUP Amendment, 2013 CUP Amendment, and 2014 CUP Amendments remain in effect.
37. The Planning Commission held a public hearing on September 16, 2015 to consider the proposed 2015 City View CUP Amendment.

### **Recommendations**

[NOTE: The relevant conditions from the 2003, 2004, 2012, 2013, and 2014 CUPs are combined together here].

Based upon the above Findings of Fact, the Planning Commission recommends to the City Council approval of the City View Electric, Inc. 2015 CUP Amendment, with the following conditions:

1. The 2015 CUP Amendment is contingent upon detailed plan review and approval by the City Building Official.
2. The 2015 CUP Amendment is contingent upon approval and recording of the Kinsella Acres Final Plat.
3. The 2015 CUP Amendment shall be developed consistent with the approved Kinsella Acres plat and the Architecture Design, LLC plan sheet numbers A1.1, A1.2, A2.1, and A3.1, dated July 9, 2015, except as amended by plan sheet numbers P3.1, dated October

- 1, 2015, P3.2, dated September 30, 2015 and P2.4, dated September 30, 2015.
4. Access to the Property shall be limited to a single access drive on the southerly portion of the Property.
  5. The existing off-site access easement on Lot 8, Will's Addition may continue to be used on a secondary use basis.
  6. The existing residence on the Property shall be remodeled for company training and conference uses, according to plan sheet numbers P2.4 and P3.2, dated September 30, 2015. The City Building Official shall determine that the existing private sewer and water services for the remodeled residence are adequate for company training and conference uses, or City View shall modify private sewer and water services as recommended by the City Building Official.
  7. Existing trees and brush within the Lake Drive right-of-way shall be removed to enhance vehicular site distance.
  8. Revisions to Architecture Design, LLC plan sheet numbers A1.1 and A1.2 shall be completed and submitted to the City for administrative review and approval prior to the issuance of any building permits. Said plan revisions shall identify elimination of the northerly driveway on the Property, location of the proposed new well, identification of the SSTS area, location of the three stormwater infiltration areas, and any other revisions associated with the changes required.
  9. Any unused well or SSTS shall be abandoned according to existing standards.
  10. Access to the Property is subject to permitting by Anoka County.
  11. Exterior storage of equipment and materials shall be limited to locations between the three primary existing storage buildings and to the east of said storage buildings.
  12. Equipment and material storage areas shall not occupy any parking areas, stormwater infiltration areas, wetland areas, or sewage treatment areas.
  13. No filling, excavating or other land disturbances are permitted in stormwater infiltration or wetland areas without written approval by Rice Creek Watershed District and the City.
  14. Routine maintenance and minor repair of company equipment and vehicles are permitted within structures on the Property.
  15. Additional businesses, expansion or intensification of the proposed contractor's business from what has been presented to date, shall require an amendment to the Conditional Use Permit.
  16. All exterior lighting shall be shrouded and directed away from adjacent properties and public streets.
  17. All refuse must be stored in a building, trash transport (dumpster), or in covered cans. Any outdoor storage area shall be enclosed on all sides visible from adjacent property by screening, compatible with the exterior of the building, not less than two (2) feet higher than the refuse container.
  18. The hours of operation for City View shall not exceed 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, with periodic use allowed on weekends and evenings.
  19. Residential use of the Property is prohibited.
  20. Any hazardous materials used or hazardous wastes generated on the Property shall be in compliance with federal, state, and county permitting and licensing requirements.
  21. City View shall be responsible for removing any waste or debris dumped on adjacent property, when evidence exists that such illegal dumping occurred via driveway accesses controlled by City View.

22. The operation of the contractor's shop must be consistent with all local, Federal, and State laws that apply to the use of the Property.
23. In the event the City Council determines, in its sole discretion, that the contractor's shop is not being operated in accordance with any term or condition contained herein, the CUP may be revoked by the City upon proper notice and a hearing. The City shall notify regulatory authorities that have issued licenses or permits in connection with the Conditional Use Permit of any such revocation.
24. City View shall be obligated to pay all costs and expenses incurred by the City in connection with any proceeding to revoke the CUP, including reasonable attorneys' fees and consultant fees.
25. There must be a total of 39 paved, striped parking spaces on the Property, consistent with minimum design standards, including three signed, handicapped accessible parking spaces. The City Council has reduced the minimum number of required parking spaces from 63 to 39, based upon the proposed use of the Property and evidence that sufficient areas exist to construct additional parking. At any time the City Council determines additional required parking is necessary, and upon one-year written notice, City View shall construct additional parking consistent with minimum ordinance design standards.
26. All buildings must be complementary in appearance with each other.
27. The CUP Amendment does not eliminate the requirement for obtaining any other permits and approvals as may be required by City, watershed, county, or state laws, rules, ordinances, and policies, including but not limited to grading permits, building permits, plumbing permits, electrical permits, stormwater permits, sign permits, water appropriation permits, and sewage treatment system permits.
28. City View shall be responsible to reimburse the City for its out of pocket expenses incurred in the review and approval of the CUP amendment, including any subsequent inspection and enforcement actions.

This matter will go before the CC at their next meeting, Wednesday, October 14th at 7 p.m.

#### **INFORMATION – MET COUNCIL 2015 COMP PLAN SYSTEM STATEMENT**

The City has received the Met Council 2015 Comp Plan System Statement. As before, the majority of the community is designated by the Met Council as diversified rural. City staff will design the City's Comp Plan under the designation being sought: rural residential. Mursko and Johnson will meet with Met Council staff to confirm that the manager of this planning process agrees that this is the way for the City to go about seeking the designation change. The deadline for the Comp Plan is 12/31/2018.

We have a lot of unique obstacles to growth in this community that will need to be made clear to the Met Council. If we have this designation, the PC and CC need to agree on what higher density housing will look like. Johnson said the PC and CC are involved in two significant components. 1) What are the ultimate recommendations regarding new densities and how extensive are they? 2) Housing affordability and identifying the location for housing within the sewer area. He thinks those are the two policy decisions on which the PC and CC need to focus.

- **Land Use Planning Workshop**

Mursko asked PC members if they are interested in attending a Government Training Services Land Use Planning Workshop on Wednesday, October 28, 2015. It is an all-day class, being held in Bloomington, Minnesota, called "Comprehensive Planning – It's Not

the Same Old, Same Old.” Most members didn’t know if they could take the whole day. Mursko said they can think about it and let her know. She will be attending.

### **DISCUSSION – CURRENT PLANNING AND ZONING TOPICS**

PC members will meet jointly with the CC on October 21st at 7 p.m. Mursko said this meeting already has a large agenda, including the PUD ordinance, the buffer ordinance, discussion about the September workshop, and Johnson will lay out performance standards for senior housing. This meeting can be used to prioritize planning and zoning topics.

### **PUBLIC OPEN FORUM**

There was no topic raised for discussion for Open Forum.

### **CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

Mursko said Sternberg will be chair of the joint meeting with the CC on October 21<sup>st</sup>. She reminded PC members that Columbus has an election this year on November 3<sup>rd</sup> - a school district election. Voting will take place at Columbus Elementary on election day, but in-person absentee voting is already available at the Headwaters Service Center in Forest Lake, located in the same building as the library. On-line registration for absentee voting is also available. There is a link on the City webpage.

There are three new subdivision applications coming in.

Mursko reminded PC members that the CC will be meeting at odd dates in November. Their first meeting will be Tuesday, November 10<sup>th</sup>. Their second meeting will be Monday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>.

### **PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS' REPORT**

#### **KREBS COMMENT:**

Krebs attended the Tribute to Troops event at Running Aces. She said it was fabulous, with a huge number of motorcycles and classic cars.

#### **STERNBERG COMMENT:**

Sternberg announced the birth of his new baby girl.

### **ATTENDANCE - NEXT CC MEETING**

Wolowski is scheduled to attend the City Council meeting on October 14, 2015.

*Motion* by Krebs to adjourn. Second by Watson. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Karen Boland, Recording Secretary