

OFFICIAL MINUTES  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
ST. LOUIS PARK, MINNESOTA  
November 21, 2018 – 6:00 p.m.  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lynne Carper, Matt Eckholm, Claudia Johnston-Madison,  
Lisa Peilen, Carl Robertson, Joe Tatalovich,  
Alanna Franklin (youth member)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jessica Kraft (excused)

STAFF PRESENT: Sean Walther, Gary Morrison

1. Call to Order – Roll Call
2. Approval of Minutes of November 7, 2018

Commissioner Peilen made a motion to approve the minutes of November 7, 2018. Commissioner Carper seconded the motion, and the motion passed on a vote of 5-0.

Commissioner Tatalovich arrived at 6:05 p.m.

3. Public Hearings
  - A. Zoning ordinance amendment – ground floor area ratio in R-3 two-family residence district  
Applicant: Gene Nicolelli  
Case No: 18-65-ZA

Gary Morrison, Assistant Zoning Administrator, presented the staff report. The applicant requests an amendment to the zoning ordinance to increase the allowed ground floor area ratio (GFAR) from 0.25 to 0.35 in the R-3 two-family residence zoning district.

Mr. Morrison reviewed current regulations the city allows for larger GFAR for single-family homes than it does for two-family homes. He presented a map showing the location of the R-3 districts in the city. He explained the differences in side yard and minimum lot size requirements for single-family and two-family. He explained that increasing GFAR to 0.35 has varying results from property to property because of the variety of lot sizes in the city.

Mr. Morrison stated that citywide, staff did not identify adverse impacts resulting from the proposed change. The change is consistent with the regulations applicable to the single-family districts, and allows greater flexibility for the living space of two-family dwellings.

Commissioner Carper asked how the percentages came about.

Mr. Morrison responded that an extensive study of single family R-1 and R-2 districts was done in 2006, which included GFAR. The percentages seemed to be working well for those districts. Given that history, there is the thought of being more compatible. He added that the proposal for a reasonably sized duplex presents the opportunity for an amendment.

The Chair opened the public hearing. As no one was present wishing to speak the Chair closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Peilen stated she doesn't have an issue with the proposal, but is concerned about varying results from property to property. She asked about future problems. She asked why not grant a variance and study this thoroughly.

Commissioner Eckholm said he thinks 0.35 is perfectly appropriate.

Commissioner Johnston-Madison said the side setbacks and minimum lot size might prevent concerns Commissioner Peilen mentioned.

Mr. Morrison discussed minimum lot size and side setbacks in the R-3 district.

Commissioner Carper said he is comfortable with the recommendation as it allows more consistency with R-1 and R-2. He added that it would also reduce the number of properties out of compliance.

Commissioner Tatalovich commented the result would not be just to make properties conforming, but to help them function well.

Chair Robertson said he has no problem with the proposal. He said there are other tools that prevent overbuilding. He said he also looks at GFAR relative to impervious surface, and he doesn't see that being an issue.

Commissioner Peilen stated the discussion helped her get past her initial concerns and she would recommend approval.

Commissioner Carper made a motion recommending approval of the zoning ordinance amendment increasing the maximum allowed ground floor area ratio in the R-3 two-family residence district from 0.25 to 0.35. Commissioner Eckholm seconded the motion, and the motion passed on a vote of 6-0.

4. Other Business: None

5. Communications

A. Zoning ordinance amendment – electric vehicle charging stations

Sean Walther, Planning and Zoning Administrator, said the report is the latest draft of the proposed amendment to be presented to the commission on December 19.

Commissioner Peilen commented the proposed recommendations for multi-family buildings to set aside 10% of parking spots for electric charging stations seemed a little high.

Mr. Walther responded that staff, the commission, and council have been looking at the numbers over the last year. The 10% is actually not much different than a normal outlet for charging so it's not really that onerous. He said we do want to plan for some additional spaces in the future. He said the city could adopt this ordinance ahead of the market as part of its Climate Action Plan.

Commissioner Peilen noted that the future would also bring other options.

Commissioner Johnston-Madison asked about percentages and cost.

Mr. Walther spoke about Level-2 chargers with faster charging options.

Commissioner Johnston-Madison asked if staff could provide more detail about the percentages at the December 19 public hearing.

Commissioner Eckholm asked if there was any more discussion on requirements for gas stations.

Mr. Walther responded the draft ordinance allows for electric vehicle charging as part of a fuel station. He said he would bring requirements back to the December 19 meeting.

Commissioner Tatalovich asked if charging stations would be required to be marked.

Mr. Walther said that would be up to the owner, as would fees.

The Chair stated the proposed ordinance feels a little inadequate. He spoke about the differences in what the two levels could provide. He asked how staff came up with the ratios.

Mr. Walther discussed overnight, long term charging. He said staff has been generating use requirements from a variety of sources, national ordinances and best management practices. Staff has been working with the city consultant on Climate Action Plan, as well as Planning Commission recommendations. He discussed the balance between promoting charging stations and becoming a cost burden.

The Chair said he'd like to see a little bit more in a chart, including an 8 hour charge. He said he'd like to see in a chart how many miles each charge would provide.

Commissioner Carper said he would like to recommend that staff track the number of electric charging facilities in the city, for the public.

Commissioner Eckholm mentioned a site called PlugShare, in which users identify the locations of charging infrastructure. He said that could be used as a starting point.

B. Request to amend comprehensive plan future land use map  
4052 Alabama Ave. S.

Mr. Walther said the report is provided in advance of the December 5 public hearing related to the Comprehensive Plan update. The request is to change the future land use designation of 4052 Alabama from commercial to low density residential.

Commissioner Tatalovich asked about adjacent lots.

Mr. Walther stated the parcel is very similar in size to adjacent properties except that it is more narrow. He discussed the provision regarding existing lots of record, regarding and rezoning.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Sells  
Recording Secretary