MEMBERS PRESENT: Jim Beneke, Lynette Dumalag, Matt Eckholm, Courtney Erwin, Claudia Johnston-Madison, Jessica Kraft, Carl Robertson

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Gary Morrison, Sean Walther

3. Public Hearings

A. Rezoning C-2 General Commercial properties to C-1 Neighborhood Commercial
   
   Applicant: City of St. Louis Park
   
   Case Nos: 19-26-ZA

   Gary Morrison, assistant zoning administrator, presented the staff report.

   The proposed rezoning is the final step taken with the intent of preserving and encouraging small businesses in neighborhood settings. Earlier this year the council rezoned several properties to be consistent with the comprehensive plan. That rezoning was followed-up with a text amendment to the C-1 Neighborhood Commercial district to limit the size of retail and service establishments. The proposed rezoning of properties to the C-1 district is now proposed with the C-1 text amendment in place.

   Mr. Morrison showed slides of Cedar Lake Road/Louisiana Area, the Texa-Tonka area, Knollwood Mall Area, several areas along Excelsior Blvd. and Hwy. 100 and Minnetonka Blvd., all of which are proposed to change to C-1 Neighborhood Commercial.

   Chair Eckholm opened the public hearing.

   Jim McGovern, representing the owner of 5825 Excelsior Blvd, commercial advisor, stated they do not oppose the rezoning plan, but oppose rezoning 5825 Excelsior Blvd. He stated this does not fit the intent or the purpose of the rezoning related to big box stores. He added the purpose of the rezoning is not appropriate for this building, stating there will not be small shops within the building. Mr. McGovern added even with grandfathering the property in - it is difficult to find tenants that will use 75,000 square feet when their leases run out, and several are about to run out soon. He asked that this property be excluded from the rezoning plan.

   Tom Goodrum, Loucks Consulting, stated he is representing 5825 Excelsior Blvd as well. He stated this is difficult to deal with in making this C-1, adding not a lot of uses transfer over from C2 to C1, and especially as it relates to tenants or proposed tenants that might use this space. He stated this building does not fit the small retail building purpose, adding it has residential behind it. He asked if the commission could take more
time to review this property. He added land uses can work together, but asked for further review by the commission on this issue.

Brian Alton, 951 Grand Ave, St. Paul, MN 55105, stated he is representing the 5825 Excelsior Blvd property also. He stated this would have a devastating effect on the property itself. He stated it is a unique parcel and on a busy street, near a railroad, built well with large tenants and large spaces. He stated C-1 is not appropriate use for this property. He added this is a restriction of good uses of properties such as this one. He stated this is also inconsistent with the city’s comprehensive plan.

Andrew Hoffer, 3966 Alabama Ave, stated they like the way the commission is planning the neighborhood, adding this is a very good way to maintain the integrity of their neighborhood. He stated the residential neighborhood supports the commission’s decision.

Larry Lessley, 2965 Brunswick Ave, stated this is a great move for the neighborhood. He stated they are all for progress, and the development must fit the neighborhood. He added they are supportive of the plan.

Chris Kasic, 3916 Colorado Ave, stated he is also in favor of the rezoning, and agrees with the previous two speakers. He stated this fits well with the neighborhood as well, adding this will help to not have large buildings built in this neighborhood area.

Susan Bloomgren, 3961 Brunswick Ave, stated she is also in support of the rezoning and appreciates keeping the small neighborhood feel alive while also progressing and developing the area.

Barb Castagna, 6002 Excelsior Blvd, she supports this and also owns Educational Outfitters, noting her biggest concern is safety for children as they shop for their school uniforms. She stated 50% of her business is done between July and Labor Day, and she is concerned about parking near the business, and that it be safe for all who shop at this store.

The Chair closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Johnston-Madison referred to the Party City building and asked staff for clarification on the owner’s ability to lease the building.

Mr. Morrison stated the zoning refers to retail, and not to restaurants, showrooms, banks, offices, indoor entertainment. He noted there are several uses that could go into the building. Mr. Morrison added staff can work with the owners on the issues of concern.

Commissioner Johnston-Madison asked about resale of the building, and if the space leased can be continued.

Mr. Morrison stated the building and businesses can be sold and operated in the same manner as they currently are. Non-conformities can continue as is, and they can be replaced by a similar type use and similar size as what is in there currently.
Commissioner Robertson stated this is the first time the commission is hearing about the 5825 Excelsior Ave. building issue. He stated he does not see a negative impact on the building to rezone it, but added he is not the owner of the building. He stated this could have been discussed further at study sessions.

Commissioner Johnston-Madison asked if later this building is sold to a different developer who may want high density development, how it would be impacted, also in light of the Brookside neighborhood, and what could be redeveloped there in a C-1 zone.

Commissioner Robertson stated this feels a bit awkward if it’s the only building zoned C-2 within the C-1 district. He hopes the owner of the property has had an opportunity to discuss this.

Chair Eckholm asked if this property could be removed from the zoning for further discussion.

Mr. Walther stated action on this parcel could be tabled this evening and come back at a later date for discussion and decision, and also re-opening the public hearing specific to this parcel, or move it along with notes, or hold up the vote as a whole.

Mr. Walther added this was going to move to city council at the December 2 meeting for a first reading.

Commissioner Robertson and Commissioner Johnston-Madison stated they would like to move this forward to vote and then have council review in December.

Commissioner Johnston-Madison added if the council were to pull this building out for further consideration, she recommends the neighborhood impacted would be involved in future discussions and meetings.

Commissioner Beneke asked how far the non-conforming goes. Can they tear down the building and re-build it, can they rearrange interior walls? What is allowed.

Mr. Morrison stated the building could be rebuilt if destroyed or torn down. It would have to be re-built to the same dimensions and cannot be made more non-conforming.

Commissioner Erwin noted the 5825 building concerns about the ability to lease it in the future, were addressed in that it can still utilized it in the same way without any further hindering of the building.

Commissioner Dumalag stated the commission needs to look forward related to development within the city, she hopes the owners work with the city staff on future uses of the building, especially as leases roll over.

Commissioner Robertson made a motion, Commissioner Dumalag seconded, recommending approval of the rezoning C-2 General Commercial properties to C-1 Neighborhood Commercial.
The motion passed on a vote of 7-0.

Mr. Walther stated this will come before the council at the December 2 meeting for first reading and review.

B. Parking ordinance amendment – Historic Walker Lake

Applicant: City of St. Louis Park
Case Nos: 19-32-ZA

Gary Morrison, assistant zoning administrator, presented the staff report. This ordinance includes regulations that apply to is an amendment to the parking ordinance in the Historic Walker Lake area only and regulations that would apply to the whole city.

Mr. Morrison noted the amendments create regulations for the in the Historic Walker Lake area, that requiring a reduced number of parking spaces for new structures, or expansion of existing structures. It also waives the minimum parking requirements for existing buildings, and on-site parking. He stated the number of parking spaces that exist on the property cannot be reduced.

Mr. Morrison noted that the city-wide amendments prohibit the including aisles and driveways from being used for any purpose that would prevent vehicle access to parking spaces or inhibit circulation or emergency service response. Additionally, parking spaces shall be open directly to an aisle or driveway, and parking spaces are to be clearly marked using minimum four-inch wide painted lines as shows on an approved parking plan.

Mr. Morrison stated that staff recommends approval of the noted amendments as proposed.

Chair Eckholm opened the public hearing.

Chair Eckholm closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Kraft asked about on-street parking and how it is delineated which business the parking goes to.

Mr. Morrison stated that the on-street parking spaces are public, and cannot be allocated to a specific business. throughout the city, businesses are allowed to include parking spaces that are adjacent, but in the Historic Walker Lake area, there are no regulations like this, so parking is open to all.

Chair Eckholm stated this is about as good as can be expected in this area, and he is in support of this.
Commissioner Johnston-Madison also supports this, adding businesses will need to figure out in the Walker Lake area how to include parking in their business plan, and the commission will not be able to second guess this going forward.

Commissioner Robertson made a motion, Commissioner Johnston-Madison seconded, recommending approval of the Parking ordinance amendment – to create parking standards and miscellaneous parking standards within the Historic Walker Lake area and the city.

The motion passed on a vote of 7-0.

4. Other Business

5. Communications

Mr. Walther stated there is a study session immediately following the meeting. He added the next meeting of the commission will be on December 4.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

**STUDY SESSION**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jim Beneke, Lynette Dumalag, Matt Eckholm, Courtney Erwin, Claudia Johnston-Madison, Jessica Kraft, Carl Robertson

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Jacquelyn Kramer, Jennifer Monson, Gary Morrison, Sean Walther

GUEST PRESENT: Rita Trapp, consultant planner with Hoisington Koegler Group (HKGi)

The study session commenced at 7:00 p.m.

1. Zoning amendment – Accessory dwelling units

Ms. Trapp presented background information related to accessory dwelling units. She noted they would discuss policy questions with the commission.

Ms. Trapp stated there are 3 types of accessory dwelling units including: attached, attached interior, and detached structure which is separate from the original structure.
Ms. Trapp stated the building code involves single-family, two-family unit, and three-unit complex. She noted if accessory dwelling units become two and three family, there are requirements to create fire walls, and additional safety requirements.

Commissioner Johnston-Madison noted there are many rental units within the city currently that rent out rooms with kitchen privileges.

Ms. Trapp noted take in borders into one’s home is allowed within the city, as long as it is not creating two independent units, it’s considered a single-family home.

Commissioner Johnston-Madison stated the council had concerns about building two duplexes on one lot, and when considering R1 and R2, this has not been discussed.

Mr. Walther stated the comp plan notes the R1 and R2 are in single family districts, but at this point the conversation will focus on ADU’s. He added the council has not given specific direction at this time. He added there is concern at this time about lot size and non-conforming lots.

Commissioner Johnston-Madison asked for the additional charts for reference for future meetings. Mr. Walther added staff will provide links for the commission regarding this topic and past meeting dates.

Mr. Walther added staff is also concerned about setting people up for certain expectations related to ADU’s, so staff wants the information to be clear related to the ordinance.

Ms. Trapp noted the rental license requirements also.

Commissioner Johnston-Madison asked about a complete mother in law apartment. Ms. Trapp stated as it is today, a kitchen is not allowed, just a room. Mr. Walther added there are some with kitchenette’s which have been allowed.

The commissioners further discussed the ADU’s related to mother in law apartments and allowing full kitchens vs. kitchenettes.

Ms. Trapp stated the owner occupancy requirement for ADU’s can be problematic for resale, and buyers will be narrowed for properties with ADU’s. The commissioners discussed this issue as it relates to resale and homeownership vs. rental properties and possible limitations related to ADU’s.

Mr. Walther stated if an ADU is created, there will be costs related to water and sewer. He stated the stack charge is based on a single-family unit, and with and ADU, this will help to increase water and sewer charges.

Ms. Trapp pointed out some examples of policies. She noted currently the code limits accessory structures (note ADU’s) only to the back yard, or in the side yard if there is a garage adjacent to a street.
She asked the commissioners if this still sounds appropriate. Mr. Walther stated exceptions have been made for side yard garages, and asked if the commission wants to allow this also for ADU’s.

Commissioner Robertson stated this would be acceptable to him. He stated the setback could be set at 5 feet. The commissioners agreed to this as a starting point.

The commissioners discussed height limits of ADU’s, and scale, along with increasing the setback, as it relates to the proposed code.

Ms. Trapp noted staff recommends the existing limit on parking would be 3 vehicles, even if an ADU was added, so there would not be an increase in vehicles allowed to park at the structure. The commissioners agreed to this recommendation.

Ms. Trapp stated staff recommends 300-800 square feet for ADU’s, or 40% of the size of the primary home, and allowing 2 occupants within the ADU. The commissioners agreed with this recommendation.

Ms. Trapp stated staff recommends prohibiting short-term rentals city-wide, with exceptions such as hotels, motels, and bed and breakfasts. The commissioners agreed with this recommendation.

Mr. Trapp noted next steps include the first draft of the ordinance will be brought back for more discussion to the commission on December 4 or 18. He also noted the Friends of the Arts would like to meet with the commissioners for feedback, and also noted the commissioners should discuss the 2020 work plan.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.