



PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

February 27, 2024 Meeting Summary

7:00 PM

1. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Joe Peterson; Valerie Ouellette; Beth Wentzlaff; Matthew Fournier; and Councilor John Geissler

Members Absent: Corey Kolquist; Buckley Simmons; and Dante Tomassoni

Others Present: Eric Johnson, Community Development Director; Mr. & Mrs. Bjork; Jim Atkinson, 30 W Superior St., Duluth; Anne Peterson, 5080 Maple Grove Rd.; Darren Weets, 3960 Peyton Ln.; Dave Fulda, 4961 Greystone St.; Mark Carlson, 3988 Stebner Rd.; Steve & Kathy Ide, 4918 Radar Rd.; Brandon Manny, 45 E Harray Rd.; Dale & Barbara Harris, 4017 Stebner Rd.; Jack Dougherty, 3205 Wellington St.; Mary & Craig Monson, 3916 Stebner Rd.; Mark Wolcott, 5652 Roses Rd.; Gage Richie, 30 W Superior St.; Dane Della Rossa, 4383 Sundby Rd.; and John Jamniek, JPJ Eng.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made by Valerie Ouellette to approve the February 27, 2024 agenda as presented. Seconded by Beth Wentzlaff. Motion carried.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Valerie Ouellette to approve the January 17, 2024 minutes as presented. Seconded by Matthew Fournier. Motion carried.

4. PUBLIC DISCUSSION

None.

5. PUBLIC HEARING

5A. An application for a Preliminary Planned Unit Development (PUD) Amendment by Jay Zierden/BMAX for a 10 building/20 total unit twinhome/duplex development on 10 acres. The property is located at 399x Stebner Road and is located in a R-3, Residential zoning district.

Eric Johnson, Community Development Director, advised the commission that the Applicant, Jay Zierden/BMAX, is proposing to construct a 10 twinhome buildings (20 units total) on an existing 10-acre lot with access to Stebner Road. The proposed development consists of a 1050' feet of public street with a 66' right of way; a 5' wide sidewalk on the north side of the street; a 4,800 square foot accessory/storage building and two pickleball courts.

Valerie Ouellette asked commented on the narrow spacing between each twin home.

Jay Zierden, 4571 Martin Rd., Duluth, addressed that concern and stated that six weeks ago when he was on the agenda, his plan did have 10-foot side lots and that the pickleball court was at the

end of the cul-de-sac. On the advice of City Staff, this is plan he was asked to resubmit. He noted that he would prefer the 10-foot side lots, with the pickleball court at the end, but this was the plan he was required to put forth.

Valerie asked Eric to explain why the pickleball courts had to be put where they are proposed.

Eric stated that it was required to accommodate a future right of way, the needs of the development today, and to potentially provide for the needs of the development in the future, i.e. right of way extension and to meet the needs of the applicant. i.e. number of units and garages, etc., and still limit wetland impacts.

Matthew Fournier, asked if the pickleball courts would be open to the general public, or open to the residents of the development.

According to Eric, the courts would be open to the public and that the roadway can accommodate one side parking.

The following residents spoke about their concerns regarding this project. The main issues were, why the zoning change, initial wetland/swampland, various development within the City, loud excavating noise, and traffic concerns associated with the project.

Barbara Harris, 4017 Stebner Rd.

Mary Monson, 3916 Stebner Rd.

Craig Monson, 3916 Stebner Rd.

Natascha Ellis, 3995 Stebner Rd.

Motion made by Valerie Ouellette to approve the application by Jay Zierden/BMAX for a 10 building/20 total unit twinhome/duplex development on 10 acres. The property is located at 399x Stebner Road and is located in a R-3, Residential zoning district. Seconded by Beth Wentzlaff. Motion carried 4 to 0.

5B. An application by JP Holding Company, LLC for a Preliminary Planned Unit Development for a 19 lot single family homes and 9 townhome buildings (18 units total) for a total of 37 lots/units on a 13-acre site located at 507x Maple Grove Road. The property is located in an R-3 zoning district.

Eric advised the commission that the Applicant, JP Holding Company, is the property owner associated with this 13-acre property at 5007x Maple Grove Rd., and is proposing the Arbors of Maple Grove project which consists of 18 single family lots and 9 twinhomes (18 units) with a minimum dimension of 55' x 125' and a minimum square footage of 6,875 square feet. In addition, there are 9 twinhome buildings (18 units total) with a minimum lot size or 40' x 113.5' and minimum lot size of 4,540 square feet for each individual unit lot.

In 2021, the City approved a preliminary PUD for a 103-unit, 4 story apartment building. In discussions with the applicant, there is the desire to move away from the apartment and instead pursue a small lot single family home development along with twinhomes. Assuming this project is recommended by the Planning and Zoning Commission and approved by the City Council, the previously approved preliminary PUD for this property will be voided.

The single-family homes are projected to be approximately 1,750 square feet with a two-car garage. Each twinhome are projected to be approximately 1,300 square feet. There may be some twinhome units with walk-out basements which could increase the square footage to 2,200 square feet. Each twinhome will have a two-car garage as well.

Matthew asked if the City had looked at a traffic flow with the Pillars of Hermantown located next to this project.

Eric stated there was a traffic analysis had been completed in the prior PUD when the applicant was looking at putting in an apartment at the site.

James Talago, 15th Ave., Duluth. Mr. Talago feels the residential need is much higher in Hermantown than the need for apartments.

Motion made by Matthew Fournier to approve the application by JP Holding Company, LLC for a Preliminary Planned Unit Development for a 19 lot single family homes and 9 townhome buildings (18 units total) for a total of 37 lots/units on a 13-acre site located at 507x Maple Grove Road. Seconded by Valerie Ouellette. Motion carried 4 to 0.

5C. An application by Hage and Co. for a Special Use Permit for the construction of a 72,000 square foot warehouse building with associated site and stormwater improvements. The property is located at 438x Sundby Road and is located in a BLM, Business and Light Manufacturing zoning district.

The Applicant, Hage and Co., is proposing to construct a 72,000 square foot building for the purpose of providing indoor storage in an area of close proximity to the Duluth International Airport. The proposed building is a 2 story building, 26 feet in height with a footprint of 120' x 600' (72,000 SF).

The BLM, Business and Light Manufacturing zoning district identifies maximum lot coverage (generally) of 35%. The code does allow for an increase in lot coverage up to 65% if there is a landscape plan provided with the proposal and approval by the City Council of a Special Use Permit (SUP).

The Applicant's engineer has provided a landscape plan which provides a mixture of deciduous and evergreen trees along the north and south facades of the proposed buildings. In addition, there are ornamental grasses proposed along the east and west facades of the buildings. And six large deciduous trees proposed in various locations on the property. The plant material along the building facades are planted within a rock maintenance strip along all sides of the buildings.

David Bolf, City Engineer, spoke to the commission regarding this project and he and City Staff have approved the stormwater plan with one underground system and the other is a stormwater pond.

There are utilities on Airbase Rd., and those utilities are City of Duluth utilities located in Hermantown, on easements on private properties. Because of this, the developer has to secure an easement from the property owners across the street and has to extend the public utilities across that easement to the Airbase Rd. right of way and then cross the right of way.

The following residents spoke about their concerns regarding this project. The main issues were, quality of life being destroyed, increased crime and traffic, property values and proposed landscaping associated with the project.

Bradley Bjork, 4395 Sundby Rd.
Dane Della Rossa, 4383 Sundby Rd.
Mrs. Bjork, 4395 Sundby Rd.

Eric stated that the applicant wanted a one-way traffic system throughout. He clarified that the entrance would be on Sundby Rd. and the exit would be onto Airbase Rd.

Applicant, Kerry Hage, 2 Merilane, Edina, is the developer for the project and he stated that it is a Business and Light Manufacturing zoned property, and as such, it is for the use of warehouse light manufacturing. There are similar businesses across the street, so it is an area that does what it is intended for.

Beth Wentzlaff stated that it would affect the property values somewhat because of the rest of the use around it. She feels it would be more of a benefit than a detriment.

Kerry also stated that he intended to build on the property to drive through it as to limit traffic flow outside of the structure. He doesn't believe there will be a tremendous amount of traffic, unlike the eye clinic across the street.

Motion made by Valerie Ouellette to approve the application by Hage and Co. for a Special Use Permit for the construction of a 72,000 square foot warehouse building with associated site and stormwater improvements. Seconded by Matthew Fournier. Motion carried 4 to 0.

5D. An application by Hage and Co. for a Commercial Industrial Development Permit for the construction of a 72,000 square foot warehouse building with associated site and stormwater improvements. The property is located at 438x Sundby Road and is located in a BLM, Business and Light Manufacturing zoning district.

Eric advised the commission that the Applicant, Hage and Co. is proposing to construct a 72,000 square foot building for the purpose of providing indoor storage in an area of close proximity to the Duluth International Airport. The proposed building is a 2 story building, 30 feet in height with a footprint of 120' x 600' (72,000 SF).

Eric explained that the maximum building coverage in the BLM zoning district is 35%, however it can be increased up to 65% with the submission of a landscape plan and a Special Use Permit. The applicant has provided a landscape plan that includes a mixture of deciduous and evergreen plant material with the landscape being installed around the periphery of the building as well as along both frontages.

Motion made by Matthew Fournier to approve the application by Hage and Co. for a Commercial Industrial Development Permit for the construction of a 72,000 square foot warehouse building with associated site and stormwater improvements. Seconded by Beth Wentzlaff. Motion carried 4 to 0.

6. CONTINUING BUSINESS
None.

7. NEW BUSINESS

7A. A discussion on development opportunities within Stebner Park.

John Mulder, City Administrator, spoke to the commission and advised them on how the concept of the Hermantown Marketplace began.

Hermantown Marketplace Summary - As of December 31, 2022, 351,339 sq. ft of space has been added. Over \$26.7 million in private investment in buildings, does not include the increase in value of land. Over \$1 million increase in new tax revenue.

Over the last two years, the City of Hermantown has been working with the land owner of “Stebner Farms” to consider how to enhance the Marketplace as a destination and center for economic activity.

Joe Wicklund, Assistant City Administrator, discussed with the commission the history of this particular idea. He stated that there have been discussions in this particular area around where in Marketplace area can a feasibly 100,000 sq. ft. facility that serves a little bit of health care but also creates opportunity for a 365-day indoor recreation site.

Eric followed up with fact that sanitary sewer has been extended from Maple Grove Rd. and that during the mid-part of next year, the driveway would be turned into a roadway. The next step would then be to change the zoning from P (Public) to Hermantown Marketplace. A Preliminary and Final Plat identifying parcels and public right of way would need to be completed, as well as a Commercial Industrial Development Permit application and review/action would need to be presented to the Planning Commission.

8. COMMUNICATIONS

None.

9. COMMISSION MEMBER REPORTS

Joe Peterson – None

Corey Kolquist – Absent

Valerie Ouellette – None

Beth Wentzlaff – None

Buckley Simmons – Absent

Dante Tomassoni – Absent

John Geissler – updates to Comprehensive Plan and new building official

Matthew Fournier – None

ADJOURN

Motion made by Valerie Ouellette to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Matthew Fournier
Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Officiated by:

Transcribed by:

Joe Peterson, Chairman

Mary Melde, Administrative Assistant