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Meeting Announcement and Agenda of the Cambridge Planning Commission  
City Hall Council Chambers  
Regular Meeting, Tuesday, May 5, 2020, 6:00 pm

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DUE TO THE COVID19 PANDEMIC, THIS WILL BE AN ELECTRONIC MEETING.  
It will be livestreamed on Facebook (Cambridge City Hall, Minnesota).

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**AGENDA**

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approval of Agenda (p.1)
3. Approval of Minutes
  - A. April 7, 2020 Regular Meeting (p.3)
4. Public Comment: For items not on the agenda. Due to the electronic format of the meeting, staff will be monitoring Facebook Live for any public comments that can be addressed by the Commission.
5. New Business
  - A. Variance Request for Exterior Materials, Craig Rabenberg, The Farm Mini Storage, located at 315 Cleveland St. S. (p. 6)
6. Other Business/Miscellaneous
  - A. City Council Update
  - B. Parks, Trails, and Recreation Commission (PTRC) Update
7. Adjourn

Notice to the hearing impaired: Upon request to City staff, assisted hearing devices are available for public use. Accommodations for wheelchair access, Braille, large print, etc. can be made by calling City Hall at 763-689-3211 at least three days prior to the meeting.

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**Cambridge Planning Commission Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, April 7, 2020**

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a regular meeting of the Cambridge Planning Commission was held via Zoom, at Cambridge City Hall, 300 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue NE, Cambridge, Minnesota.

Members Present: Commissioners Aaron Berg (Chair), Robert Boese (Vice Chair), Monte Dybvig, Jessica Kluck, David Redfield, and Arianna Weiler.

Members Absent: Bob Shogren (City Council Representative) (Unexcused).

Staff Present: Community Development Director Marcia Westover.

**Call To Order and Pledge of Allegiance**

Westover called the electronic meeting to order via Zoom at 6:10 p.m. The meeting start was delayed due to technical difficulties. Westover called the role call to verify attendance for a quorum; Dybvig, Redfield, Kluck, Berg, Boese and Weiler were present. Westover turned the meeting over to Berg who led the Commissioners in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approval of Agenda**

Boese moved, seconded by Dybvig to approve the agenda. Roll call was taken and the motion carried 6/0.

**Approval of Minutes**

***March 4, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes***

Boese moved, seconded by Weiler, to approve the March 4, 2020 meeting minutes. Roll call was taken and the motion carried 6/0.

**Public Comment**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting was held through electronic means. Staff noted they will be monitoring Facebook Live for any relevant comments that can be addressed by the Commission.

**New Business**

***Public Hearing – Preliminary and Final Plat for Parkwood on the Lakes 5<sup>th</sup> Addition  
INH Properties***

Westover stated staff received a request from INH Properties, 175 7<sup>th</sup> Ave S, Waite Park, MN 56387, for a preliminary and final plat. The applicant, Jim Illies, was also present electronically.

Westover explained INH Properties is preparing to build a new 36-unit apartment building located at 2000 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE (to be called Roosevelt Gardens Phase II). This site is just south of the first phase of Roosevelt Gardens currently being constructed. The site is currently a vacant parcel and was originally platted as an Outlot with the Parkwood on the Lakes plat in 2003. Westover stated parcels are typically platted as an Outlot until such time the developer plans to build on that parcel; developers typically build



in phases. All Outlots must be platted (into a lot and block legal description prior to any building permits being issued).

Westover stated the total lot area is 1.98 acres. The property is currently zoned R-3 Multiple Family Residence district. A multiple family apartment building is a permitted use. The properties to the north and west are also zoned R-3 Multiple Family Residence district. The properties to the east and south are zoned R-1 One Family Residence district.

Westover stated the preliminary and final plats have been reviewed by staff and are complete. Preliminary and final plats can be reviewed simultaneously when no new public infrastructure is required. All public infrastructure is in place for this site.

Westover stated a Site Plan Review is currently being done by City staff for the multiple family site. This is done administratively and not reviewed by the Planning Commission or Council. Site Plan Review consists of planning, public works, engineering, and building preliminary review. During this process, staff obtains information and plans to review the property's buildability and city code standards.

Westover stated a public hearing must be held for the preliminary plat. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting is being held through electronic means. Staff will be monitoring Facebook Live for any relevant comments that can be addressed by the Commission. Staff also prepared a public notice asking for comments and/or feedback via email, telephone, or written correspondence.

Westover stated she had not received any written comments, email responses and did not see any comments on the Facebook Live post.

Berg opened the public comment period at 6:18 pm and, without any comments, closed the public comment period at 6:18 pm.

Boese asked the applicant, Jim Illies, when the owner plans on beginning this project.

Jim Illies, INH Properties, stated the builder is budgeting for the project, getting formal bids and once the builder is able to get together a sworn construction statement and a formal contract with INH Properties is reviewed, INH hopes to start construction at that point.

Boese moved, seconded by Dybvig, to recommend the City Council approve the preliminary and final plats for Parkwood on the Lakes 5<sup>th</sup> Addition as long as the conditions are met. Upon call of the roll, Dybvig, Redfield, Kluck, Berg, Boese and Weiler voted aye, no nays. Motion carried 6/0.

#### **Other Business/Miscellaneous**

##### ***City Council Update***

Westover stated with Commissioner Shogren absent, there was no City Council update.

##### ***Parks, Trails, and Recreation Commission Update***

Westover stated there was no updates for the Parks, Trails, and Recreation Commission.

Chairman Berg extended his personal thank you to all City Staff who are continuing to work through what is going on in the world today and trying to make City government continue to work to.

Westover expressed her appreciation for the Commissioners attending the electronic meeting.

**Adjournment**

Being no further business before the Commission, Dybvig moved, seconded by Redfield, to adjourn the meeting at 6:24 pm. Motion carried 6/0.

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Aaron Berg, Chair  
Cambridge Planning Commissioner

ATTEST:

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Marcia Westover  
Community Development Director

DRAFT



**5A Planning Commission  
Variance for The Farm Mini Storage**

**May 5, 2020**

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Author: Marcia Westover, Community Development Director

**Background**

Craig Rabenberg, The Farm Mini Storage, has requested a variance from City Code Section 156.088 Exterior Building Wall and Roof Finishes. The property is located at 315 Cleveland Street S and is zoned I-2 Light Industrial district. Buildings in the I-2 district are required to have a minimum of 50% coverage with the major exterior surfaces listed in the code. The pertinent sections of the code are as follows:

156.088 Exterior Building and Roof Finishes

**B (2) Industrial buildings.**

(a) Major exterior surfaces on all walls shall be face brick, rock face block, cementitious siding, stone, finished precast panels, glass, stucco, synthetic stucco or cast in place and/or precast panels.

(b) Under no circumstances shall sheet plywood, sheet metal, corrugated metal, metal/steel or aluminum, asbestos, iron, or plain concrete block (whether painted or color-integrated or not) be deemed acceptable as exterior wall materials on buildings.

**C (2) Industrial buildings.**

(a) In industrial areas, the exterior surface must be covered with the major exterior surface materials required in subpart (B)(2) above as follows:

1. I-1, Low Impact Business - Industrial District 65% coverage
2. I-2, Light Industrial District 50% coverage
3. I-3, General Industrial District 25% coverage

(b) The remainder of the exterior surfaces may be architectural concrete, or decorative block when they are incorporated into an overall design of the building that is determined by the City to be appropriate with the use of the building, and is compatible with adjacent structures. All decorative concrete block shall be colored only by means of a pigment impregnated throughout the entire block.

**(D) Accent materials.** Wood and metal may be used as accent materials, provided that they are appropriately integrated into the overall building design and not situated in areas that will be subject to physical or environmental damage. Accent materials shall not comprise more than 25% of a building exterior.

**Review**

The character of mini storage facilities is comprised mostly of garage doors and

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Variance for The Farm Mini Storage**

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naturally cannot meet the 50% major exterior materials required. Staff understands that the garage doors will be steel by disposition, but would require the remainder of the building to be covered by a major exterior material as identified by city code. Steel/metal is not an approved material. Metal may be used for an accent material as long as it does not exceed 25% of the materials used.

The steel overhead doors comprise approximately 80% of the building. If the remainder of the building were comprised completely of major exterior materials allowed, staff considered it reasonable due to the nature of the building. However, the applicant is requesting to meet the 50% major exterior building requirement on the east and west elevations only (half steel, half stone). These elevations do not have any garage doors and face the street which is the most visible frontage.

The Planning Commission is tasked with making a recommendation to allow or deny the variance request for exterior materials as proposed on the attached building elevation sketch. Since the strict letter of the ordinance cannot be met because of the nature of the mini storage use (steel overhead doors comprising 80%), staff have no recommendations for this request. The Practical Difficulties test cannot be met if considering economic considerations alone, although the applicant has made a clear attempt to add stone which is an approved major material. In addition, the character of the neighborhood is industrial with existing metal buildings and the proposed variance better meets the intent of the code than other existing buildings. Moving forward, however, this will set a precedence for any new industrial buildings.

The purpose of the Variance process is to review applications on a case by case basis to determine whether relief may be granted from unforeseen particular applications of the zoning code that create practical difficulties. In considering an application for a variance, the Planning Commission shall recommend the approval of the variance only upon the finding that the application complies with the standards set forth below.

**(E) Standards.** In considering an application for a variance, the Planning Commission shall recommend the approval of the variance only upon the finding that the application complies with the standards set forth below.

(1) *General standard.* No variance shall be granted unless the applicant shall establish that conforming to the strict letter of the provisions of this chapter would create practical difficulties.

(2) "Practical difficulties", as used in conjunction with the granting of a variance, means that the property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by the Zoning Ordinance; the plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner, and the variance, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the area.

(3) *Harmony.* Variances shall only be permitted if they are in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the Zoning Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan.



(4) *Economic Considerations.* Economic considerations alone shall not constitute a practical difficulty; the alleged hardship shall not include the inability of the property owner to realize a greater profit than if the variance were not granted.

(5) *No other remedy.* There are no less intrusive means other than the requested variance by which the alleged hardship can be avoided or remedied to a degree sufficient to permit a reasonable use of the lot.

(6) *Variance less than requested.* A variance less than or different from that requested may be granted when the record supports the applicant's right to some relief but not to the relief requested.

(7) *Essential character of the area.* In considering whether a proposed variance will have an effect on the essential character of the area, the following factors shall be considered:

(a) Would the variance be materially detrimental to the public welfare or materially injurious to the enjoyment, use, development or value of property or improvements permitted in the vicinity;

(b) Would the variance materially impair an adequate supply of light and air to the properties and improvements in the vicinity;

(c) Would the variance substantially increase congestion in the public streets due to traffic or parking;

(d) Would the variance unduly increase the danger of flood or fire;

(e) Would the variance unduly tax public utilities and facilities in the area;  
and

(f) Would the variance endanger the public health or safety.

The following are suggestions for Findings of Fact depending on your recommendation for approval or denial.

Options for Findings of Facts of Denial

- *General Standard.* The use as a mini storage and its typical constructed overhead steel doors creates an unintended practical difficulty; however, other materials could be used, and other materials could be used on the other wall elevations.
- *Practical Difficulties.* The difficulties are created by the landowner and the use as



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mini storage, not the property itself.

- *Harmony.* Future buildings will be required to meet the ordinance. Allowing this building does not create the aesthetic harmony intended in the code.
- *Economic Considerations.* Not installing the approved materials on the walls appears to be an economic decision. The applicant is able to more closely meet the intent of the ordinance with approved major materials on all surfaces other than the garage doors.
- *No other remedy.* There are other remedies for this request. Requiring a major exterior building material (stone, brick, etc.) on all exterior surfaces other than the steel overhead garage doors more closely meets the intent of the ordinance.
- *Variance less than requested.* Steel is not an approved material. Additional approved materials can be added to better meet the intent of the ordinance giving the applicant some relief of the strict provisions of the code.
- *Essential character of the area. (a.)* If steel is allowed, it could affect others' enjoyment of their property.

Options for Findings of Fact of Approval

- *General Standard.* The use as a mini storage and its typical constructed overhead steel doors creates a practical difficulty in itself because it does not meet the strict letter of the ordinance (approximately 80% of the building is comprised of overhead doors).
- *Practical Difficulties.* The difficulties are created by the landowner and its intended use as mini storage. However, the use is permitted in the I-2 zoning district through an Interim Use Permit and inherently mini storage is comprised of mostly overhead steel doors. This use with steel materials will not significantly alter the character of the neighborhood.
- *Harmony.* Granting the variance is in harmony with the intent of the code and comprehensive plan. Specifically, the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Goal 4, Policy 4.4: Continue to plan for land uses in order to support and enhance Cambridge's ability to attract quality development.
- *Economic Considerations.* The applicant has made an attempt to better meet the intent of the code by proposing stone on 50% of the east and west elevation walls.
- *No other remedy.* Due to the nature of a mini storage facility and its inherent overhead steel door construction, the building is mostly comprised of prohibited materials at present proposal.

**5A Planning Commission  
Variance for The Farm Mini Storage**

**May 5, 2020**

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- *Variance less than requested.* The design of the building is comparable to other mini storage facilities.
  - *Essential Character of the Area.* The steel materials will not increase traffic congestion, disturb light and air quality, or create a fire hazard.

A summary from the applicant along with a sketch showing the proposed building materials is attached.

**Planning Commission Action:**

Make a recommendation to approve or deny the variance request for exterior materials and direct staff to prepare Findings of Fact for Council consideration.

**Attachments**

1. Applicant submittal (narrative and elevation sketch)



APRIL 8, 2020

Marcia Westover  
Community Development Director  
City of Cambridge  
300 3rd Avenue NE  
Cambridge, MN 55008  
mwestover@ci.cambridge.mn.us



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RE: EXTERIOR MATERIALS VARIANCE NARRATIVE  
THE FARM MINI STORAGE - 315 CLEVELAND STREET SOUTH, CAMBRIDGE, MINNESOTA

Marcia,

The Farm Mini Storage, LLC is proposing a new mini-storage facility and has been engaged in the City's plan approval process. The subject property is located along Cleveland Street South and is described as Part of Lot 1, Block 1, Southeast Cambridge Industrial Area 3rd Addition, Isanti County, Minnesota.

An Interim Use Permit was approved on March 4, 2020 to allow this mini-storage project in the existing I-2 Light Industrial Zoning District following affirmative findings by the City Council and Planning Commission that this interim use is compatible with the City's Comprehensive Plan.

In addition, it was determined that the proposed mini-storage facility is free from objectionable features and will reasonably utilize the property. All storage will be housed within the proposed buildings, and no outdoor storage is included as part of this project. It was also determined that the facility will be located in an industrial district which is deemed a preferred location for mini-storage, and it was noted that the City does not anticipate any development or other changes to this area in the near future.

Limited conditions were associated with the approval of the interim use permit including that the site plan review process be completed prior to issuance of a building permit. An updated site plan being provided to address staff comments made during the site plan review process which required minor adjustments to meet the intent of the zoning code.

Also among the limited conditions of the interim use permit, the exterior materials utilized by the project "need to be in compliance with City Code or receive a variance for approval of other materials prior to issuance of a building permit." The following narrative and attached information is being provided in support of this noted variance to § 156.088 Exterior Building Wall and Roof Finishes.

In the I-2 Zoning District, 50% of major exterior surfaces on all walls must be covered by face brick, rock face block, cementitious siding, stone, finished precast panels, glass, stucco, synthetic stucco or cast-in-place and/or precast panels. By nature, storage facilities have multiple individual units which must be separately secured and accessible to only the leasing tenant. Therefore, inherently, these facilities are comprised of approximately 80% steel overhead doors.

The proposed mini-storage facility is no exception to that standard requirement. By strict letter of the ordinance governing acceptable exterior materials, this approved interim use project could not proceed without a variance. This creates a practical difficulty whereby the applicant's ability to locate an approved interim use within an appropriate zoning district is subsequently hindered by an unintended contradiction of the zoning code.

With the understanding that mini-storage is an acceptable interim use preferred within the industrial zoning as proposed, and that the north and south elevations of the proposed mini-storage buildings are comprised primarily of overhead doors due to the inherent purpose of storage facilities, the applicant is requesting a variance from the exterior materials requirement.

The applicant is proposing to meet the 50% exterior material requirement on the east and west elevations of the building which are the sides without integral overhead doors and also the most prominent sides facing public frontages. This approach would

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Architecture + Engineering + Environmental + Planning



allow the project to proceed with the proposed exterior material allocations as illustrated by the updated elevations while still keeping with the overall intent of the ordinance.

The essential character of the area will not be altered by granting the proposed variance. Most other buildings within the immediate vicinity do not conform to § 156.088 Exterior Building Wall and Roof Finishes. In addition, strict conformance with the exterior materials code requirement will create a substantially different product and building type from surrounding structures.

The site is centrally located within and surrounded by I-2 Zoning on all sides. This same zoning extends across Cleveland Street to the east approximately an additional 420', where it borders I-1 Light Industrial Zoning which creates an additional multi-parcel buffer between the I-2 industrial park before transitioning again to B-2 Highway Business District Zoning. To the west approximately 300', the I-2 industrial park area is bordered by Railroad Street South and areas of I-3 General Industrial Zoning.

Similar circumstances exist along the south property line where multiple I-2 parcels are located. Other than a narrow strip prescribed as a bridging corridor of General Commercial Use according to the City's Future Land Use Map, I-3 industrial zoning also continues the several block trend further to the north.

As proposed, The Farm mini-storage buildings seek to provide a quality storage product consistent with the surrounding areas. The use is in harmony with the Comprehensive Plan as well as the Future Land Use Map, and it is an approved interim use proposed within the appropriate zoning district. In addition, this is the minimum variance necessary to allow exterior materials essential to storage facilities due to their multi-user requirements.

It is our hope that the City of Cambridge will allow this project to move forward with the requested variance amidst these uncertain times when many projects have been put on hold indefinitely. The applicant remains willing to invest in the Cambridge Community and committed to providing a quality local storage resource to its residents.

Please contact me at 952.426.0699 or via email at [Ryan.Anderson@ISGInc.com](mailto:Ryan.Anderson@ISGInc.com) with any questions or if there is any additional information we can provide in support of this project.

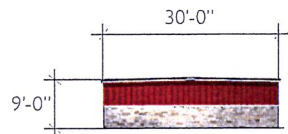
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ryan Anderson" with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

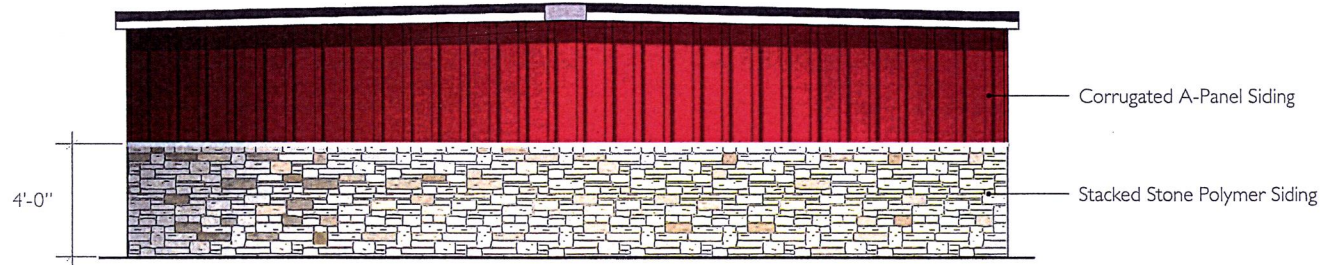
**Ryan Anderson, PE**  
Civil Engineer  
[Ryan.Anderson@ISGInc.com](mailto:Ryan.Anderson@ISGInc.com)

CC: Craig Rabenberg ([clrjmm@hughes.net](mailto:clrjmm@hughes.net))

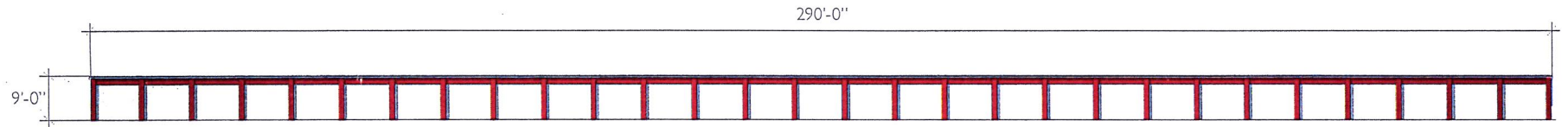




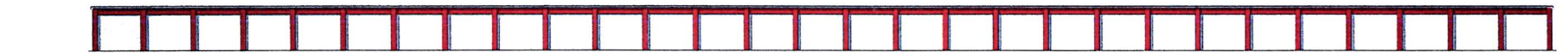
1 East Elevation



2 West Elevation



3 North Elevation



4 South Elevation

### EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS

Storage Facility - Cambridge, MN