

**Cambridge Planning Commission Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, March 1, 2022**

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

Members Present: Commissioners Aaron Berg (Chair), Robert Boese (Vice Chair), Amanda Latsch, Jessica Kluck, David Redfield, and Joe Morin

Members Absent: Kersten Conley (City Council Representative)

Staff Present: Marcia Westover (Community Development Director) and Evan Vogel (City Administrator)

**Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**

Berg called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and led the Commissioners in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approval of Agenda**

Morin moved, seconded by Boese to approve the agenda. Motion passed on a 6/0 vote.

**Approval of Minutes**

Latch moved, seconded by Kluck to approve the February 1st, 2022 meeting minutes. Motion passed on a 6/0 vote.

**Public Comment**

Berg opened the public comment period at 7:05pm and Kristie Erickson, resident at 2155 6<sup>th</sup> Lane, Unit 302, spoke regarding a letter and petition from the Board of East Terrace Cooperative and she also spoke about Public Hearing Notices and what she thought their requirements were.

Berg closed the public comment period at 7:06pm.

**New Business**

**A. PUBLIC HEARING-Ordinance to allow the Keeping of Ducks**

Westover reminded the Planning Commission about the resident who has requested to keep ducks, and who gave a presentation about how keeping ducks and chickens are similar. Westover stated that she has reviewed other city's ordinances regarding the keeping of ducks and has prepared a draft ordinance for the Keeping of Ducks as directed from the Planning Commission.

Berg opened the public comment period at 7:07pm, and without any comments, Berg closed the public comment period at 7:08pm.

Boese moved, seconded by Redfield to recommend approval of the Ordinance as presented to allow the keeping of ducks. Motion passed 6/0.

**B. PUBLIC HEARING-Preliminary Plat-Parkwood on the Lakes 6th Addition**

**C. Final Plat-Parkwood on the Lakes 6th Addition**

Westover stated that a request came in for a property that is currently an outlot and is required to be platted prior to development. The Park Land Dedication has already been set aside for Parkwood, but the area charges for this outlot G have not yet been captured and will be paid at the time of the building permit. The developer is proposing one lot and the lot size is 7.28 acres. The intent is to build a 159-unit luxury apartment building. The property is zoned R-3 Multiple Family Residence district and the proposed use is allowed by right. The density allowed on this property for a multi-family building is 159 units (2,000 sq. ft of land required per unit).

Westover stated that the final plat accompanies the Preliminary Plat request. Since no new infrastructure is required, the preliminary and final plat can be reviewed simultaneously. Site Plan Review is also currently taking place. This is done administratively to review all city code requirements, utilities, grading and drainage, and storm pond requirements.

Berg opened the public comment period for the preliminary plat at 7:11pm, and Corrine Sanderson, resident from 2155 6<sup>th</sup> Lane SE (unit not provided), spoke about how this proposed apartment is surrounded by three senior apartments, and that she believes that the seniors will not want such a large apartment building there because it will obstruct their view and will bring in more traffic and concerns with parking on the street. She said that it could be a safety issue.

Kristie Erickson, resident at 2155 6<sup>th</sup> Lane, Unit 302, spoke about zoning concerns, impervious surface concerns, alternatives to the building design, and recommended to the Planning Commissioners to not make a decision today regarding this plat.

Barbara Kruschel, resident at 1477 16<sup>th</sup> Ave SE, spoke about her concerns about homelessness. She said that she would like to support more section 8 housing, more community amenities, and inquired about how many people are living in that area with multiple apartment buildings.

Elizabeth Lastavica, resident at 1530 Old Main St S, spoke about her concern about the apartment building height, and desire for more low-income housing. She would like to see less homeless people. She also said she would encourage more time to review.

Douglas Trandahl, resident at 2155 6<sup>th</sup> Lane SE, Unit 301, spoke about concerns on water pressure, sewer, traffic, and noise levels. He also had concerns about how much light would be blocked, saying that East Central Terrace could be in shadows from the new apartment for approximately 3 months of the year when the sun angle lowers.

Robert Kramer, resident of 615 Taft Loop S, spoke about how he moved from Coon Rapids to Cambridge, was to avoid the traffic, the sun being blocked, he wants Cambridge to have a small-town feeling. He said that the apartment would bring chaos to an area with many seniors. He also expressed concern about the building height.

Berg welcomed the Builder/Developer to speak on behalf of the plat. Sirish Samaba stated that he has seen that Cambridge over the last 14 years and has had a lot of transformation. He stated that Cambridge was listed among the towns as one of the fastest growing suburbs of the Twin Cities. With the Allina Medical Center proposing a new medical center, there will be an influx of housing needs.

Samba stated that he composed a market study, and found that with the upcoming medical center renovations, that it will bring a population growth that could potentially require up to 800 more living units, and his apartment is bringing in 159. He said that there is a significant demand for housing. He said that they will be providing amenities such as an underground parking facility that will benefit any seniors that may end up living in the apartment, and also a dog park and tot lot to make the area more hospitable.

Berg closed the public comment period at 7:30pm.

Berg inquired if the Commissioners had any questions so far, Commissioner Morin asked Westover when the property was rezoned from Single Family District to Multiple Family District, and Westover replied that the change happened around 2013.

Berg stated that a report from 2019 identified that the City of Cambridge had a housing shortage of around 1,100 units and also stated that there is a nation-wide housing shortage. Berg then said that we have an opportunity to lessen the tax burden for the rest of Cambridge by increasing our tax base. Berg stated that the apartment complex matches the zoning regulations, so although a nice small rural community is desirable, there needs to be room for growth. In order to get the amenities that our residents want then we need to expand to some degree.

Berg inquired if there was any other questions, comments, or discussion.

Morin moved, seconded by Boese to recommend approval of the Preliminary and Final Plats for Parkwood on the Lakes 6<sup>th</sup> Addition. Redfield inquired from Westover how many days' notice is required for Public Hearings. Westover replied that it is State Statute that residents receive 10 days' notice to everyone within 350 feet of the property, and it also gets published in the newspaper. Berg stated that impervious surface limitations are reviewed during the building process, and if they needed more than 30% impervious surfaces, then a variance would need to be reviewed by the Planning Commission. Motion passed 6/0.

**D. PUBLIC HEARING-Variance for building height at 2000 9th Ave SE (Star Cambridge Apartments)**

Westover informed the commission that applicant Star Cambridge Apartments is proposing to build a 159-unit luxury multi-family apartment building at 2000 9th Ave SE. This property is zoned R-3 Multiple Family Residence District and the use as a multi-family apartment building is permitted. The maximum building height allowed in the R-3 Multiple Family Residence District is 45' according to city code.

Westover noted as part of their plan to draw a young generation, active adults, and seniors to this site, they are proposing underground parking. A building height variance is being requested because of this parking enhancement. In order to assure the garage elevation is above the ground water level, they would like to elevate the building to exceed 45' in some areas. The average grade around the building will cause the height to be 48' at the highest.

Westover stated that the City requires one garage per unit. In order to meet the requirements and provide a modern luxury style building, the applicants are proposing underground parking. Some above ground garages are also proposed in order to meet the City requirement. A total of 119 stalls will be underground garage parking and 40 stalls will be above-ground garages. Additional open parking will

be provided on site. Staff find the underground parking more desirable aesthetically than above ground garages and it allows more green space on the property.

Westover stated that the apartment complex will include a mix of studio, one-bedroom, two-bedroom, and three-bedroom apartments. The amenities proposed include a party room, fitness center and media room, an outdoor patio, children play area, dog park, and dog spa are proposed. An additional feature is that no Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is being requested for this project. This project will be taxable immediately and staff find this a valuable attribute.

Westover stated that this project meets the goals and intent of the City's Comprehensive Plan. (Housing Goal 1, Policy 1.3): Encourage the development of a balance of housing types, including market rate, low to moderate income, and congregate, to meet the needs of all citizens, including young adults and senior citizens. In addition, this project meets the intent of the City of Cambridge 2021 Strategic Planning and Goals, Core Strategy #7: Provide diverse amenities for a high quality of life; Provide inclusive housing options. Westover stated that this apartment will be a luxury option, but that City staff have been talking to other developers about low-income housing options that may be proposed in the near future.

Westover noted that she talked to the Deputy Fire Chief, Will Pennings, and he is excited for this building since it will be a good safe building with fire suppression.

Berg opened the public comment period at 7:40pm, Kristie Erickson, resident at 2155 6<sup>th</sup> Lane, Unit 302, proposed that the applicant reduce the building to 3 floors instead of 4 which would reduce the height and amount of parking spaces needed, and expressed that she would like involvement with future development in the area. She recognized that we need more housing, but said that it doesn't all need to be in the same place.

Corrine Sanderson, resident from 2155 6<sup>th</sup> Lane SE (unit not provided), said that she wants to reduce the number of units available on this one lot, and said that she believes 3 stories could work.

Evan Vogel, City Administrator for the City of Cambridge, thanked the community for their engagement. He stated that he would like to express his support for this project, due to it not being a TIF district and the taxes we will gain from this project. He said that this apartment provides diversity to our housing options. Vogel also stated that without this three (3) foot variance request, this project would go straight to City Council.

Berg closed the public comment period at 7:49pm.

Berg inquired if there was any other questions, comments, or discussion. Redfield inquired how many variances we have issued in the past for height. Westover replied 1 other for the Emerald apartment buildings, which was also 48 feet. The Emerald requested the height variance because they wanted taller ceilings to be competitive with new trends, not due to an underground parking garage.

Berg moved, seconded by Boese to recommend approval of the 3' Variance for building height for Star Cambridge Apartments. There was discussion amongst the Planning Commissioners, where Berg stated that he has received many complaints about how high the taxes are in Cambridge, and he said that we need a bigger population to reduce the tax burden on existing residents. He said that the 3 feet gained

by the variance is not usable any other way, since it is vertical. Discussion continued about taxes and green space/lot coverage. Evan Vogel, City Administrator, spoke about the historical significance of the height limitations, which came from lack of fire suppression and fire vehicles that could not reach that height. This building is being proposed with fire suppression, and our modern fire vehicles can reach up to 100 feet. Motion passed 4/2, with Redfield and Latsch voting no.

**E. Discussion on the use of dumpsters in residential zoning districts**

Westover said that a discussion is needed for dumpsters in residentially zoned areas. The City has been receiving complaints on two different properties in a residential zoning district. Both properties have 2-yard dumpsters as their regular garbage container rather than the typical 96-gallon containers. We also have a request to keep the dumpsters and allow them in our ordinance. The current language does not distinguish what containers are permitted for residential or business zoning districts. The Industrial and Commercially zoned districts do allow dumpsters, but they must be screened.

Discussion pursued about the definition of a container, screening requirements, size of containers, businesses vs single-family homes, location of containers on properties, frequency of pickups, location of screening, and the noise ordinance.

The general consensus from the Planning Commission was to amend the ordinance to be specific to not allow dumpsters in residential areas, and if in a business district all dumpsters need to be screened.

**City Council Update**

Evan Vogel, City Administrator, updated the Planning Commission on the previous City Council meeting and relevant news to the City.

**Parks, Trails and Recreation Commission Update**

Westover informed the Planning Commission that the February PTRC was cancelled. Westover then gave an update on the 2022 Summer Parks Programing.

**Adjournment of Planning Commission Meeting**

Being no further business before the Commission, Latch moved, seconded by Redfield to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:42pm. Motion carried unanimously.

  
Aaron Berg, Chair  
Cambridge Planning Commissioner

ATTEST:

  
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Marcia Westover  
Community Development Director