

Cambridge Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 7, 2024

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 Jessica Kluck (Chair), Robert Boese (Vice Chair), Joe Morin (arrived at 7:28 pm), Michael Liddy, Julie Immel, David Redfield, and Mark Ziebarth (City Council Representative)

Staff Present: Community Development Director Marcia Westover, City Planner Jacob Nosbush

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Kluck called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

Westover requested to move Item #5F Interim Use Permit- Solar- 300 Spirit River Dr S- SolarPod Inc to the top of the meeting.

Liddy moved, seconded by Redfield, to approve the amended agenda. All voted aye, no nays. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Immel moved, seconded by Ziebarth, to approve the April 2, 2024 meeting minutes. All voted aye, no nays. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Kluck opened the public comment at 7:04 pm.

No one approached to speak.

After three calls, Kluck closed the public comment at 7:04 pm.

New Business

F. PUBLIC HEARING- Interim Use Permit- Solar- 300 Spirit River Dr S- SolarPod Inc

Nosbush presented the request from SolarPod Inc, Shakopee, MN, for ground mounted solar, which is allowed via Interim Use Permit (IUP) in §156.066 H. Staff will require an additional review of the solar panels, and require building and electrical permits. The panels must comply with height and setback requirements for accessory buildings, screened from adjacent properties to the extent possible without affecting their function, and must have certification by Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. A condition has been listed that all local, state, and federal codes must be met. Staff recommend approval for ten years as long as the conditions are met.

Mouli Vaidyanathan, owner of SolarPod, Inc. stated he has been in business for 16 years in the State of Minnesota, installing solar panels for both roofs and ground systems. He has his building contractor

license and is a professional engineer. Liddy asked if the power would be utilized by the college, Vaidyanathan said it would. Liddy asked if there was a possibility of expansion in the ten-year timeframe, Vaidyanathan said the solar panels come with a 25-year warranty and could be expanded upon in the future depending on space allocation. The energy produced would only provide three to seven percent of the college's energy use.

Liddy asked if the IUP defined a fixed space or does it allow for growth, Westover said it was fixed and any expansion would require an additional IUP.

Redfield asked the square footage of the proposed area, Vaidyanathan said it was approximately 60 feet by 60 feet and would have a perimeter fence.

Boese asked what the agreement with the college was, Vaidyanathan said the State of Minnesota has a program called Solar for Schools, Anoka Ramsey College was awarded this grant to pay for installation.

Vaidyanathan noted they are in a time crunch to finish this project and asked how soon construction could begin if approved, Kluck said the IUP still needed to be reviewed by City Council on May 20th, so construction could not begin until the 21st if approved.

Public Hearing

Kluck opened the public hearing at 7:13 pm.

No one approached to speak.

After three calls, Kluck closed the public hearing at 7:14 pm.

Liddy questioned if the allowed size of the solar field should be noted in the resolution, Westover stated it is documented on the building permit but clarifying language could be added to refer to the permit.

Immel asked if it was easier to limit to the number of panels versus square footage, Nosbush said he did not know the number of panels, but the 60 by 60 size allowed for two rows total. Commissioners were concerned about limiting the size due to needing the perimeter fence. Nosbush thought adding language to reference the building permit would be best. Vaidyanathan noted there would be 104 solar panels.

Liddy motioned, seconded by Boese, to recommend approval of the draft resolution to include language referencing the building permit as discussed. All voted aye, no nays, motion passed unanimously.

A. PUBLIC HEARING- Easement Vacation- Cambridge Cove Outlot A

Westover presented the request from LGI Homes to vacate the existing drainage and utility easements of Cambridge Cove Outlot A. Phase One had been approved and construction is underway, Phase Two was set aside for future development. The plat shows Phase Two as Outlot A, the state requires future phases be shown as outlots. In order to plat Phase Two, the outlot needs to be removed, changed to lots and blocks, and the easement vacated.

Public Hearing

Kluck opened the public hearing at 7:19 pm.

Melanie Castellano, whose mother lives at GracePointe Crossing, approached to speak. She asked if new drainage would be installed if the existing easement was vacated, Westover said the engineers have ensured the correct drainage and storm ponds were in place. Castellano asked the number of homes, Westover said there would be a total of 206 homes.

Kluck closed the public hearing at 7:21 pm.

Boese motioned, seconded by Ziebarth, to recommend approval of the resolution to vacate the drainage and utility easements as presented. All voted aye, no nays, motion passed unanimously.

B. PUBLIC HEARING- Interim Use Permit Extension- Pawn Shop in B-1 Downtown Business District- 107 Main St N- Krystle Lindelof- Local Pawn

Nosbush presented the request to extend the Interim Use Permit (IUP) for Local Pawn, 107 Main Street N. The initial resolution was granted in 2014 and extended in 2019. Over the course of those 10 years, the City has had no code enforcement cases open against them. Staff recommend approval for another 5-year term IUP with conditions to match to original Resolution R19-015.

Public Hearing

Kluck opened the public hearing at 7:24 pm.

Monte Dybvig, 115 Main St N and 132 Ashland St N, said Local Pawn have been great neighbors and hoped the IUP would be approved. He said he was surprised the pawn shop needed an IUP, and noted the business has made a substantial investment in downtown by purchasing the property and being a long-term business. Dybvig felt the City should revisit the conditions that require an IUP.

Kluck closed the public hearing at 7:26 pm.

Immel motioned, seconded by Ziebarth, to recommend approval of the draft Resolution R24-033 as presented with the listed conditions. All voted aye, no nays, motion passed unanimously.

C. PUBLIC HEARING- Interim Use Permit Extension- Chickens- 1293 Roosevelt St S- Stephanie Baker

Nosbush noted this was an extension for an existing IUP to keep up to six birds on the property, the maximum allowed by City Code for properties with less than three acres. This parcel is about one third of an acre.

Nosbush continued, all conditions of the initial IUP were met, and no complaints or code violations have been undertaken related to the coop or chickens. Staff recommended approval of the draft resolution for four years with the same conditions as the original IUP.

Public Hearing

Kluck opened the public hearing at 7:29 pm.

No one approached to speak.

After three calls, Kluck closed the public hearing at 7:30 pm.

Immel asked if extending the IUP for four years was the general rule of thumb after the initial IUP. Nosbush said it was ultimately up to Commissioners, but staff feel the IUP should be extended up to four years in cases where there have been no concerns reported. Westover noted if there are issues with a property staff would detail them and recommend a shorter timeframe.

Liddy motioned, seconded by Immel, to recommend approval of the draft resolution as presented. All voted aye, no nays, motion passed unanimously.

D. PUBLIC HEARING- Interim Use Permit- Chickens- 433 11th Ave SW- Kayla Boettcher

Nosbush presented the request from Kayla Boettcher, 433 11th Ave SW, to keep up to six chickens on the property, the maximum allowed by City Code for properties with less than three acres. This property is approximately 1.29 acres. The applicant has not yet provided a site plan of the coop but given the size of the lot staff do not feel placement will become an issue, and is a condition of approval before the coop can be placed.

Public Hearing

Kluck opened the public hearing at 7:33 pm.

No one approached to speak.

After three calls, Kluck closed the public hearing at 7:34 pm.

Morin motioned, seconded by Liddy, to recommend approval of the draft resolution as presented. All voted aye, no nays, motion passed unanimously.

E. PUBLIC HEARING- Easement Vacation- 707 Sunset Ln N- Wayne Brown

Nosbush said Wayne Brown, property owner of 707 Sunset Ln N, has requested to vacate a drainage and utility easement along a previously existing property line that was combined sometime prior to 1997. The addition ran directly over the easement and should not have been approved until this process occurred, this request is a mere formality to correct that.

Public Hearing

Kluck opened the public hearing at 7:36 pm.

No one approached to speak.

After three calls, Kluck closed the public hearing at 7:36 pm.

Boese motioned, seconded by Redfield, to recommend approval of the draft resolution as presented. All voted aye, no nays, motion passed unanimously.

G. PUBLIC HEARING- Conditional Use Permit- Four-Plex in R-2 Zoning- 2455 Main St S- Chenlee Liu

Westover presented the request by Chenlee Liu, 2455 Main St. S., for an CUP to build a four-plex on a lot zoned R-2 one- and two-family dwellings. More than two units is considered multiple family which is a conditional use in the R-2 zoning district. There are other four-unit buildings along Main Street S, some that have been purchased or built by Liu, and this proposed dwelling fits the character of the area. The plans submitted for this building have been reviewed and match the other four-unit dwellings in the area. This is a steep property, but City Engineer Blank had reviewed the grading plans and stated the design

should work. There are foundation concerns with the amount of slope and fill, but these concerns will be reviewed along the way.

Public Hearing

Kluck opened the public hearing at 7:39 pm.

Laurie Higgins, 2563 Main St S, approached to speak. Higgins lives in the adjacent lot and is opposed to this project. She does not feel four-unit dwellings should be allowed in R-2 zoning. It was explained to her that the houses would face her lot, not the street. Staff assured her the plans show the housing faces Main St, not her home. Higgins questioned the plan to ensure construction does not make a mess of her yard, Westover said the inspectors will be making regular inspections on the property to ensure proper erosion control. If there are concerns regarding this, Westover encouraged Higgins to reach out to staff.

Kluck closed the public hearing at 7:43 pm.

Morin stated this request has been presented to City Council in the past and was denied due to the steep grade of the property, concerns regarding erosion control, and the amount of fill and grading needed being a disruption to the neighboring properties. Westover said that was a different property further south. Morin stated the property in discussion has the same issues.

Chad Erickson, 2563 Main St S, said he owns the home south of the parcel. He expressed concern about erosion in his yard stating the slope is close to a forty-foot drop. He also agreed that R-2 zoning should only be for one- or two-family homes, and adding four homes would increase traffic and noise, which is already an issue in the neighboring multifamily dwellings. The buffer of woods on this lot offers some protection from this.

Morin opined the amount of fill and potential disruption to the land around the parcel makes him opposed to the project. Westover said engineer Blank had reviewed and approved the plans. Morin asked if Blank saw different plans than were presented to the Commissioners, because what he has viewed shows problems for the neighbors. He stated he respects and trusts engineer Blank. Westover said Blank did have concerns, but after discussion with the project engineers and viewing new grading plans, he approved the project stating concerns moving forward were how the fill and foundation walls worked with the permit. But what has been presented to date has been approved.

The applicant, Chenlee Liu, 129 2nd Ave SW, told Commissioners she relied upon engineers and City staff to address the concerns on the project, and has a plan that was approved. The lot that was denied had a storm sewer cutting through the property, this lot does not. Plans include building a retaining wall in the low area and making the four-plex eight inches higher than the building next to it. The plans should not disturb the neighboring properties, and should be contained to the lot. She stated she has built in Cambridge for the past 20 years and understands the need to not disturb neighboring properties.

Kluck asked for clarification on the concerns for the foundation walls, Westover said the concerns would be address with the building permit moving forward. These are typical things building inspectors watch for on any site. Bringing in fill affects the foundation so the building inspectors will review the plans

before approving the permit, and the plans will most likely require an engineered structural plan to ensure everything is constructed correctly due to the fill.

Immel said most of the houses in the neighborhood are similar to this proposal, seemingly built off the edge of a cliff and bringing in fill. As long as it is done appropriately and to code, it is feasible.

Ziebarth said from the perspective of the Planning Commission, the goal is to ensure due diligence has been taken in the project, which has been done. The next step is to ensure the permitting process is correct and inspections happen. For those that have concerns regarding the project, there is a process that the City goes through in order to make sure the building is safe, and trust needs to be placed into those hired to do this. There are concerns about the slope and he wants to be sure this is addressed before things progress too far.

Westover said those concerns are being addressed, but tonight is about approving the conditional use permit. The zoning code is one- and two-family dwellings, multiple family dwellings are listed as a conditional use. Commissioners need to decide if the permit should be recommended and if the use is compatible with the neighborhood, not discuss the slope or foundation walls. Because of previous four-plex's along Main Street, staff feel the use as a four-plex is viable in this location.

Liddy asked why a four-plex was requested rather than a duplex, Liu said the four-plex units would be one bedroom, with mostly single people residing in the homes whom are usually quiet neighbors. There is a strict background check with no felonies or drug use allowed. Liddy asked why not consider a duplex, Liu replied a duplex would allow for two bedrooms on each side, which would bring in more traffic. Kluck felt a single family with two kids would produce less traffic and vehicles than four single units. Kluck said if couples rented the single units that is the potential for eight vehicles in the small area. Liu said there was enough parking to meet the requirements, four inside parking spots and four outdoor parking spots, plus guest parking.

Boese said he recently drove through Cambridge Cove to see how things were progressing, four to five homes have been sold, all are three-bedroom homes. There is a need for smaller units too. At the current four-plex there are sometimes cars parked outside of the garages, but it works for the area.

Morin wanted to amend Condition Three, replacing 'must' with 'shall', to read "they shall be approved prior to construction". Redfield asked if it could be clarified who is making the approval, Westover said the grading must be approved by the City Engineer, the foundation walls are approved by the building official, and this is covered under Condition Two, stating the project must meet all federal, state, and local codes. Immel was opposed to adding in language because it could be legally binding to show proof of approval from both parties, and Condition Two does cover the concerns.

Liddy motioned, seconded by Boese, to recommend approval of resolution R24-038 for a Conditional Use Permit for a four-unit building with the amendment to replace must with shall in condition three as discussed. All voted aye, no nays, motion passed unanimously.

Other Business/Miscellaneous

A. City Council Update

Ziebarth said in the past month Council has been updating ordinances for clarification on some issues, and working with Parks Commission to highlight and celebrate some of the summer events including things to broaden the appeal of the events. Council and staff have been working with Senator Koran regarding the parking legislation, there has been a last-minute push to restrict the City's ability to regulate parking. Senator Koran has been supportive in working with the City on this issue. Street work for the Goldenwood area has been progressing, and bids for the work came in lower than expected, which is great news. The connection with the bike trail will also be completed, this has been a long-term goal for the City. There will also be re-pavement on some of the airport runways which will involve some closure and limitations of the airport, but is a good use of grants that have been awarded from state and federal partners. Council is working on getting bids for cleaning services, which will help when staff are absent.

Westover reminded Commissioners that last year Council approved No Mow May, the City will not be enforcing codes on lawn length for the month of May.

Redfield asked for an update on the tiny houses that were discussed two months ago, Ziebarth said most of the legislation has stalled, though this is concerning because things are being brought back if they have not passed. Currently this will be left as is, but may be revisited in the future. Redfield asked if representatives understood why cities were opposed to the change, Ziebarth said there have been conversations in the last three to four months regarding this and the Highway 95 project, both have had good response. The number of amendments being added have seemed to bog the system down.

B. Parks, Trails, and Recreation Commission (PTRC) update

Westover noted that summer programming has been widely published, including on social media, the website, and in brochures.

Immel asked for more information on the bike trail connection. Westover said the paved trail currently ends at 40th Ave in Isanti Township, where it continues onto the gravel Central Ave, then connects again in Goldenwood. Central Ave will be paved and a bike lane added with a curb to separate it from the street. Immel asked where people who want to use the trail will park, Westover said the City is in discussions with property owners in the area to purchase a corner parcel for a parking lot. Ziebarth noted this has been a 25-year process, but with recent changes staff are hopeful.

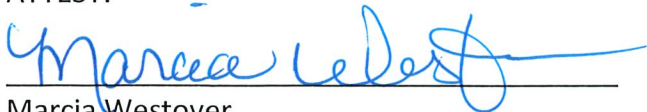
Adjournment of Planning Commission Meeting

Being no further business before the Commission, Boese moved, seconded by Immel, to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:17 pm. All voted aye, no nays. Motion carried unanimously.



Jessica Kluck, Chair
Cambridge Planning Commissioner

ATTEST:



Marcia Westover
City Planner