



City of Northfield

City Hall
801 Washington Street
Northfield, MN 55057
ci.northfield.mn.us

Meeting Minutes - Final Planning Commission

Thursday, January 16, 2020

6:00 PM

Northfield Police Station - Training Room

Roll Call

Also present: Mitzi Baker-Community Development Director, Mikayla Schmidt-City Planner, Jennifer Banaszewski-Building Permit Technician, Dave Bennet-City Engineer, Sofia Chihade-Youth Representative, Gregory Langer, Richard Sorem, Kevin J. Larson-Director of Facilities at St. Olaf, and Marta Jensen-Permitting Associate at Geronimo Energy.

Present 6 - Joe Gasior, Betsey Buckheit, Tracy Heisler, Greg Siems, William Schroeer, and Aaron Swoboda

6:00 PM - REGULAR AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Gasior thanked Terri Jensen for her service on the Planning Commission, congratulated new City Planner Mikayla Schmidt and welcomed new member Jacob Hamalian to the committee.

Hamalian gave a brief introduction of his background.

Chair Gasior called the meeting to order at 6:04pm.

A motion was made by Siems, seconded by Buckheit to approve the agenda.

Motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Gasior, Buckheit, Hamalian, Heisler, Siems, Schroeer, and Swoboda

PUBLIC HEARINGS AND RELATED ACTION

1. [20-042](#) Public Hearing on a Conditional Use Permit request for a 1MW Solar Garden.

Attachments: [1 - Public Hearing Notice](#)
[2 - Public Hearing Mailing](#)

Chair Gasior opened the Public Hearing at 6:10pm.

City Planner Mikayla Schmidt gave a short Powerpoint presentation and answered questions posed by Planning Commission.

Marta Jensen, Geronimo Energy gave a short presentation and answered questions posed by the Planning Commission.

Gregory Langer, 7050 320th St W, Northfield, MN 55057, greglanger@hotmail.com

Richard Sorem, 32840 Garrett Ave, Northfield, voiced concern of the runoff from the current solar field and noted that no one has fixed it. He is worried that adding another

solar farm will create even more runoff and additional problems. Asked questions on how efficient are the solar garden and are they worth it?

Kevin J. Larson, Director of Facilities, St. Olaf College, addressed the runoff problem and noted there has been additional work done to help alleviate the problem. Noted that farmers could ask for reimbursement for any losses they might have had.

Gregory Langer, 7050 320th St W, Northfield, he has concerns regarding the runoff and would like for this problem to be resolved.

City Planner Mikayla Schmidt relayed a message from Matt Langer, landowner to the North, expressed his concern regarding the runoff and would like it to be fixed.

A motion was made by Buckheit, seconded by Siems to close the Public Hearing at 6:31pm.

Yes: 7 - Gasior, Buckheit, Hamalian, Heisler, Siems, Schroeer, and Swoboda

REGULAR BUSINESS

- 2. [PC M2020-001](#) Consider a Conditional Use Permit Request for a 1MW Solar Garden.

- Attachments:** [1 - Location Map](#)
[2 - Hyacinth Solar CUP Application](#)
[3 - Site Plans](#)
[4 - Hyacinth Solar CUP Complete Narrative](#)

A motion was made by Heisler, seconded by Buckheit to approve a Conditional Use Permit Request for a 1MW Solar Garden with the conditions that the development of the property includes restoration of areas compacted during construction and native plantings on the site, that stormwater discharge rates leaving the property shall not be greater than existing stormwater discharge rate conditions and shall be evenly distributed and when the current use expires, the conditions of the CUP will expire. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Gasior, Buckheit, Hamalian, Heisler, Siems, Schroeer, and Swoboda

PRESENTATIONS

- 3. [20-043](#) Presentation from Community Action Center on Site Plan Design Considerations for the Hillcrest Motel Site.

- Attachments:** [1 - CAC Affordable Housing Site Plan Design Considerations](#)
[2 - Site Plan Options A-E](#)

City Planner, Mikayla Schmidt introduced this item and reminded commissioners it is discussion only.

Brian Novak, designer for project gave a presentation stating after discussions with Community Development Director Mitzi Baker there would need to be variances. Property is an N-1 and in an industrial area.

Steve Schmidt and Alison Miller are CAC board members and Scott Wopata, CAC

Executive Director were there as well to field questions.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- 4. [20-044](#) Review Draft Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [1 - 12-19-2019 PC Minutes](#)

A motion was made by Heisler, seconded by Swoboda to approve the December 19, 2019 PC meeting minutes. Motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Gasior, Buckheit, Hamalian, Heisler, Siems, Schroeer, and Swoboda

REPORTS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

Commissioner Heisler gave an update on the Riverfront Enhancement Advisory Committee.

- 5. [20-045](#) Planning Commission 2020 Election of Officers

Attachments: [1 - PC Bylaws - 2018](#)

A motion was made by Schroeer, seconded by Buckheit to nominate Joe Gasior as Chair of the Planning Commission. Motion carried by the following vote:

A motion was made by Hesiler, seconded by Schroeer to nominate Betsey Buckheit as Vice Chair of the Planning Commission. Motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Gasior, Buckheit, Hamalian, Heisler, Siems, Schroeer, and Swoboda

- 6. [20-046](#) Approve the 2020 Planning Commission Meeting Schedule

Attachments: [1 - 2020 PC Meeting Schedule w. submission dates](#)

A motion was made by Swoboda, seconded by Buckheit to approve the 2020 Planning Commission Meeting Schedule. Motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Gasior, Buckheit, Hamalian, Heisler, Siems, Schroeer, and Swoboda

- 7. [20-047](#) Completion and Submission of Ethics Disclosure and Equal Opportunity Information Forms.

Attachments: [1 - Ethics Disclosure Form](#)
[2 - Equal Opportunity Information Form](#)

Chair Gasior let Planning Commissioners know that they need to fill out the Ethics Disclosure and Equal Opportunity Information form.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Swoboda, seconded by Schroeer to adjourn the meeting at 8:07 pm. Motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Gasior, Buckheit, Hamalian, Heisler, Siems, Schroeer, and Swoboda