

City of Duluth Planning Commission

August 8, 2023 – City Hall Council Chambers
Meeting Minutes

Call to Order

President Margie Nelson called to order the meeting of the city of Duluth planning commission at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 8th, 2023 in the Duluth city hall council chambers.

Roll Call

Attendance:

Members Present: Jason Crawford, Gary Eckenberg, Jason Holliday, Margie Nelson, Danielle Rhodes, Michael Schraepfer, and Andrea Wedul

Member Absent: Brian Hammond

Staff Present: Adam Fulton, Jean Coleman, Jenn Moses, John Kelley, Jason Mozol, and Cindy Stafford

Approval of Planning Commission Minutes -

Planning Commission Meeting – July 11, 2023

MOTION/Second: Holliday/Rhodes approved

VOTE: (7-0)

Public Comment on Items Not on Agenda

None

Public Hearings

PL 23-094 Preliminary Plat for Pine Haven Estates between Arrowhead Road and Krueger Road by Duluth YMCA Property, Inc.

Staff: John Kelley introduced the applicant's proposal for a preliminary plat of 58+ acres of land creating three lots ranging from approximately 11 acres to 24 acres into "Pine Haven Estates" for single-family homes. Staff recommends approval with the conditions listed in the staff report. A revised plat was received, which included utility easement and platting language.

Applicant: Present, but did not speak.

Public: No speakers.

MOTION/Second: Wedul/Schraepfer approved as per staff recommendation

VOTE: (7-0)

PL 23-125 Special Use Permit for a Restaurant Use for a Cat Café at 1823 E Superior Street by Wired Whisker/Misha Smith

Staff: Jenn Moses introduced the applicant's proposal for a special use permit for a new coffee shop in an existing building with a dedicated, separate cat lounge where people can interact

with adoptable cats. A restaurant use with less than 5,000 square feet requires a special use permit. The site currently has two off-street parking spaces. The capacity of the building is similar to previous uses, allowing the nonconforming parking to remain. Staff recommends approval with the conditions listed in the staff report.

Commissioners: Andrea Wedul asked about business hours. Moses noted the hours were proposed by the applicant, and are unique to each special use permit issued.

Applicant: Misha Smith addressed the commission. She hopes the café will serve as an extension to animal rescue efforts. They encourage cat adoption. She is aware they are among neighbors and hopes to be non-disruptive. She noted their emphasis on cats, but there is a dog-friendly patio included in their layout.

Commissioners: Gary Eckenberg asked if the cats would all be from Duluth. Smith noted the selection will be local cats. Eckenberg asked about parking. Smith noted the parking situation is not unfamiliar to Duluth. Wedul asked about approval from the Department of Health. Smith noted the cats will be separate from the food prep area. Eckenberg asked about beverage options. Smith shared she would like to have a small selection of beer and wine.

Public: Ted Policka – 1815 E Superior St. – addressed the commission. He noted the former child care facility located in this space was not a problem. He is against this proposal. He thinks parking is not available for a café with only 2 of their own parking spaces. He noted that parking on the street is extremely limited. He is against the proposal, but will support the business once the commission approves it.

MOTION/Second: Rhodes/Hollinday approved as per staff recommendation

VOTE: (7-0)

PL 23-126 Concurrent Use Permit for Parking in the Right of Way at 2250 E Water Street by the Breakers/F.I. Salter

Staff: Jenn Moses introduced the applicant's proposal to obtain a concurrent use permit to allow six parking spaces within the right of way of E Water Street. This is a similar parking pattern to nearby properties along Water Street. The city of Duluth requires liability insurance to indemnify the city against all occurrences in the right of way. Staff recommends approval with the conditions listed in the staff report.

Applicant: Present, but did not speak.

Commissioners: Danielle Rhodes asked if there was a sidewalk present. Moses stated there is a trail located on the north side of Water Street. Eckenberg asked about the trail passing in front of the buildings and closer to the lake. Deputy Director Fulton noted it is cost prohibitive and highly unlikely.

MOTION/Second: Wedul/Crawford recommended approval as per staff recommendation

VOTE: (7-0)

Tabled Item

PL 23-003 UDC Text Amendments to Off-Street Parking Requirements by the City of Duluth

Deputy Director Adam Fulton noted there will be a national speaker (recommended by city councilor Noah Hobbs) presenting on 8/24/2023 during a brown bag lunch meeting. They will potentially host a public meeting on Tuesday, August 29th, 2023, and will have a public hearing and possible vote on 9/12/2023. Deputy Director Fulton gave a brief overview of the changes, and noted they are not eliminating parking requirements. They are hoping to provide the

market with greater flexibility. The city needs to adopt bicycle parking rules. A minimal amount needs to be provided. EV charging station minimums also need to be addressed.

Communications

Land Use Supervisor (LUS) Report – Deputy Director Adam Fulton gave an overview. There is a MN DOT meeting tomorrow night. He complimented staff on their continued work on the Core Investment Areas – long range planning.

Heritage Preservation Commission – Gary Eckenberg stated there will be a meeting on Monday.

Joint Airport Zoning Board – No updates.

Duluth Midway Joint Powers Zoning Board – No updates.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 6:04 p.m.

Respectfully,

DocuSigned by:
Adam Fulton
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Adam Fulton – Deputy Director
Planning & Economic Development