

CRYSTAL PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Monday, October 14, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.

Council Chambers, Crystal City Hall

A. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Crystal Planning Commission convened at 7:00 p.m. with the following members present:

X Commissioner (Ward 1) Sears [Vice Chair]	X Commissioner (Ward 2) Kolb	X Commissioner (Ward 4) Richter
X Commissioner (Ward 1) Heigel	X Commissioner (Ward 3) VonRueden [Chair]	X Commissioner (Ward 4) Johnson
X Commissioner (Ward 2) Erickson	X Commissioner (Ward 3) Buck [Secretary]	X Commissioner (At- Large) Strand

Also attending were staff members John Sutter and Gail Van Krevelen and Councilmember Julie Deshler.

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Commissioner Sears and seconded by Commissioner Heigel to approve the minutes of the September 9, 2013 regular meeting with no exceptions.

Motion carried.

C. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Consider Application 2013-12 to rezone 5502 West Broadway (Crystal Gallery Mall) to C-2 Planned Development including de-malling the existing building, adding a second, smaller building and revising the parking lot layout.

Staff member, John Sutter, presented the staff report. He mentioned that there was one change, the city had requested enlargement of the blocking island where the main entrance enters the parking lot, forcing cars to turn and help prevent cars cutting through the parking lot.

Commissioner Kolb stated that he was very excited about the project but questioned whether changes would be made to the main entrance at West Broadway.

Mr. Sutter stated that there were no changes planned for the access point, however the south parking lot would be connected to the main parking lot and this would provide an alternate access point from West Broadway. There have been discussions about whether a signal would be warranted at that intersection, but it's a county road so would have to meet their requirements and the city

doesn't see a significant change in traffic occurring because of the improvements.

Commissioner Sears mentioned that the entrance from the northbound lane has a hard hook in but a gentle exit, cars slide when entering, and there are few spots for a deceleration lane. Commissioner Kolb also commented that cars enter in the wrong lane, and wondered if a sign could be installed.

Mr. Sutter said that if it was a new center, they would design it differently and that the current setup does leave something to be desired. He also said he will discuss it with the property owner and the Engineering Department.

Commissioner Erickson questioned where the remaining interior corridors would lead to if the center is de-malling. Commissioner VonRueden stated that in the past, the entrance off of Sherburne Avenue was used often.

The following were heard:

Greg Hayes, from Lupient Automotive Group, a representative of the property owner, said that the remaining corridor to Sherburne would allow the tenants in the back spaces access to the parking lot.

He mentioned that there was a new tenant coming to the mall called Home Choice. He also indicated that both Starbucks and Caribou were interested in leasing a location in the new secondary building being proposed.

Planning Commission discussion:

Commissioner Kolb asked whether there was a timeline set for the improvements to be completed on the property.

Mr. Hayes stated that they plan to de-mall in phases. There are many tenants to deal with and the cost is substantial. They would like to have the leasing done and take out the walkway when they do the build-out for new tenants. He said the parking lot is scheduled to be done this coming summer and they would like to break ground on the pad building after the first of the year with occupancy in mid- to late-summer.

Mr. Sutter said that the way staff is viewing it as a master plan. The city would approve building permits and the owner doesn't need to have to come back.

Commissioner Kolb questioned whether there is an end date. Mr. Sutter said that as a Planned Unit Development, it would last for 2-3 years and the property owner can ask the City Council for an extension.

Moved by Commissioner Heigel and seconded by Commissioner Sears to recommend approval of Application 2013-12 to rezone 5502 West Broadway (Crystal Gallery Mall) to C-2 Planned Development including de-malling the

existing building, adding a second, smaller building and revising the parking lot layout.

Motion carried.

D. NEW BUSINESS

1. Discuss Metropolitan Council's preliminary 2040 forecasts and possible city response

Mr. Sutter stated that every 10 years the Met Council releases a new forecast. The 2040 projection is a radical departure from previous forecasts. Mr. Sutter feels they may be right on broad trends, but they aren't happening at the projected rate. Even if they are correct on the demand side, the model appears to be broken on the supply side in that it doesn't seem to account for the difficulty of finding development sites in already-developed communities like Crystal.

They are projecting 3200 housing units and Mr. Sutter indicated that he has no idea where that amount of development could occur. There is very little available land in Crystal, if it's not already developed there's a reason.

He also indicated that he looked at development between 2000 – 2007 and there was a net gain of 179 residential units and that was a strong period of development. Land supply is getting harder to find and he thinks the Met Council's computer model is not differentiating between undeveloped and developed land.

Commissioner Heigel asked if there is anything on record of available acreage of open land in Crystal.

Mr. Sutter said yes, but that the land is probably not built on for a reason. Assuming infill development on the last little bits of undeveloped property, he calculated 270 additional housing units could be built by 2030 but it all depends on the market.

Commissioner VonRueden asked if there would be any penalty and if that meant the forecast is wrong.

Mr. Sutter said that these were ridiculously large increases, and they are not considering closing the airport in calculations.

Commissioner Richter asked if the October 30th workshop was open to the public. He said he was aghast at population estimates and if the model was broken, why wasn't it fixed before the information went out to the cities. He also stated that if their projection is not challenged, this would be the pretext of what they push for.

Commissioner Kolb questioned why we care what they say and if there would be a penalty.

Mr. Sutter stated that they can withhold grant money and that according to state statute they have the right to review the comprehensive plan. Mr. Sutter said that he doesn't believe there is a test case where a developed community refused to follow Metropolitan Council's forecasts, but in the end the city could put its Comprehensive Plan into effect despite Metropolitan Council's objection and see if they sue the city. Mr. Sutter said the workshops are open to Planning Commission or Council members in addition to staff.

Commissioner Kolb mentioned that Golden Valley has an even higher percentage increase in the 2040 forecast.

Commissioner Richter asked if the 55% increase in employment was for public or private jobs.

Mr. Sutter indicated it would be both public and private, but he didn't know the reason for the large increase and would ask at the October 30 workshop.

Commissioner Strand said that businesses she deals with are looking at neighboring states and moving out because of the continuing taxation.

E. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. City Council actions on previous Planning Commission items:
 - Adopted an ordinance rezoning 5401 51st Avenue North to R-3 Planned Development to allow a four story building (The Cavanagh)
2. Quarterly Development Status Report

Commissioner VonRueden asked if the city was seeking new house proposals. Mr. Sutter stated that we just closed on the tenth 2013 lot sale in early October and there would be about 13-14 lots remaining going into 2014.

3. Staff preview of likely agenda items for Tuesday, November 12 meeting.

Mr. Sutter said there wasn't anything currently on the agenda. He indicated that a developer is looking at the Gaulke property at 39th and Douglas Dr. for possible development of single-family homes and there may be a couple of other applications regarding small requests.

Commissioner Sears commented that anything that indicates it is based on computer modeling should be flagged. He said that the Metropolitan Council's wastewater treatment plants are overbuilt and way short of being filled up.

F. OPEN FORUM

None were heard.

G. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Commissioner Buck and seconded by Commissioner Erickson to adjourn.

Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.