

**CITY OF ST. FRANCIS
ST. FRANCIS, MN
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
July 20, 2016**

1. **Call to Order:** The Planning Commission meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Brittney Berndt.
2. **Roll Call:** Present were Brittney Berndt, Todd Gardner, Joel Olson and William Murray. Absent were Ray Steinke and Greg Zutz
3. **Adopt Agenda:** Motion by Olson, second by Gardner to approve the July 20, 2016 agenda. Motion carried 4-0.
4. **Approve Minutes:** Motion by Olson, second by Murray to approve the June 15, 2016 minutes. Motion carried 4-0.
5. **Public Comment:** No comments received
6. **Public Hearing – Johnson & Lee Minor Subdivision**

Parcel that is 39 acres being split into 2 buildable lots on Tamarack St. Both lots meet width and size requirements. Park dedication is due, wetland delineation was identified. The north parcel, parcel 1 has a higher water table and when permits are issued may require location adjustments. Meets all codes and requirements, recommending approval

Public hearing opened at 7:49 p.m.
Question from Stacy Lee, applicant in regards to process
Public hearing closed at 7:50 p.m.

Motion by Olson to recommend approval upon meeting the six items identified in the Requested Action. Second by Murray, Passed 4-0
7. **Public Hearing – Lauseng Solar Amendment**

Application seeking to install ground mounted solar panels. Property zoned RR, ordinance does not mention solar panels. Past city practice has been to review roof panels as mechanical, but to date have not had an application for ground systems. In order to approve CUP request need to establish ordinances to support solar structures.

Draft language being offered for Ordinance. This public hearing and request to the Commission is multi-layered as first the ordinance needs to be considered and then the CUP application based on the decision of the ordinance put in place. If an Ordinance is not put in place, the CUP would be denied as it would not meet city code requirements.

Public hearing opened at 8:02 p.m.
Comment from: Mark Vogel at 2540 243rd Ave NW, Not commenting on the property in question but in the concept of Solar panels. Would like to encourage the Commission to think of the future and energy use. Requesting that solar panels not be included as part of the Accessory Structure ordinance.

Comment from: Donna Pickard, True North Solar, contractor for the project applicant. Supports the jurisdiction to obtain and ordinance. Would like to see an ordinance separate

than the Accessory Structure. Very different type of structures than a typical building. Does not agree to a 10' limit in height. Requests city to reach out to solar experts beyond the ordinances for best practices.

Mark Brinkman, True North Solar, contractor for the applicant. One quick point to make on Nates examples in reference to percentages. Isanti County passed an ordinance, requiring no more than 10% regardless of other structures. None of the examples addressed existing buildings, on St Francis has this requirement.

Commission Discussion/Questions

Q – What measures are in place for public safety and the safety of children?

Per True North Solar, Donna Pickard- they are required to follow strict codes in regards to wiring and meet safety requirements. Only so much you can do about children climbing on structures. These units are inspected by the State Electrical Inspector.

Q – Can screening be proposed without affecting arrays?

Per True North Solar, Donna Pickard- Yes, any screening would be trees and far enough away to screen from neighbors. Not an issue. Screening is typically discussed because of large solar farms. Small residential units are typically not as much of a concern.

Q – What is the physical size of these units?

A brochure was passed from the True North providing examples. Per True North Solar, Donna Pickard, one of the documents in the packet provided the area and size of the project in question. Various configurations exist. As they have to trench a meter they have to work to get it as close as possible to the house. Many things are considered when discussing size.

Q – How do we keep this distinguished between solar and someone trying to create a canopy to store other items?

Per Nate Sparks, the difference would be in the types of structures. If someone was to create a roof it would be considered under the Accessory Structure ordinances and would not qualify for the solar ordinance.

Public Hearing closed at 8:18 p.m.

Discussion on issue to amend code:

Clarified that the ordinances proposed are not unique, many cities utilize the same process and style. Concern that solar structures could be used for other purposes, would require the city to enforce applicable ordinances.

Motion by Olson to approve a change in Ordinance to include an Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to include solar installation. Second by Gardner, Passed 4-0

Discussion on issue of proposed code language:

Commission agrees that code should be separate than that of the Accessory structure and limits placed within. Code puts in place basic limits that independent but in a common layout to our codes in regards to lot size and type. Discussion was had to place language in code regarding concerns of using solar as storage. Was not included as of this point, will continue to enforce other applicable codes on this concern. Overall consensus that language is a good starting point, allows project in question to move forward.

Motion by Olson to accept recommend ordinance language to Council for adoption and addition to the Code. Second by Gardner, Passed 4-0

Discussion and review of the CUP Application for Lauseng

No further discussion, CUP is eligible based on the adoption of and the language within the proposed Ordinance.

Motion by Gardner to approve Conditional Use Permit for the property located at 2660 239th Ave NW, St Francis. Second by Olson. Passed 4-0

8. Public Hearing – Temporary Family Health Care Dwelling Amendment

The Temporary Family Health Care Dwelling issue was created in the spring Legislative session in which cities are required to participate unless they formally opt-out through ordinance. Before Commission is a few of the basic requirements and draft language to opt-out. To opt-out would allow the city to create its own regulation in regards to this topic.

Public Hearing opened 8:46 p.m.
No comments received
Public Hearing closed 8:47 p.m.

Olson motioned to forward to Council to adopt and approve the Ordinance to Opt-Out of the Temporary Family Health Care Dwellings. Second by Gardner. Passed 4-0

9. Planning Commission Discussion

Nate Sparks readdressed the topic of Fence Viewing statutes that are changing and the option to opt-out. The LMC is working on language for cities and will bring this back at a later date. Felt this delay would not have an effect on the city at this time.

Discussion between Commission and Kate to get contact information updated. Kate will email everyone what is currently in place and update.

10. Adjournment: Motion by Gardner, second by Murray to adjourn. Motion carried 4-0.

Kate Thunstrom, Community Development Director

Date

Approved 02/15/2017