

**CITY OF ST. FRANCIS
ST. FRANCIS, MN
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
July 20, 2022**

1. **Call to Order:** The Planning Commission meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm by Chair Women Fairbanks
2. **Roll Call:** Present were Dean Becker, Liz Fairbanks, Deborah Humann, Tara Kelly, Dustin Pavel, and Colleen Sievert. Absent: Christina Bass.

Others in attendance: Kate Thunstrom, City Administrator, Colette Baumgardner, Community Development Director, Beth Richmond, City Planner; and, Kevin Robinson, City Council.

3. **Adopt Agenda:** Motion by Pavel, second by Humann to approve the agenda with added amendment. Motion carried 6-0.
4. **Approve Minutes:** Motion by Sievert, second by Kelly to approve the June 15, 2022 minutes. Motion carried 6-0.
5. **Public Comment:** None
6. **Public Hearing:**

- a. Comprehensive Plan Amendment.
Richmond reviewed the staff packet and request for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment.

Commission asked what difference was between high density and medium density. Richmond explained the four residential land used categories. She stated medium density residential is three to seven units per net acre, and high is 12 to 16 units per net acre. She added high density is typically townhomes, apartments, attached units.

Commission asked if it meant larger lot sizes. Richmond replied it typically coincides.

Commission asked if they are looking a reduction in the commercial space in the southern section. Richmond confirmed this adding it is going from about 24 acres to about three.

Commission asked if it still meets the Comprehensive Plan. Richmond replied it still meets the City's density requirements.

Commission asked if that land would be used for residential, just shifting things. Richmond confirmed this and showed the plan on the map.

Commission asked if there is a risk of becoming a bedroom community with this with no commercial. Richmond replied that isn't a concern of Staff because it is not an area where retail would flourish and there is still an area across 47 that could be used for office or industrial.

Commission asked about distribution of housing on the site. Richmond explained that re-guiding the entire area to medium density would allow for pockets of higher density and pockets of lower density as long as together it averages out.

Commission asked about the setback from the river. Richmond replied there are requirements in the Rum River District for setbacks from the river and those are things the City and DNR would be looking at.

Commission asked if there would be access to the river by the homeowners or community. Richmond replied that would be a question that would be answered in the future.

Commission expressed concern about preservation along the river. Richmond replied the concept plan shows the lowest density along the river.

Commission commented that the neighborhood has received letters about the proposed changes weeks ahead of time but Commission members didn't receive notice. Thunstrom explained when a land use application triggers a public hearing in the urban area all properties within 300 feet will receive a letter. The Planning Commission doesn't because the information is available in the packet online.

Public Hearing opened at 7:15 p.m.

Andrew Nelson, 24105 St. Francis Boulevard NW, expressed concern about discussion and an offer he subsequently submitted about the use of his driveway to create a road into the new development, which he stated was met with opposition and then silence. He stated he has been threatened with eminent domain and expressed concern about fairness in proceedings to all. He noted discrepancies on property or site lines between the map presented and those on the Anoka County GIS. He expressed concern with changing the density and suggested having homes families can purchase to maintain stability instead of high density apartments with a lot of turn over.

Applicant's representative addressed the Commission to answer questions related to requests for change and indicated this was the first request. He stated the request is for one half of the minimum density it is guided for, with a net of five. He stated every lot along the river is a single family, for sale home. Everything on the inside is attached or detached townhome that could be for sale or rent to own. Apartments are in commercial area and were driven by a rental study that indicated there was a market for it along with other types of housing. He commented the lines on the northside of the map indicate ghost platting on adjacent properties of what could happen in the future.

Commission expressed concern about retaining the country feel of St. Francis and felt the area looked packed. Concern about apartments and rentals were also expressed.

Commission asked discussed the role of Mn/DOT in the process and influence on turn lanes. Richmond replied this has been submitted to Mn/DOT and they have 60 days to comment but didn't have strong guidance after the concept plan.

Commission asked about lot size. Richmond replied the intent is to meet lot minimums for a single-family lot in the Rum River urban district.

Applicant's representative commented this is the last section of urban river overlay district but there are quite a few rural that will preserve the country feel.

Andrew Nelson commented he and the neighbors are most against the apartment and asked if it were possible to place the apartment on the southside away from homes and closer to a more major road.

Tom Wynell, 4025 St. Francis Boulevard, commented he agreed with Mr. Nelson.

Public Hearing closed at 7:34 p.m.

Commission discussed the land use and placement of the apartments being on the south end.

Motion by Sievert, second by Kelly to recommend approval of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment to re-guide the 112 acre site at 23925 St. Francis Blvd. with conditions and findings of fact as presented by Staff. Motion passed 6-0.

7. **Regular Business Items** – None

8. **Planning Commission Discussion**

Commission wished Sievert all the best. She asked for consideration on who would like to set up as Vice-Chair for the next meeting.

9. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Website Link to Packets and Minutes for the Planning Commission:

<https://www.stfrancismn.org/meetings>

Recorded by: TimeSaver

DATE APPROVED: