

**CITY OF ST. FRANCIS  
ST. FRANCIS, MN  
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES  
August 17, 2022**

1. **Call to Order:** The Planning Commission meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chair Women Fairbanks.
2. **Roll Call:** Present were Dean Becker, Liz Fairbanks, Deborah Humann, Tara Kelly, and Dustin Pavel. Absent: Christina Bass, Colleen Sievert.

Others in attendance: Colette Baumgardner, Community Development Director; Brad Scheib, City Planner.

3. **Adopt Agenda:** Motion by Pavel, second by Humann to approve the agenda. Motion carried 5-0.
4. **Approve Minutes:** Motion by Pavel, second by Humann to approve the July 20, 2022 minutes. Motion carried 5-0.
5. **Public Comment:** None
6. **Public Hearing:**

a. The Bluffs of Rum River

Brad Scheib reviewed the staff packet and the request for a rezoning to a Planned Unit Development (PUD), Conditional Use Permit for the creation of a public street, and Preliminary Plat of a subdivision.

Darren Lazan, Landform Professional Services, explained the process and that there was a lot of thought that went into the PUD and product types.

Commission asked why it was chosen for this to be on the north side of the site rather than the south side. Mr. Lazan explained that the original land use guided this decision. He said the south side of the site has a narrow pitch point and it opens up as it moves north. The access from the north will relieve the pressure from the south.

Mr. Lazan added that the Comp Plan had envisioned a business park to the west so the density is from a housing for employee standpoint.

Commission noted it appeared that the number of units had increased by about 15. Mr. Lazan explained that they ended up pulling the property south.

Commission asked if there had been any thought of putting in some type of traffic control at Ambassador and Highway 47 due to the increase in traffic. Mr. Lazan said that MNDOT is looking at the intersection and requested a traffic study. This study will dictate the design. He added that the City and the State are looking at adding a roundabout at this intersection.

Commission discussed that there are three homes on the north end that could sustain impact on this and what this would do to the value of those properties. Mr. Lazan called attention to the fact that this was guided as a high density area. This is the only piece of urban Rum River Scenic Boulevard with higher density. Mr. Lazan discussed that valuation is always a concern of the public. This area is envisioned as higher density to support a broader community.

City Planner Brad Scheib described site design factors in landscaping buffers and transition aesthetics that serve to protect and preserve surrounding property values, although it may still affect the sellability of the properties.

Commission asked what the price point would be for these different units. Mr. Lazan explained that there are detached townhomes in North Metro that are in the \$450,000 range, and up to \$650,000-\$750,000 in the South Metro area, the row homes could drop into the mid-low \$300,000, and the apartments are based on square footage, typically \$1 a square foot. Mr. Lazan mentioned that he drove around the perimeter of the site and he noted that the perimeter single family homes are stunning and similar projects are going for \$750,000 or more.

Commission asked about sidewalks for the detached townhomes being on the private or public street. Mr. Lazan said that the detached townhomes are on the public street and the row homes are on the private street.

Commission asked if this was all going to be under an HOA. Mr. Lazan said yes that the HOA will be governing all landscaping.

Commission asked where the sidewalks will be. Mr. Lazan said the only homes that do not have a sidewalk are the brown row homes on the private drive and the sidewalk would be on the right side of the street with fewer driveways.

Commission expressed concern about kids running around in these areas and the Commission would like to see walkways or sidewalks in between the homes to allow for children to go back and forth more safely. Mr. Lazan explained the situation with where current sidewalks are placed. Mr. Lazan said that he is not 100% opposed to having a sidewalk put in this area.

Commission asked about a park in this area. Mr. Lazan noted that Brad Scheib had mentioned the suggestion for open space around the wetland and that is being worked on down the line.

Commission suggested that the applicant add a condition of approval that the applicant must clear a pedestrian mobility layer to this application. Not meaning they must add trails, it could be signage, off street paths, or connection pieces. Mr. Lazan added that he is thankful this request would be more fluid. Commission added that they will be limiting the hard cover to 30%, which will help meet the Rum River hard cover requirement. Mr. Lazan added that the applicant is trying to be respectful of the public infrastructure when it comes to road projects, knowing that they require a lot of maintenance, including the sidewalks.

Public Hearing opened at 7:53 p.m.

Paul Rydberg, 23956 St. Francis Boulevard NW, asked if the entrance off Highway 47 and 241 was in the works with the State or if they have approved or denied it. Commission answered that it was in the process and the State is currently working on a study. Mr. Rydberg asked if the plan was to put in a temporary entrance. Mr. Lazan said he did not say that. Commission clarified that there would be a south and north entrance and there would be a potential third entrance, which would wait on approval from MNDOT. Mr. Rydberg asked if one entrance would be allowed off Ambassador with there being so many units. Mr. Lazan said that with only one entrance the project would not be able to be as big as it is.

Mr. Rydberg asked how many homes the lift station can handle. Commission said the infrastructure has the capacity to serve the homes, but the engineers have asked that they build pipes deeper so that they can run them further.

Mr. Rydberg asked about the location of where there would be a park. Commission answered that they are not putting in a public park as a part of this project. Mr. Rydberg asked if they thought they should put a park in this area. Commission said that with the trail work and the common open areas, there is no need for a park. Commission added that City Council is working on the parks system.

Public Hearing closed at 8:00 p.m.

Brad Scheib went over the different motions and conditions so the Commission was clear.

Commission asked about trees in the area and making it look nice. Mr. Lazan replied that all of the bluff is protected. Commission discussed that per City code, every lot has one tree in front.

Motion by Fairbanks, second by Kelly to recommend approval of the rezoning from B2 and R3 The Bluffs of Rum River PUD with conditions and findings of fact as recommended by Staff. Motion passed 5-0.

Motion by Fairbanks, second by Pavel to recommend approval of the preliminary plat for The Bluffs of Rum River project with conditions and findings of fact as recommended by Staff. Motion passed 5-0.

Motion by Fairbanks, second by Humann to recommend approval of the public roads CUP for The Bluffs of Rum River project with conditions and findings of fact as recommended by Staff. Motion passed 5-0.

7. **Regular Business Items** – None

8. **Elect Vice Chair Member**

Commission nominated Deborah Humann to serve as Vice Chair. Nomination passed 5-0.

9. **Planning Commission Discussion**

Commission had nothing to discuss.

**10. Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 8:19 p.m.

Website Link to Packets and Minutes for the Planning Commission:

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

Recorded by: Kate Thunstrom

**DATE APPROVED:**