

City of Excelsior
Hennepin County, Minnesota
Minutes
Planning Commission
Monday, June 28, 2021

1. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Black called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Black, Craig, Harrison, Holste, Noll, DiLorenzo

Commissioners Absent: Wallace

Also Present: Interim City Planner Mullin, City Attorney Staunton

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) Planning Commission Meeting of May 24, 2021

Craig commented there was a typo in item 5(a) where “densities” should be “density.”
Craig made a motion to approve the amended minutes. Holste seconded the motion.
Motion carried 6/0.

b) Planning Commission Special Meeting of June 14, 2021

Black commented the attendance was incorrect. The attendance on the agenda was correct. Noll made a motion to approve the amended minutes. DiLorenzo seconded the motion. Motion carried 6/0.

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- (a) None

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a) 690 Excelsior Boulevard - Excelsior Flats PUD Concept Plan Review & Sketch Plan Review

Mullin briefly introduced the report. Mullin explained that a previous staff report that was for this property was taken and updated for this PUD Concept Plan Review. Mullin reminded the PC that this concept plan review is for feedback purposes only, and the PC will make no action tonight. Mullin turned it over to the Applicant.

The Applicant presented the materials in the packet. Black opened the discussion to questions from the Commissioners. Noll questioned what the 45-foot height on the "Site Section" image is measured from. The applicant answered the 45 feet will be measured from the top of the soil that would be brought in. The applicant explained the "established grade" is about halfway up from the parking garage level. Craig requested the applicant discuss how the project would address the PUD Criteria, and how the project does not really meet any of the East Side Area Plan. Specifically, Craig pointed out how this project has no public benefit. Craig also has concerns over the height and the high price point of the condos.

Harrison questioned how the grade of the guest parking compares to the sidewalk and the rest of the property. The Applicant responded with the grade of the guest parking is about ten feet above the underground parking, which is about 4 feet under the established grade, so the differential is about 6 feet. Harrison commented the green patio was named an 'amenity' in the packet; however, it does not appear to be public as there is a gate on the drawing. The applicant said the plans have changed, and that patio will not be gated. Harrison also questioned how this would affect the view to the lake from the ramp from Highway 7 coming into town. The applicant responded it would depend on where the viewer is on the ramp. Noll imagines the view to the lake would be blocked.

Black brought the discussion back to the PUD Criteria. Craig has concern that the project does not meet the criteria. Harrison, who was part of the East Side plan and Comprehensive Plan, thought there was a large disconnect between the project and what the East Side Sub Area Plan wants to see in this area. Craig agrees. Harrison comments the City has long discussed a Mixed-Use type of use in this area, and what the applicant brought to the meeting is a residential building with no public benefit. The Applicant states that retail and office space isn't economically feasible now, and possibly not in the foreseeable future. Holste notes that this would be the first major development on this side of town, and what happens here will set the tone for future projects, so it is important to adhere to the Vision for this area. Holste comments there are ways to creatively have a public benefit that isn't just retail space. Craig also has concerns about the high price point. The applicant states anything less expensive is not feasible with the cost of land and building right now.

Black wondered if any aspects from the East Side Plan included in the Comp Plan, or if the East Side Plan is just community preferences. DiLorenzo states it has not been formally adopted into the Comprehensive Plan yet. DiLorenzo reinforces that the vision for this side of town is more mixed-use. Black comments the plans don't fit in with Excelsior's inviting character.

Staunton reiterated that the Concept Plan Review is really for informal feedback prior to a Land Use Application being submitted. Craig thinks it is a good project, it just doesn't fit in this location. Noll wraps up with concern over the height, width, large massing of the building, the views of the lake being lost, and the impervious lot coverage. Noll Black, and DiLorenzo like the modern architecture. Black, Harrison and DiLorenzo are excited at the prospect of development happening in this empty lot. The Applicant thanked the Commission for their time and feedback. The Applicant encouraged the Planning Commission to attend the July 7 City Council Meeting where they will also be presenting.

6. COMMUNICATIONS & REPORTS

a) Next City Council Meeting - July 6, 2021

Black corrected that the City Council Meeting is on the 7th.

b) Next Planning Commission Meeting - July 26, 2021

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7. MISCELLANEOUS
 - a)Recent City Council Actions
8. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Craig, seconded by Black, to adjourn at 7:37 pm. Motion carried 6-0.
Respectfully submitted,

Julia Mullin
Interim Planning Director

DRAFT