

MINUTES
AUSTIN CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
TUESDAY, MARCH 13, 2012
5:30 P.M.
AUSTIN CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jeff Bednar, Dan Hirst, Steve Kime, Jodi Krueger, Troy Nelson, Lonnie Skalicky and Holly Wallace

MEMBER ABSENT: Jim Mino and Lynn Spainhower

OTHERS PRESENT: Craig Byram, Craig Hoium, District 492 School Administration, School Board Members and Public

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm by Commissioner Bednar with no corrections to the agenda. Commissioner Hirst made a motion to approve the minutes as written from the December 13, 2011 Planning Commission Meeting. Commissioner Wallace seconded the motion and with all members in favor the motion passed unanimously.

Appointment for the “2012” Austin Planning Commission Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson

Mr. Hoium stated that all members for the Planning Commission are back for another term and how much their appointments and commitment for this is appreciated. He asked for nominations from the floor for 2012 Officers. Commissioner Wallace nominated Commissioner Mino as Chairperson and Commissioner Bednar as Vice Chairperson for the 2012 Term. With no other nominations, both passed unanimously.

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING: To consider a request from the Austin Public School District for an amendment to an existing conditional use permit for the construction of an approximate 117,000 square foot 5th and 6th grade intermediate school, off-street parking facilities and athletic fields. This requested action is pursuant to Austin City Code Section 11.30, Subd. 3 and 11.56 for the property located at 1800 4th Avenue SE which is located in an “R-1” Single Family Residence District.

Mr. Hoium, referring to the monitor, pointed out the location of this area for this conditional use permit as being in an R-1 District with single family dwellings located to the north and east. There is a church and wetlands to the south and west. Renovations of the existing school took place in 2010 adding on a multi-purpose room that was 35 feet which exceeds the 30 feet regulation.

The Austin Public School District purchased the property to the southeast location which includes a church and wooded area. The church will be demolished and will become an athletic field. The portion of 6th Avenue SE located behind the school will be vacated to public right-of-way for the school district to develop and to the north of the 6th Avenue SE portion will be additional athletic fields. The proposed school will be located to the north of these fields and to the east of the proposed school will be school parking. The City of Austin Engineering Department has been involved with the planning of this project relating to traffic issues and requested right-of-way vacations. The drainage ditch to the south of 6th Avenue SE will remain in place with the addition of two pedestrian walkways. There will be a buffer between the residential area and the parking lot of the proposed school. The bus entrance will be on the northwest corner and continue with two exists located approximately between the schools and to the

northeast. Parking spaces will be provided along this drop zone with a median separation between them. The new school elevation will range from 32-45 feet in height.

John Schulte from JHS Engineering Surveying completed traffic studies of the proposed area. He feels that based on the proposal, traffic levels should go down and suggestions were made for an additional turn lane west of Ellis. The east lot exit would be moved to the next parking lot over. The northeast parking entrance will be closed; therefore, allowing only a northwest entrance. The berm area would be approximately 3 feet high to block headlights from the parking lot to the residential area. There will be more than 280 parking stalls. Parking lot vehicle lights will be buffered by a berm and lot lighting will be downward directional lighting.

Craig stated there will be more off street parking than is recommended and the tree removal will be 175 which is below what is allowed.

David Moffit of 1812 7th Avenue SE questioned the location of where the trees would be removed. Mr. Schulte stated that the trees would be removed from the church area and 4th Avenue.

Sharon Holton, 608 18th Street SE, asked if she would have access to her garage which is located on the portion of 6th Avenue SE that will be vacated to the public right-of-way. John Schulte confirmed that access will be left and there will be a dead end located in the area.

Janet Martin, 500 18th Street SE, asked for measurements of the parking lot. Mr. Hoium responded with the parking lot size in the northeast as being 1,325 square feet. Mr. Schulte stated the parking lot would be located 20 feet from the back of the residential properties.

Angela Sturgis, 706 18th Street SE, questioned how far the buffer will go towards the south of 4th Avenue? Mr. Schulte stated there will be no blockage from the ball field. Angela asked if something could be done as a buffer from the athletic fields. Superintendent Krenz stated they would try to do something and separate the field from the homes.

Commissioner Hirst asked if there would be vehicle access from 6th Avenue SE to the north field. Mr. Schulte responded stating there would only be pedestrian walk ways, no traffic.

Commissioner Skalicky made a motion to approve the conditional use permit referring to the staff recommendations. Commissioner Kime seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING: To consider a request from the Austin Public School District for a 15 foot variance to be issued pursuant to Austin City Code Section 11.30, Subd. 5 governing the maximum building height of 30 feet for properties located in an “R-1” Single Family Residence District. This requested action is for the proposed construction of an approximate 117,000 square foot 5th and 6th grade intermediate school to be located at 1800 4th Avenue NE.

Craig explained this as being a 15 foot height variance for the gymnasium and natural lighting. With no other comments, Commissioner Kime made a motion to recommend the approval for the height variance request taking into consideration the five items listed in Minnesota State Statutes. Commissioner Hirst seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Wallace made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Hirst seconded the motion. The Planning Commission Meeting was adjourned at 6:20 pm.