NOTICE OF AGENDA

PLANNING COMMISSION

City of Forest Lake – Link to Meeting Livestream

Forest Lake City Center – Council Chambers Forest Lake, Minnesota

June 12, 2024 - 7:00 PM

- 1. Call to Order
- 2. Roll Call
- 3. Pledge of Allegiance
- 4. Approve the Agenda
- 5. Consent Agenda Considerations (Action Items)*
 - a) Approve Planning Commission Meeting Minutes from May 8, 2024
 - *Planning Commission may remove any item from the consent agenda for specific consideration
- 6. Regular Agenda (Action Items)
 - a) **Public Hearing:** Comprehensive Plan Amendment and Zoning Map Amendment Donnelly (932 2nd Street NW)
 - b) **Public Hearing:** Variances for Signage Forest Lake Ford (508 15th Street SW)
- 7. Staff Updates
 - a) June 26 PC Meeting Cancelled
- 8. Adjourn





Regular Meeting

1408 Lake Street South Forest Lake, MN 55025 www.ci.forest-lake.mn.us

~ Minutes ~

Wednesday, May 8, 2024

7:00 PM

City Center - Council Chamber

City of Forest Lake - Recorded Meeting

1. Call to Order

The Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Paul Girard	Commission Chair	Present	
Susan Young	Commission Vice-Chair	Present	
Kevin Miller	Planning Commissioner	Present	
Don Stehler	Planning Commissioner	Present	
Jeff Larson	Planning Commissioner	Present	
Jesse Wagner	Planning Commissioner	Present	
Tim Stender	Planning Commissioner	Present	

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. Approve the Agenda

No comments on the Agenda.

<u>Motion:</u> Commissioner Stender made a <u>Motion to Approve</u> the Agenda as presented. Motion seconded by Commissioner Miller. Motion carried 7-0.

5. Consent Agenda Considerations (Action Items)*

- a. Approve Planning Commission Meeting Minutes from April 10, 2024
- b. Site Plan Approval Chase Bank (1232 Broadway Avenue West)

<u>Motion:</u> Commissioner Young made a Motion for the Board to Approve Consent Items 5a and 5b as separate motions, in order to abstain from Item 5a.

Motion was seconded by Chair Girard.

Approval of Consent Agenda Item 5b: Motion carried 7-0

Approval of Consent Agenda Item 5a: Motion carried 5-0. (Young and Stehler abstained)

6. Regular Agenda (Action Items)

a. Public Hearing: Preliminary and Final Plat – Gaiovnik Estates (7902 North Shore Trail)

City Planner Roberts provided a background on the request for the preliminary and final plat approval for Gaiovnik Estates. He explained changes to the proposed lots that occurred after the





Regular Meeting

1408 Lake Street South Forest Lake, MN 55025 www.ci.forest-lake.mn.us

~ Minutes ~

Wednesday, May 8, 2024

7:00 PM

City Center - Council Chamber

neighborhood meeting. He commented that the Watershed District confirmed the wetland delineation. He reviewed City staff comments regarding the preliminary and final plat and provided an explanation of the boundary and property lines with the Outlots.

Commissioner Young asked where the driveway moved and commented that there should not be a shared driveway for the two properties.

City Planner Roberts answered that the City would not support a shared driveway and pointed out the driveways on the plan.

Commissioner Young stated that there was a proposed outbuilding that looked to be of significant size and asked for the provisions of the outbuilding for this zoning type. Commissioner Young asked if approving this plat, would it approve this outbuilding as well.

City Planner Roberts answered that this plat only creates lots, and it does not guarantee what can and cannot be built. He stated that the maximum size allowed would be 1,500 to 2,000 square feet based on the lot size.

Commissioner Young asked if the Zoning Code allowed for an accessory building of that size.

City Planner Roberts confirmed this information.

Chair Girard invited the applicant to come forward.

Chris Gaivonik, 7902 North Shore Trail, explained that the outbuilding was included in the plans to show what was possible to build on the land. He stated that he met with the watershed district and received a permit. He reviewed the steps he has taken to meet the City's requirements.

Chair Girard thanked the applicant for his comments.

Public Hearing was opened at 7:19 p.m.

Keith Kuhnly, 7841 North Shore Trail, requested a review of the changes to the lot other than the house and driveway move. He stated that he owns Outlot A and asked who he needs to meet with to discuss the transfer of ownership.

City Planner Roberts stated that there would need to be deeds prepared for this process and the City would help facilitate this as a part of the plat.



Forest Lake

Planning Commission

Regular Meeting

1408 Lake Street South Forest Lake, MN 55025

www.ci.forest-lake.mn.us

~ Minutes ~

Wednesday, May 8, 2024

7:00 PM

City Center - Council Chamber

Dennis Peterson, 7656 North Shore Trail, stated that he was concerned about the stability of the land based on his childhood experiences. He commented that the township restricted property to a one-party use because multiple people wanted to use it. He stated that the person who created the easements was not the owner, but the property to the east has a legitimate easement.

Chair Girard clarified that Outlot B would be a part of the deed that goes to him.

Mr. Peterson explained the property lines that are recessed are that way because the old marker used for measurements was fourteen feet off and this was never corrected.

Chair Girard stated he lives six houses to the east of this parcel. He commented that all these property lines are incorrect, and residents have spent money getting monuments to identify the boundaries.

Commissioner Stehler asked if anyone was disputing the markers.

Chair Girard answered that he was not aware of anyone disputing the markers.

Sherry Zigan, 7871 North Shore Trail, voiced concerns about the property development because it is a protected wetland environment. She stated she was concerned about the habitat and wildlife, and houses being constructed on a swamp. She commented that there were safety concerns regarding the driveway near the corner of the road where cars often swerve.

Josh Parker, 7881 North Shore Trail, voiced concerns with the location of the driveway since there is non-impervious material in that location. He stated that the water has increased since the current house has been constructed and how the water would be managed. He stated that putting a house in that location could cause an issue with drainage and easements.

Mr. Gaivonik stated that others who previously considered building on this property did not do a wetland delineation or soil testing that considered drainage in the plans. He stated the area that they will build is not on top of the wetland and any drainage would run off in the same place. He stated that this would not change anything for the wetland.

Commissioner Young asked where the drainage was that residents voiced concerns about.

Mr. Gaivonik stated that the driveway is larger to address safety issues and there is a culvert near the driveway.

Chair Girard highlighted the culvert on the plan to show where the water would drain.





Regular Meeting

1408 Lake Street South Forest Lake, MN 55025

www.ci.forest-lake.mn.us

~ Minutes ~

Wednesday, May 8, 2024

7:00 PM

City Center - Council Chamber

Mr. Gaivonik stated that the wetland would not be changed.

Commissioner Young stated that much of Lot 1 drains back to the northwest before it comes to the ditch. She commented that there is a significant amount of swamp and asked if there were any other culverts near the proposed building plans that goes south to the lake.

Mr. Gaivonik answered that the only culvert was the proposed culvert under the driveway and there was a drainage plan on the proposed plat.

Mr. Peterson voiced concerns about the extra water runoff with the topography and the erosion in the ditch. He stated that the township had a 33-foot easement for maintenance and the ditch starts in his backyard to the lake. He wondered if there needs to be consideration of a way to stabilize the ditch.

Chair Girard commented that if you watch the April 22 City Council meeting, they spent an hour discussing the plans for North Shore Trail. He stated that the culvert is most likely defunct and there are culvert problems. They plan to replace them with reinforced concrete culverts.

Mr. Peterson stated that the culvert is caving in. He shared a story of the construction of the culvert.

Mr. Kuhnly asked what the City was going to do with the southeast lot that they are taking over as a City right-of-way.

City Planner Roberts stated that nothing would change, but that street right-of-way is currently on private property. They will legally own it. There are no current plans to develop this property.

Public Hearing was closed at 7:41 p.m.

<u>Motion:</u> Commissioner Miller made a <u>Motion to recommend Approval</u> of the Gaiovnik Estates Preliminary Plat and Final Plat for the property located at 7902 North Shore Trail, (PID: 10.032.21.13.0030), subject to the 15 conditions of approval as listed in the staff report. Motion seconded by Commissioner Stender. <u>Motion carried 5-0.</u>

Commissioner Young stated that she would like to add a sixteenth condition that the deeds to the two Outlots be ready to file at the same time as the recording of the final plat in the interest of the City and the property owners in questions.

Commissioner Miller withdrew the motion.





Regular Meeting

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~ Minutes ~

Wednesday, May 8, 2024

7:00 PM

City Center - Council Chamber

Motion: Commissioner Miller made a Motion to recommend Approval of the Gaiovnik Estates Preliminary Plat and Final Plat for the property located at 7902 North Shore Trail, (PID: 10.032.21.13.0030), subject to the 16 conditions of approval as listed in the staff report. Motion seconded by Commissioner Stender. Motion carried 7-0.

Chair Girard noted that this item will go before the City Council for final action.

City Planner Roberts stated that the City Council will make the final decision on May 28.

Commissioner Young commented with the City owning additional Outlots, there would be more potential for drainage projects.

City Planner Roberts clarified the section of the property that the City owns.

Chair Girard clarified that the 25-foot parcel south of Outlot B is a private easement.

b. Revised Site Plan Approval – Washington County Northern Environmental Center (6065 **Headwaters Parkway**)

City Planner Roberts provided a background on the request for site plan revision for the Washington County Northern Environmental Center at 6065 Headwaters Parkway. He stated that when the County received the approval last year, it was for only a portion of the site. He suggested that when the Zoning Code was reviewed, it might be beneficial to clarify the proposal, so site plan revisions only need to be brought before the Planning Commission. He explained the revised layout to the site plan, along with the plans for lighting, landscaping, and the trail.

Commissioner Stender clarified that the County was maintaining this road.

City Planner Roberts answered that the County will maintain the road since they are the only users of the road. If the Public Works facility is built to the north, there might be additional discussion.

Commissioner Miller asked about the intersection planned and if the County is putting in turn lanes.

City Planner Roberts responded that they must widen Highway 61 and will provide turn lanes into the site. These are all Mn/DOT requirements.

Commissioner Stender asked about the required landscaping.

City Planner Roberts answered that the first part of the landscaping is on the overall site and the last page addressed the change to the landscaping with the trees.





Regular Meeting

1408 Lake Street South Forest Lake, MN 55025 www.ci.forest-lake.mn.us

~ Minutes ~

Wednesday, May 8, 2024

7:00 PM

City Center - Council Chamber

Commissioner Young asked how they will maintain the landscaping and how it will be watered so screening is provided for the residents.

City Planner Roberts responded that there could be an added condition to require maintenance.

Commissioner Stehler asked for the residential homes to be pointed out and if the purpose for the screening was for the vehicles.

City Planner Roberts commented that if a vehicle is headed south, there would be issues with headlights.

Commissioner Stehler suggested adding more trees to make sure that the residents do not receive headlights into the house.

City Planner Roberts clarified that he had suggested including coniferous trees but they did not want the trees to get too close to the intersection and block the view.

Commissioner Stehler suggested adding additional trees.

Commissioner Young agreed with this suggestion as it is an environmental center.

City Planner Roberts asked for a recommended number of trees.

Commissioner Stehler suggested drawing a straight line of where the headlights could be aimed to help provide additional screening and adding trees in those areas.

Commissioner Young stated that since there would be potential for the future Public Works facility, more trees would be beneficial.

Chair Girard stated that there was a significant amount of grass and asked if there could be a couple rows of trees since there would be plenty of room. He stated that with the possible addition of a City lot, more greenery would be beneficial. He summarized the requests.

Commissioner Young requested the addition of the provision to water and maintain the trees.

Commissioner Miller asked about the difference between an understory and overstory tree.

City Planner Roberts explained the difference and provided examples.

Commissioner Miller questioned why they could not plant additional trees to provide privacy for the residents. He stated that other businesses in the City are required to meet a higher standard.

8

Planning Commission



Regular Meeting

1408 Lake Street South Forest Lake, MN 55025

www.ci.forest-lake.mn.us

~ Minutes ~

Wednesday, May 8, 2024

7:00 PM

City Center - Council Chamber

Commissioner Stender asked about the benefits for the trail across the highway and the purpose of the walking trail.

City Planner Roberts answered that this was a signaled intersection and the hope is to continue the trail up to County Road 50 if the City constructed a Public Works facility.

Chair Girard stated they would build the trail to the next potential for development in hopes that it would be continued.

City Planner Roberts commented that the County would build the trail now, so the City would not need to build the trail later.

Commissioner Young commented that the Vinco property had a conditional use permit that required screening and those trees have since been removed. She wants to make sure that these trees will be maintained.

City Planner Roberts read a possible conditional statement to include.

Chair Girard clarified that Commissioner Miller was requesting trees between Forest Boulevard and Headwaters Parkway.

Commissioner Miller stated that it will be a busy location and it is important to have trees along the curve all the way down to the pond. He asked why the front needs to be visible and wide-open since there would be increased truck traffic.

Commissioner Young commented that there would be residential vehicles looking for the Environmental Center and the County made sure that the messy stuff would be in the back hidden by the building. She voiced support for native landscaping to be planted.

Commissioner Miller stated that the County was only getting 140 trees when there should be 600 planted. He asked whether they were getting more park dedication.

City Planner Roberts answered that they were getting a public road that would eventually serve the Public Works facility.

Chair Girard asked if there would be a monument sign at the intersection.

City Planner Roberts highlighted where the direction signs would be located.





Regular Meeting

1408 Lake Street South Forest Lake, MN 55025 www.ci.forest-lake.mn.us

~ Minutes ~

Wednesday, May 8, 2024

7:00 PM

City Center - Council Chamber

Commissioner Miller stated that this was Forest Lake and there were many places in the City where trees were being taken down and not replanted. He commented that it was necessary to plant trees. If there was irrigation installed, the trees would grow well.

Chair Girard asked whether the requests for trees should be added in as conditions or if the Planning Commission would like to see this plan an additional time.

Commissioner Young asked if they could reword 13e.

City Planner Roberts pointed out that 13b was generic and could be an appropriate place to make the change.

Commissioner Young asked if the Planning Commission wanted 100 percent of the trees or 80 percent of the required overstory and understory trees.

City Planner Roberts stated that a boulevard effect along Forest Boulevard would be potential. He did not know if they could get to that number but thought there was a potential to have 40 to 50 trees in addition to the 64 trees planted around the building.

Commissioner Young commented that the condition should read, such landscape conditions required by the City shall meet 75 percent of the normally required overstory and understory plantings.

Commissioner Stehler remarked that the number was a large increase.

Commissioner Young stated that some of the understory could be shrubs and native plants. She commented that there needs to be an additional requirement for continuous maintenance.

Commissioner Miller commented that he was suggesting a condition that the County be responsible for maintaining all the landscaping number and conditions per the approved plan. This could be 13g.

Commissioner Young repeated the suggested motion.

<u>Motion:</u> Commissioner Young made a <u>Motion to recommend Approval</u> of the revised site and project plans for Washington County Northern Environmental Center (dated March 15, 2024 and April 8, 2024) for the property located at 6065 Headwaters Parkway, subject to the 15 conditions of approval as listed in the staff report and an additional condition that the City-required landscaping shall meet 75 percent of the normally required understory and overstory vegetation and with the addition of 13G that the County shall be responsible for the maintenance of all landscaping materials number and condition per the approved plans.



1408 Lake Street South Forest Lake, MN 55025 www.ci.forest-lake.mn.us

Regular Meeting

~ Minutes ~

Wednesday, May 8, 2024

7:00 PM

City Center - Council Chamber

Motion seconded by Commissioner Stehler. Motion carried 7-0.

Chair Girard noted that there were two of number 13 and it should be 14, 15, 16.

7. Staff Updates

a. May 22 PC Meeting Cancelled

City Planner Roberts commented that the May 22 meeting was canceled. He stated that the Zoning Code update with the architecture and realigning was approved by the City Council. He added that the Park and Recreation Supervisor resigned.

Commissioner Young asked if the City Council was discussing changes to the boat launch.

City Planner Roberts stated that he did not have information on this discussion.

Chair Girard mentioned that there was a new City Clerk.

8. Adjourn

<u>Motion:</u> Commissioner Stender made a <u>Motion to Adjourn</u> the meeting at 8:24 p.m. Motion seconded by Commissioner Wagner. <u>Motion carried 8-0.</u>



Date: June 12, 2024

To: City of Forest Lake Planning Commission

From: Ken Roberts, City Planner

Re: Comprehensive Plan Amendment and Zoning Ordinance Map Amendment

Owner: Allison Donnelly

Applicants: Allison Donnelly and Doug Amundson

Location: 932 2nd Street NW (WA County PID 05-032-21-42-0003)

Zoning District: RR – (Rural Residential)

Land Use Plan Designation: Rural Residential

60-Day Deadline: June 24, 2024

Introduction/Background

Allison Donnelly, the current property owner, and Doug Amundson, the prospective property owner, have submitted land use applications to the City of Forest Lake for the property located at 932 2nd Street NW. They include:

- 1. A Comprehensive Plan Amendment to change the land use designation of property from Rural Residential to Highway Commercial.
- 2. A Zoning Ordinance Map Amendment to change the zoning designation of the property from Rural Residential (RR) to Limited Industrial Business (B-3).

The Donnelly family operated the Kinder Korner childcare center on the property for about 40 years. Ms. Donnely recently closed the facility and now is in the process of selling property. Mr. Amundson, the prospective buyer of the property, wants to use the existing building and property as an office and meeting facility for his contracting business. Such a land use is not listed as a permitted or conditional use in the Rural Residential zoning district. As such, the proposed change of use of the property requires City-approval of changes to the land use designation and the zoning of the property to commercial designations.

The Planning Commission makes recommendations to the City Council about Comprehensive Plan Amendments and Zoning Map Amendments. Please see attached applicant's project narrative and maps of the area and for more information about these requests.

Regulatory Framework and Discussion

Comprehensive Plan Consistency and Proposed Amendment

The Comprehensive Plan currently guides the property Rural Residential. The purpose of this land use category is to provide areas for single-family homes with densities between 0.16 to 0.2 units per acre. The Comprehensive Plans also notes "Uses in the category may also include agricultural uses or plant nurseries. The Rural Residential category comprises areas that are difficult to serve with municipal wastewater treatment systems and that will be so in the foreseeable future." As shown of the existing land use map, the City has guided much of the area to the north and west of the subject property Rural Residential.

The applicants are requesting the City change the land use designation of the property to Highway Commercial. The Highway Commercial land use designation is "intended to accommodate uses that provide a wide range of goods and services that serve the needs of people who live or work in and around the City. This category also provides for general and light industrial uses." This is the land use designation of the property immediately north of the subject property and the properties to the east of Highway 61. Staff cannot attest to why the 2040 Comprehensive Plan did not guide the property for commercial development.

The City has not established any criteria for approving or denying a proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment. However, when considering any change or amendment to the Comprehensive Plan, the City should ensure the proposed change or amendment will be in the best interest of the City and consistent with the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

The following are the most-relevant Overarching Goals in the City's Comprehensive Plan for the Planning Commission and City Council to consider with this request:

- Protect Natural Resources. Forest Lake is fortunate for the diversity of natural resources within the
 community. Forest Lake is committed to preserving and expanding access to these resources as
 they are integral parts of the community and provide food, as well as animal and fish habitat.
 Having Access to these resources connects residents to nature, encourages active and health
 lifestyles and promotes community interaction.
 - <u>Response</u>: The buyer of the property is not proposing any changes to the exterior of the site. The property is 8.89 acres of which about two-thirds are wetlands. The proposed change to the land use designation to accommodate the proposed use of the property as an office and meeting space in the existing building and using the existing parking area will preserve the existing natural resources on the property.
- 2. Guide Land and Manage Growth. An important role of the Comprehensive Plan is to appropriately guide the use of land and manage the timing by which it is developed. This important challenge is met with careful decision about land uses, including the location and amount of specific land uses to meet the need and demand for new housing of all types, provide increased areas of commercial, industrial and job growth and to meet park and recreation facility needs. The staging plan for development is intended to manage the timing, location and characteristics of growth, based on the logical and practical use and extension of municipal services and infrastructure.

Response: The proposed change to the land use designation for this 8.89-acre property from Rural Residential to Highway Commercial will not negatively affect the supply of available land for housing and it will create a site for a commercial land use and job growth in the City. The site is not served by City sanitary sewer and water and the City has no plans to extend those utilities to the property or to this part of Forest Lake. In addition, as was noted above, much of the site is wetland. These are important existing conditions that limit the potential for any type of additional development or redevelopment of the property.

Staff also reviewed the Economic Competitiveness Goals and Objectives in the Comprehensive Plan and found the following goal and objectives that are relevant to this request:

Goal: Enhance the image of Forest Lake as a good place to conduct business.

Objectives:

- Provide an adequate amount of land planned and zoned for commercial and industrial (uses).
- Attract and encourage new light industrial, office-industrial, high-tech and professional services while maintaining and expanding existing businesses.
- Solicit businesses that fill voids in the current range or retail and business services offered in Forest Lake.

In summary, the proposed change to the land use plan designation of the site from Rural Residential to Highway Commercial is consistent with the goals and objectives in the Comprehensive Plan.

Zoning Map Amendment

The existing rural residential (RR) zoning of the property does not allow for office or commercial land uses. Therefore, the applicants are requesting the City approve an amendment to the zoning map for this site to change the zoning of the property from RR (Rural Residential) to B-3 (Limited Industrial Business).

Section 153.037(E) of the City Code lists the Standards the City should consider when reviewing a Zoning Map Amendment. They are:

- The existing use and zoning of nearby property.
- The extent to which the proposed amendment promotes the public health, safety, comfort, convenience, and general welfare of the city.
- The relative gain to the public, as compared to the hardship imposed upon the applicant.
- The suitability of the property for the purposes for which it is presently zoned, i.e. the feasibility of developing the property in question for 1 or more of the uses permitted under the existing zoning classification.
- The length of time that the property in question has been vacant, as presently zoned, considered in the context of development in the area where the property is located.
- The evidence, or lack of evidence, of community need for the use proposed by the applicant.

- The consistency of the proposed amendment with the Comprehensive Plan.
- That the proposed amendment will benefit the residents of the city as a whole, and not
 just the applicant, property owner(s), neighbors of any property under consideration, or
 other special interest groups, and the extent to which the proposed use would be in the
 public interest.
- The extent to which the proposed amendment creates nonconformities.
- The trend of development, if any, in the general area of the property in question.
- Whether adequate public facilities are available including, but not limited to, schools, parks, police and fire protection, roads, sanitary sewers, storm sewers, and water lines, or are reasonably capable of being provided prior to the development of the uses, which would be permitted on the subject property if the amendment were adopted.
- That there is an adequate buffer or transition between potentially incompatible districts.
- That the proposed action will not adversely affect property values.

This proposed zoning map change would be consistent with the standards for a zoning map change as listed in the City Code. These include that the proposed change would be consistent with the proposed amendment to land use plan for the property from Rural Residential to Highway Commercial, it would be consistent with the zoning of the properties to the north and east and it would allow for the use of the property as an office and meeting space as envisioned by the buyer of the property.

Site Plan/Design Review

The applicants are not proposing nor are they asking for City approval to make any changes to the exterior of the existing building or to the site.

Parking – City Code requires one parking space for each 200 square feet of office space and one parking space for each 2,000 square feet of storage space in the building. The existing childcare building is about 5,000 square feet. The buyer of the property has indicated he expects to have no more than eight people at the property at any one time and that he intends to use about one-half of the building for storage purposes. If the building has 2,400 square feet of office space that would require 12 parking spaces. If the owner uses about 2,600 square feet of the building for storage, that will require two parking spaces for a total requirement of 14 off-street parking spaces. The existing parking lot appears to have enough room for 20-22 parking spaces, although there is currently no striping of any parking spaces in the lot.

Section 153.135 of the City Code outlines the minimum parking space and aisle dimensions. This section of the City Code requires off street parking spaces to be 9 feet wide, 20 feet in length and the drive aisles in parking lots to be at least 24 feet wide. The City will require the buyer of the property to stripe the parking spaces as part of the approval of any building permits for remodeling of the building.

Traffic - The seller of the property noted the following about traffic:

The license capacity of the childcare center is 59 children; there was an average of 50 children enrolled at any given time with a handful of these having multiple children per household. A good estimate for traffic count stemming from parent drop off and pickup would be 45 cars between the hours of 6-9am for drop off and then again 45 cars between the hours of 4-6pm for parent pickup. (90 vehicle trips per day)

Staffing ranged from 10-12 staff members entering and exiting the parking lot in any given day during business hours of 6am-6pm. (20 vehicle trips per day)

In addition, the school age program buses children to a from the daycare during the school year and summer school session. This on average was 6-8 buses per day picking up between the hours of 6:45am-9am and dropping off between 2:45pm and 4:45pm. (14 vehicle trips per day)

<u>Staff response</u>: City staff expect the number of vehicle trips the proposed business will generate each day will be significantly fewer than the 120-130 vehicle trips the childcare center generated each day.

Access – The property now has two driveways onto 2nd Street NW. The prospective buyer of the property is not proposing any changes to the driveways or to the parking lot.

Public Infrastructure - The site is currently served by an onsite septic system and a well. The public sanitary sewer and public water are not available to the property as the nearest public utilities are located about 1,200 feet to the south – south of Highway 8. Forest Lake has no plans to extend the public utilities to the north and the buyer of the property wants to continue to use the existing on site utilities.

Staff Analysis

City Engineer Comments

The City Engineer had no comments about this request.

Fire Chief Comments

Fire Chief Newman had no comments about this proposal.

Public Comment

Neighborhood Meeting

The applicant held the required neighborhood meeting for this proposal on Wednesday May 29, 2024 at City Hall. The property seller and the buyers, their realtor, two neighbors, one Planning Commission member and the City Planner attended the meeting. Those in attendance had an opportunity to ask the sellers and the buyer questions directly. Concerns raised by those in attendance included traffic accessing 2nd Street NW and safety at the intersections of Forest Boulevard, Highway 8 and Highway 61.

Public Hearing

The City noticed a public hearing in advance of the City's Planning Commission June 12, 2024 meeting. At the time of this writing, staff has not received any public comments about this proposal.

Findings

This proposed reuse of the property as an office and storage facility for a contractor supports several of the City's land use and economic goals and objectives. The proposed land use and zoning designations are consistent with adjacent properties and will not adversely affect nearby property values.

The use of the property as an office and storage facility for a contractor would be compatible with present and planned uses and will not have an adverse impact on the environment, surrounding properties or public facilities. In addition, the proposed use of the existing building and site will be consistent with the proposed B-3 (Limited Industrial Business) zoning designation for the property.

Lastly, the proposed zoning map amendment will not create any nonconformities.

Recommendations

Staff recommends the Planning Commission take the following actions regarding the land use applications for the property located at 932 2nd Street NW:

- 1. Staff recommends the Planning Commission recommend to City Council approval of the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment to change the land use designation for the property located at 932 2nd Street NW (PID 05.032.21.42.0003). The proposed change is from Rural Residential to Highway Commercial designation to accommodate the proposed use of the property as an office, meeting space and storage facility for a commercial contractor. Staff is recommending City approval of this change as it will make the land use designation of the property consistent with the commercial land uses in the area, it will be consistent with the intended use of the property as an office and because it will be consistent with the goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan as outlined in the City staff report.
- 2. Staff recommends the Planning Commission recommend to the City Council approval of the proposed Zoning Ordinance Map Amendment for property located at 932 2nd Street NW (PID 05-032-21-42-0003). The proposed change is from RR (rural residential) to B-3 (limited industrial business). City staff are recommending approval of this zoning map change as it would be consistent with the proposed land use plan change for the property and because the change would be consistent with the standards for a zoning map change as outlined in the City Code.

Attachments:

- 1. Applicant's Statement dated April 24, 2024
- 2. Location Map
- 3. Aerial Photo
- 4. Aerial Photo with Wetlands
- 5. Enlarged Aerial Photo
- 6. Existing Land Use Plan Map
- 7. Proposed Land Use Plan Map
- 8. Existing Zoning Map
- 9. Proposed Zoning Map

April 24, 2024

P932 2nd St NW: Proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment and Zoning Map Change

The property located at 932 2nd St NW has been operating as a business serving the Forest Lake community for almost 30 years. The 5,000 sq. ft building located on the corner of 2nd St NW and Highway 8 has been home to Kinder Korner Day Care and has been in the Donnelly family continuously during this time. The daycare was passed down from mother to daughter. Allison Donnelly will be retiring and closing the current daycare.

The property has been zoned (RR -rural residential) during the entire time this business has been in operation. The property is an oddly shaped rectangular parcel that is about 8.9 acres in size with approximately 2,000 feet of its southern border adjacent Highway 8. The front and rear of the parcel are extremely skinny for a parcel of this size, with widths of 149 and 77 ft. The highway entrance to Highway 8 is immediately to the South of the property. Much of the rear of the parcel is wetlands and would remain as wetlands.

It is our view that changing the land use designation and rezoning the property to commercial use is more compatible with the surrounding area and future use of the area. As the City guides and manages land growth in Forest Lake, changes need to be made to reflect the current growth of the City. This is an excellent location that is already functioning with a commercial use that has immediate access to Highway and 8 and Highway 61 for the community to utilize as a business opportunity.

This property has the look, feel and has been acting as a commercial property for the past 30+ years and should be reclassified to reflect this use. The abnormalities of the lot and its current location abutting the highway make the best use for the community of Forest Lake to have a business utilize this location.

The current lot with over 50% of the rear of the lot covered in wetlands and being such a narrow lot situated immediately adjacent a highway on/off ramp is not suited to residential use. The wetlands will continue to be protected with whatever the final use of the property.

The area around where this property is located will continue to be a future opportunity for Forest Lake to expand and encourage business growth within the City and drive additional employment growth into the City.

The zoning of the adjacent property immediately to north at 23620 Forest Blvd N is classified as B-3 (Limited Industrial Business) reflecting the suitability of commercial use in this area.

Immediately to the east of the property is Highway 61 commercial corridor. Changing the use from residential to an industrial use in this area creates a transition zone from the busy commercial area.

The current building on the property would be an immense financial hard ship to tear down to return the property to a residential use. There is also an asphalt parking lot and driveway that would be extremely financially onerous to remove to return to a residential use.

The current owner has tried to find another day care to move into the current space for with the current zoning, that is one of the few businesses that are allowed in the rural residential zoning. That search has been unsuccessful.

It seems there was a time that this area would have been far enough away from the "City Center" to have been suited for rural residential zoning but with the growth of the City, and the proximity to the current highways, a commercial/industrial classification seems to make more sense. The property has been a commercial property for over 30 years and with its location along Highway 8 and next to Highway 61 this is a good opportunity for Forest Lake to rezone a property that is more suited to commercial/industrial use. It provides a business opportunity for Forest Lake that is highly suited with its ample parking and easy access to multiple highways.

The proposed new owners are a local father and son, Doug and David Amundson who would be re-locating their siding business to Forest Lake from Hugo. Doug is a lifetime, local resident and has been operating Precision Exteriors for over 15 years in Hugo. David is a recently retired Navy Seal that is joining Doug as the business expands. They will not be making any changes to the exterior of the structure. The current daily occupancy use of the building will go down from the day-care operations to more of an interior storage and occasional meeting place for new customers. Daily traffic usage will certainly be diminished with the new business.







City Limits

Parcels (1/1/2024)

--- Lot Lines

932 2nd Street NW



Disclaimer:

This drawing is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey and is not intended to be used as one. This drawing is a compilation of records, information, and data located in various city, county, and state offices, and other sources affecting the area shown, and is to be used for reference purposes only. The City of Forest Lake is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.

263 Feet

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- Culverts
- Catch Basins
- Storm Manholes
- Control Structure
- Storm Miscellaneous Points
- Storm Gravity Pipe



Parcels (1/1/2024)

Lot Lines

National Wetlands Inventory

Shoreland Overlay

Easement Lines

- Computed Utility Drainage
- Conservation
- Scenic

932 2nd Street NW (with wetlands)



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263 Feet

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- Sanitary Manholes
- Air Release Manhole
- Lift Stations
- Sanitary Pipe
- Abandoned Sanitary Pipe
- Forcemain
- Hydrants

Watermain Valves

- Unknown
- Hydrant
- Mainline
- Service

Water Facilities

Water Tower

Well

Watermain

City Limits

Parcels (1/1/2024)

Lot Lines

Shoreland Overlay

Water Service

Water Curbstop

Abandon Watermain

932 2nd Street **NW** - enlarged



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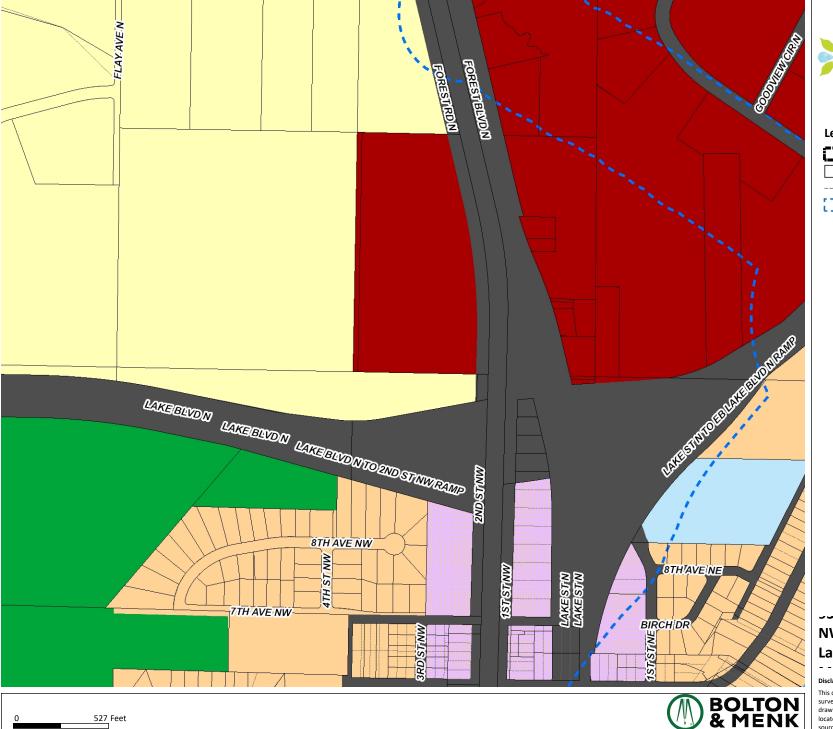
BOLTON & MENK

NW - Existing Land Use Plan



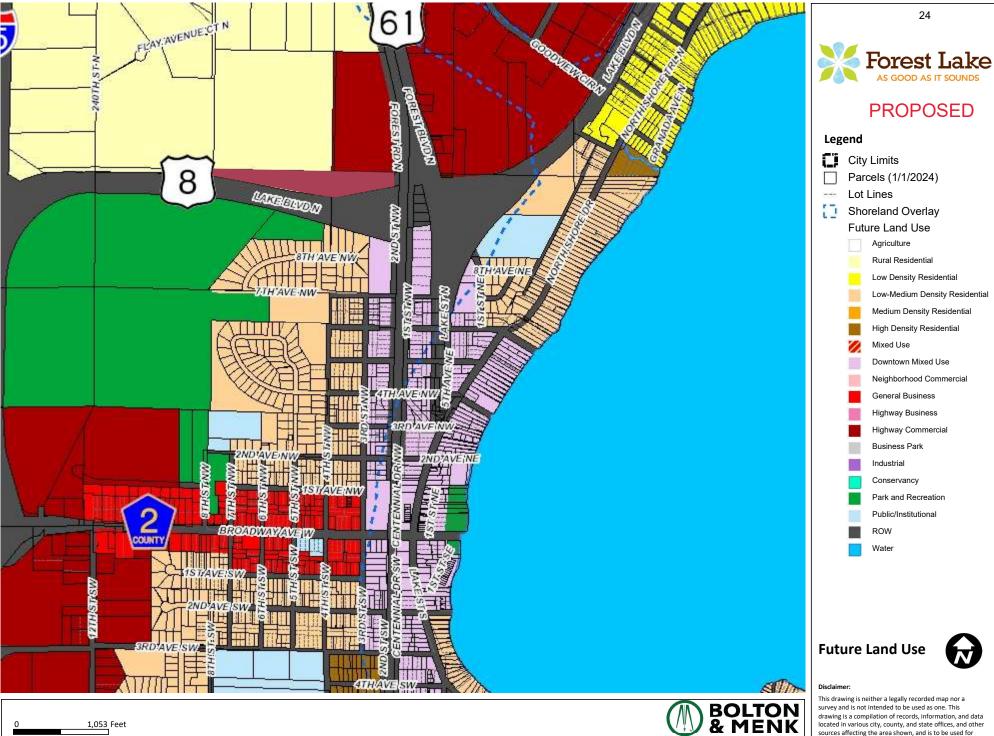
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reference purposes only. The City of Forest Lake is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained



MF - Multiple Family District

NC - Neighborhood Commercial [

B-1 - Broadway Business District

MXR-3 - Mixed Residential Distric

B-2 - Highway Business District

B-3 - Limited Industrial Business I

MU-1 - Downtown Mixed Use Dist

MU-2 - General Mixed Use Distric

BP - Business Park District

I - Industrial District

PUD - Planned Unit Development

AP - Agricultural Preserve Overlag

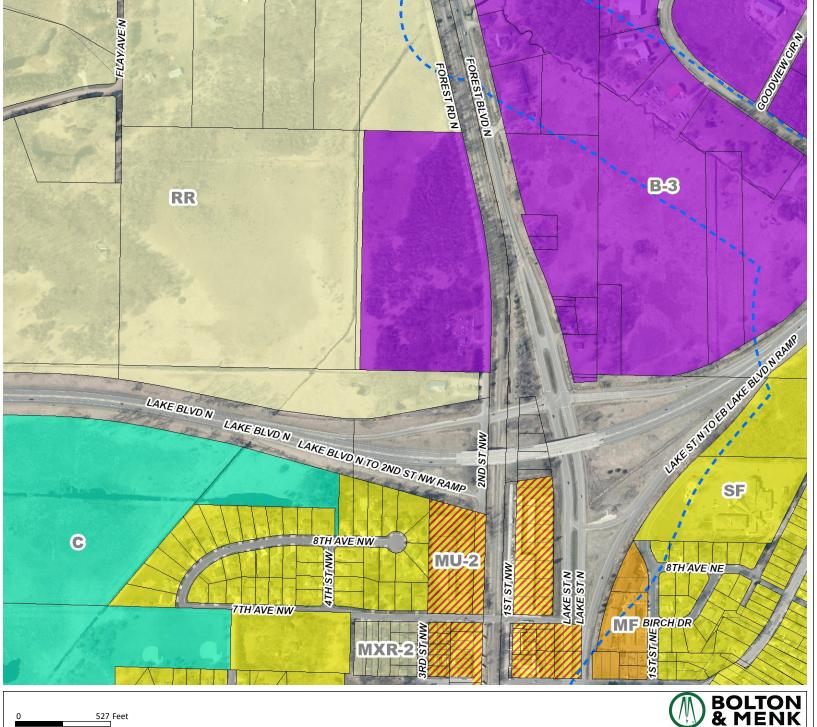
Airport Boundary

932 2nd Street NW - Existing Zoning Map



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City Limits

Parcels (1/1/2024)

--- Lot Lines

Shoreland Overlay Zoning

C - Conservancy District

A - Agriculture District

RR - Rural Residential District

SF - Single Family Residential Dis

MXR-1 - Mixed Residential, Single

MXR-2 - Mixed Residential, Single

10/D 0 14 1D 11 (1D)

MXR-3 - Mixed Residential Distric

MF - Multiple Family District

NC - Neighborhood Commercial [

B-1 - Broadway Business District

B-2 - Highway Business District

B-3 - Limited Industrial Business I

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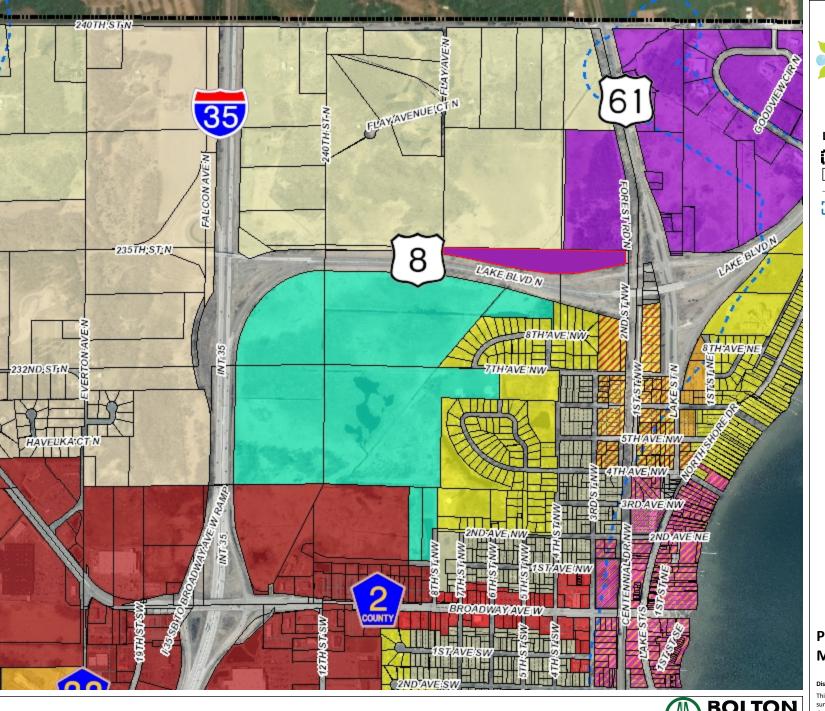
Airport Boundary

Proposed Zoning Map



Disclaimer:

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Date: June 12, 2024

To: City of Forest Lake Planning Commission

From: Ken Roberts, City Planner

Re: Sign Variance Application

Applicants: Bryan Okubo and Steve McDaniels (Forest Lake Ford)

Location: 508 15th Street SW

Zoning District: B-3 (Limited Industrial Business)

Comprehensive Land Use Plan: Highway Commercial

60-Day Deadline: July 18, 2024

Introduction/Background

The developers of the new Forest Lake Ford motor vehicle dealership are requesting City approval of two variances for the installation of a freestanding sign at the dealership located at 508 15th Street SW.

They are requesting the variances because they are unable to locate a freestanding sign on the west side of the dealership (as required by the Ford Motor vehicle company) that would meet the City height and setback requirements for the sign. The specific requests are for a 17-foot height variance to allow a 47-foot tall pylon sign and a setback variance of up to 90 feet to allow the sign to be setback up to 110 feet from the west property line of the site. Please see the attached variance request narrative, maps and sign plans for more information about this request.

The City Code requires the Planning Commission to hold a public hearing for variance requests. The Planning Commission has final decision authority on variance applications in Forest Lake.

The Planning Commission approved the project plans for Ford dealership on December 7, 2022, subject to 13 conditions of approval.

Discussion

The applicants are in the process of finishing the new Ford dealership located at 508 15th Street SW, where new and used motor vehicle sales are a permitted use. Unfortunately, they recently discovered it is impossible to locate a freestanding sign on the west side of their site that would be visible from Interstate 35 as required by Ford while also meeting the City sign ordinance requirements. This is primarily because of site visibility restrictions in place due to two existing billboards located on the property. The applicant's narrative notes the limitations and challenges they have encountered in trying to locate the freestanding sign on the west side of the new dealership.

The City Code limits a secondary freestanding sign on the property to a maximum height of 30 feet and the sign is to be located between the building and I-35 with a setback of 20 feet from the I-35 right-of-way. The regulations the variance requests refer to are:

153.208 WALL SIGNS AND FREESTANDING SIGNS IN ALL COMMERCIAL, MIXED USE COMMERCIAL, AND INDUSTRIAL ZONING DISTRICTS.

Within the commercial, mixed use commercial, and industrial districts, wall signs and freestanding signs are permitted as follows:

- (M) Freestanding sign in the MU-2, B-2, B-3, BP, and I Zoning Districts. One freestanding sign shall be allowed for a single- or multi-tenant commercial building, with the following regulations:
- (2) Parcels fronting on Interstate Highway 35 are allowed 1 additional freestanding sign, not to exceed 100 square feet in area and a height of 30 feet. The secondary sign shall be located between the principal building and I-35 and shall be set back 20 feet from the I-35 right-of-way.
- (9) No freestanding sign, or any part thereof, shall be located closer than 10 feet from the public right-of-way and 5 feet from all other lot lines, and shall meet traffic visibility requirements as defined in § 153.205(B).

Sign Proposals and Variance Requests

The applicants have identified two possible locations on the dealership property for a freestanding sign that would allow the new sign to be visible from I-35 while not interfering with the sightlines of the two existing billboards. Option 1 is near the northwest corner of the site adjacent to the existing billboard while Option 2 is located south of the new dealership near the southern billboard. Option 1 is shown with an 80 foot setback from the I-35 right-of-way (requiring a 60-foot setback variance) and Option 2 is shown with a 110 foot setback from the I-35 right-of-way (requiring a 90-foot setback variance).

The plans also show the proposed freestanding sign with a height of 47 feet in either location – requiring a height variance of 17 feet.

Findings of Fact

The Zoning Code states that "the Planning Commission shall not approve a variance application unless it finds failure to grant the variance will result in practical difficulties for the applicant."

In deciding to grant a variance the Planning Commission must consider the following criteria. The criteria from the zoning code are listed in **bold**, followed by staff response in italics.

(a) Because of the particular physical surroundings, shape, or topographical conditions unique to the specific parcel of land involved, a practical difficulty to the owner would result, as distinguished from a mere inconvenience, if the strict letter of the regulations were to be carried out;

The applicant has identified the existing site line easements for the existing billboards on the property as a practical difficulty relating to physical surroundings, shape, or topographical conditions.

(b) The property owner proposes to use the property in question in a reasonable manner not permitted by this chapter. Economic considerations alone (or desire to increase the value or income potential of the land) shall not constitute practical difficulties if reasonable use of the property exists under the terms of this chapter;

The applicant is proposing to use their property in a reasonable manner not permitted by the sign ordinance as follows:

- 1. Setbacks. A setback of 80 or 110 feet for the new sign from the I-35 ROW is a reasonable request. Having a specific setback requirement of 20 feet for every freestanding sign along I-35 does not provide options for sign placement as may be needed or warranted. The applicant ensures the placement of the freestanding sign in either proposed location will not interfere with the existing billboards on the property nor will it interfere with the use of other nearby properties.
- 2. Height. The City Sign Code allows a maximum height of 30 feet for a freestanding sign between the principal structure and I-35. Freestanding signs in the B-3 district could potentially reach 35 feet high. A 47-foot-tall sign is a reasonable request for the location.
 - (c) The plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner;

The applicant purchased the property with the two existing billboards to redevelop the property with the new Ford dealership. They had identified a location on the project site for the freestanding sign between I-35 and the new dealership building with the approved project plans. Unfortunately, the applicant's discovered the limitations on the property for the placement of the freestanding sign near I-35 after City approval of the project plans and after construction of much of the site improvements. The existing two billboards and their site line easement requirements are circumstances unique to the property not created by the current landowner. However, one could say the circumstances now in place that limit the placement of the sign were created by the applicant-landowner by how they designed and constructed the building for the dealership.

(d) The granting of the variance will not be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to other land or improvements in the vicinity of the parcel or land, nor shall it alter the essential character of the locality;

The granting of the variances would not be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to other land or improvements in the vicinity. City staff does not expect the granting of the setback variance and height variance for the freestanding sign will alter the essential character of the locality.

(e) The proposed variance is in keeping with the spirit and intent of this chapter and thus approval of the variance will not: 1. Impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property; 2. Substantially increase the congestion of the public streets; 3. Increase the danger of fire; 4. Endanger the public safety; or 5. Substantially diminish or impair property values within the neighborhood; or 6. Cause drainage issues for an adjacent property.

Staff believes the proposed variances will not result in any negative impacts to the applicant's property or to neighboring properties.

Recommendation

Staff recommends Planning Commission discuss whether the variance requests for the freestanding sign meet the findings of fact required in both City Code and Minnesota state statute to approve a variance.

If the Planning Commission wants to conditionally approve the two variance requests for the freestanding sign for Forest Lake Ford located at 508 15th Street SW (PID 07.032.21.42.0019), it should make the following motion:

The Planning Commission *moves to approve Resolution 6-12-24-01*. This Resolution is for the approval of a setback variance and a height variance of 17 feet for the proposed freestanding sign for Forest Lake Ford for the property located at 508 15th Street SW (PID 07-032-21-42-0019). **This approval shall be subject to the following conditions as proposed by staff:**

- 1. The final plans shall conform to those reviewed and conditionally approved as part of this case Number PZ 24-1263.
- 2. The surface area of the new sign shall not exceed 100 square feet.
- 3. The new sign shall be located as shown as Option 1 (or possibly Option 2) as shown on the site plan submitted with the variance application.
- 4. The new sign shall have a maximum height of 47 feet.
- 5. The new signage shall be consistent with signage plans reviewed by the Planning Commission on June 12, 2024.
- 6. No work on installing the new sign may begin prior to receiving any required sign or building permits.

Attachments:

- 1. Variance Narrative dated May 18, 2024
- 2. Location Map
- 3. Property Line Map
- 4. Aerial Photo
- 5. Site Plan
- 6. Building and Sign Elevations
- 7. Resolution 06-12-24-01

City of Forest Lake Attn: Ken Roberts Attn: Abbi Wittman

May 18, 2024

Narrative: Ford Brand Sign height variance request:

Forest Lake Ford, located at 508 15th Street SW, is requesting a variance to allow our primary Ford Brand sign to be visible to the traffic on I-35.

- In our plans and submittals, we were approved for a 35-foot Ford brand sign to be placed in the center of our western property along I-35. We located the power and the footing for this sign.
- There were four parcels purchased and combined for the Ford facility. There are Billboards in the NW and SW corners of the combined parcel. We contractually agreed to a sight line easement with respect to these billboards as a condition of the purchase agreement (attachment).
- We fully anticipated receiving permission to locate the 35-foot brand sign in the center of the property, with the applicable 20-foot City of Forest Lake set back.
- Over several months, it has been determined that our sight line easement is contractually written so that we are restricted from placing light poles or signs anywhere within the easement without permission from the billboard company. We have failed to obtain the requisite permission. We were quite diligent in our efforts.
- This has created a significant issue for placement of the Ford sign that we are contractually obligated to pay for and maintain. It needs to be visible to the traffic from I-35. Therefore, we need to move it to the east far enough to get out of the easement and out of the drive aisles. There are two locations that will work with a 47-foot sign that Ford currently builds and will approve. Importantly, 47-feet is the height determined by our architectural firm that will allow it to be seen from I-35 over the billboards and structures. Also, we do not see any issues at all for surrounding businesses.
- We have identified two specific locations that are set back significantly from the western property line.
 - * Option 1 (preferred) is the north location that will require us to locate the sign 80 feet back from the western property line. We will place it in a current inventory designated parking spot (attachment)
 - * Option 2 is the south location that will require us to locate the sign 110 feet back from the western property line and place it within an existing parking lot island. The island has a fire hydrant and light pole in it already and this would require additional engineering. Additionally, it would be difficult to see from vehicles traveling north on I-35.
- Note: There are sign(s) directly across I-35 that appear to be the height we are requesting. One example is the Chevrolet sign.

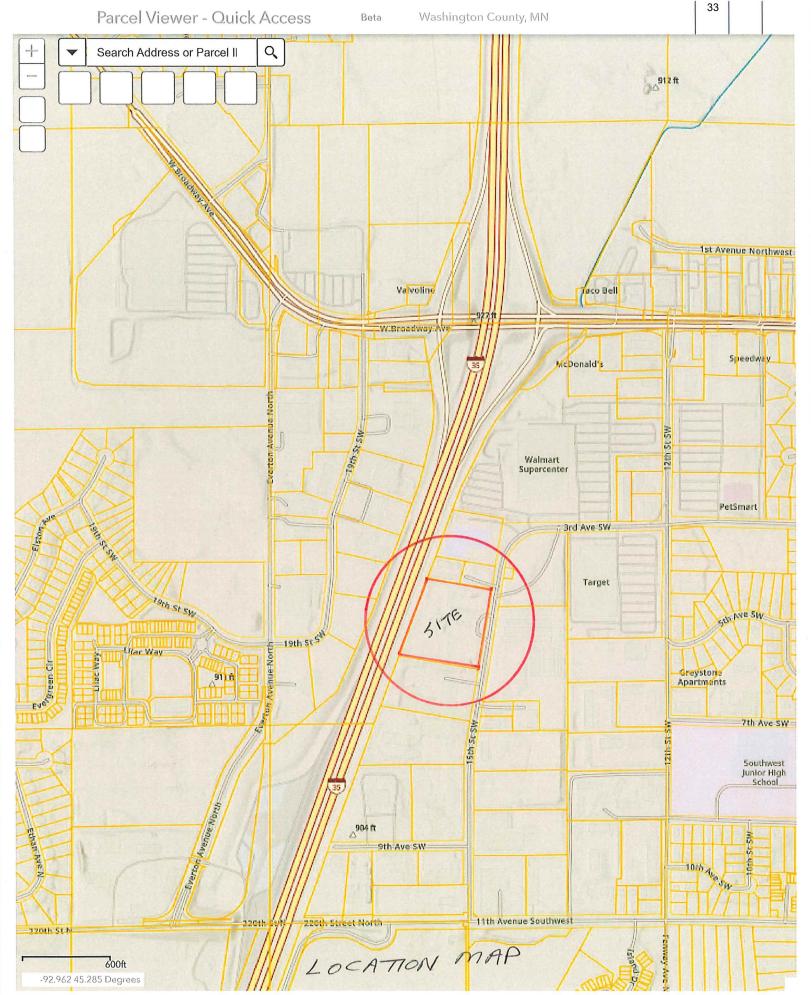
We believe this variance request is reasonable and necessary. We have worked hard to avoid the need for this variance without success. The original 35-foot sign and location remains desirable. Unfortunately, as stated above, we are unable to obtain permission.

We are very excited to be opening a new Ford dealership in Forest Lake. We are continually available to discuss any details of this variance request.

Please advise.

Thank you for your efforts and consideration.

Bryan Okubo 651-719-1514 (mobile) Steve McDaniels 651-247-6500 (mobile)









Search...



AERIAL PHOTO - 508 15TH ST. S.W.







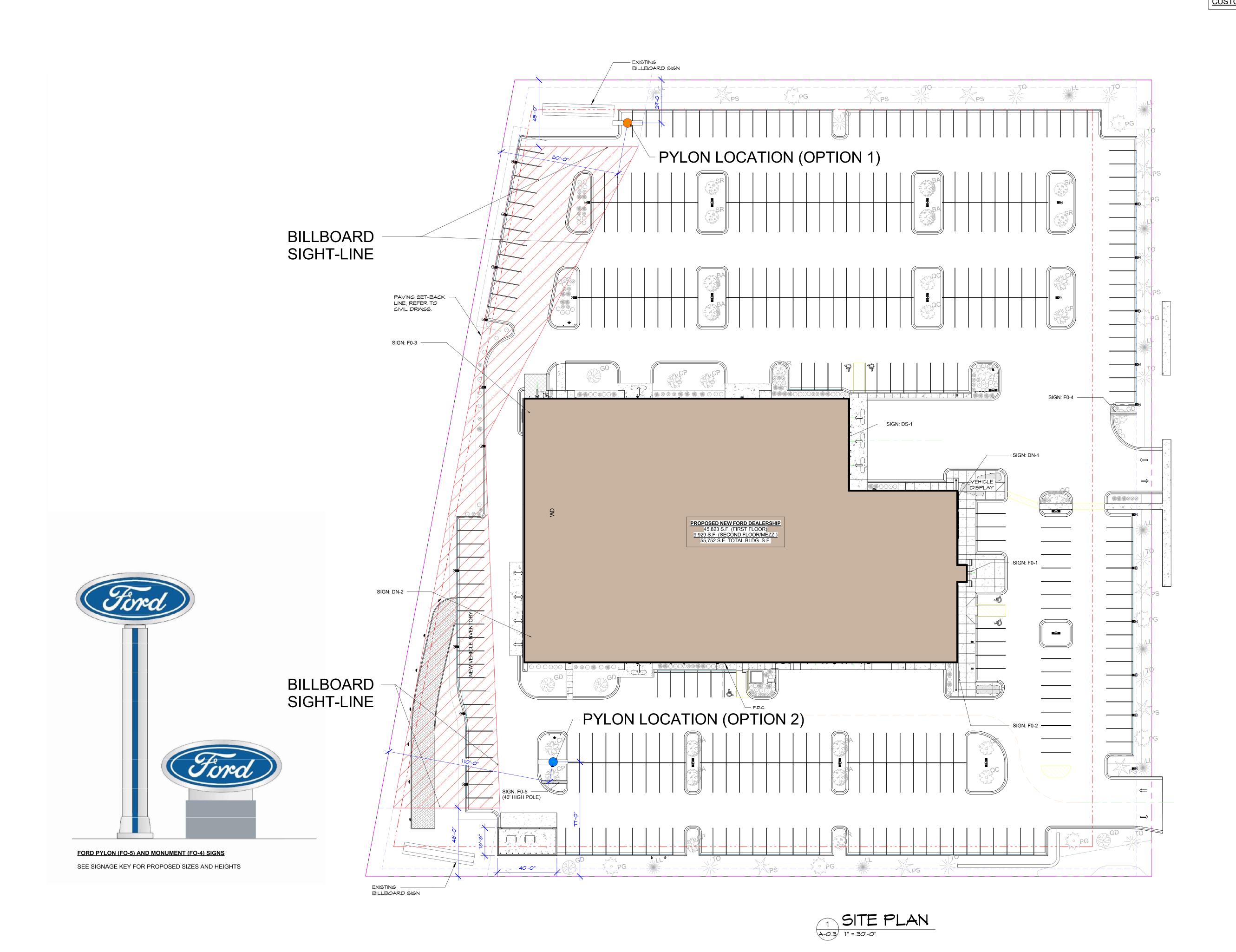
d. by: DRB, BJG, LCF REV. #1- PER rev.: OWNER 06-15-23

A-0.3

ARCHITECTS
I hereby certify that this plan, specification, or report was prepared by me or under my direct supervision and that I am a duly Licensed Architect under the laws of the State of Minnesota.

NOTE:
THE HEIGHT OF ALL FREE
STANDING LIGHTING POLES
SHALL NOT EXCEED 25 FEET.
REFER TO SITE LIGHTING PLANS.

Print Name: Brannin John Gries



















CITY OF FOREST LAKE WASHINGTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA

RESOLUTION NO. 06-12-24-01

A RESOLUTION APPROVING A 60-FOOT SETBACK VARIANCE AND A 17-FOOT HEIGHT VARIANCE TO ALLOW THE INSTALATION OF A NEW FREESTANDING SIGN WITH A 80-FOOT SETBACK FROM THE I-35 RIGHT-OF-WAY WITH A TOTAL HEIGHT OF 47 FEET AT FOREST LAKE FORD AT THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 508 15TH STREET SW

WHEREAS, Bryan Okubo and Steve McDaniels ("Applicants") represent the owners of the real property located at 508 15th Street SW, located in the City of Forest Lake, Washington, County, Minnesota PID No. 07-032-21-42-0019 ("Property"); and

WHEREAS, the Applicants submitted a complete application to the City of Forest Lake on May 20, 2024 for two variances for the installation of a new freestanding sign on the Property: and

WHEREAS, the Variance requests are to have a reduced setback from the I-35 right-ofway for a sign and to increase the allowed height of a sign to allow for installation of new freestanding sign with an 80-foot setback from the I-35 right-of-way with a total height of 47 feet on the Property, ("Variances") and Forest Lake City Staff reviewed the application for the Variances and discussed the same with the Applicant and Owners; and

WHEREAS, the requested Variances and approvals are for a variance of 60 feet (to allow a sign setback of eighty (80) feet) from I-35 right-of-way and a height variance of 17 feet (to allow for the sign to have a total height of forty seven (47) feet); and

WHEREAS, Staff recommended approval of the two variance requests as further articulated in the City Staff Report dated June 12, 2024, for the June 12, 2024 Planning Commission meeting, attached hereto and incorporated by reference herein as "Staff Report" for the following reasons:

- 1. The Applicant has identified the existing site line easements for the existing billboards on the property as a practical difficulty relating to physical surroundings, shape, or topographical conditions of the site.
- 2. The Applicant is proposing to use their property in a reasonable manner not permitted by the sign ordinance as follows:
 - 1. Setbacks. A setback of 80 or 110 feet for the new sign from the I-35 ROW is a reasonable request. Having a specific setback requirement of 20 feet for every freestanding sign along I-35 does not provide options for sign placement as may be needed or warranted. The applicant ensures the placement of the freestanding sign in either proposed location will not interfere with the existing billboards on the property nor will it interfere with the use of other nearby properties.

- 2. Height. The City Sign Code allows a maximum height of 30 feet for a freestanding sign between the principal structure and I-35. Freestanding signs in the B-3 district could potentially reach 35 feet high. A 47-foot-tall sign is a reasonable request for the location.
- 3. The shape and elevation of the property, the location of the two existing billboards and the existing topography are unique to the property and were not created by the applicant or landowner.
- 4. The proposed plan for the new freestanding sign is not expected to adversely impact the surrounding community, nor will it be injurious to or alter the essential character of the area.
- 5. These variance requests appear to meet the spirit and intent of the Forest Lake Zoning Ordinance to allow commercial properties along Interstate 35 to have freestanding signs visible from the freeway. As proposed, the freestanding sign is not expected to create or enhance any detrimental impacts on the applicant's property or to adjacent properties.

WHEREAS, a notice of a public hearing on said Variances was duly published, posted and mailed in accordance with applicable Minnesota Statutes; and

WHEREAS, the Forest Lake Planning Commission (Planning Commission) held a public hearing at its June 12, 2024 meeting where they offered all persons interested in said Variances an opportunity to present their views and objections to the City granting of said Variances; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission also considered the application for the setback and height Variances, took comments from the Applicants, and reviewed the Staff Report; and

WHEREAS, the Forest Lake Planning Commission has determined that the City should approve the proposed sign setback and height Variances as described herein and in the Staff Report subject to the recommended conditions of approval listed in the Staff Report.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Planning Commission of the City of Forest Lake hereby approves the sign setback and height Variances for the Property as described herein subject to the following conditions of approval:

- 1. The final plans shall conform to those reviewed and conditionally approved as part of this case Number PZ 24-1263.
- 2. The surface area of the new sign shall not exceed 100 square feet.
- 3. The new sign shall be located as shown as Option 1 (or possibly Option 2) as shown on the site plan submitted with the variance application.
- 4. The new sign shall have a maximum height of 47 feet.
- 5. The new signage shall be consistent with signage plans reviewed by the Planning Commission on June 12, 2024.
- 6. No work on installing the new sign may begin prior to receiving any required sign or building permits.

This resolution is adopted by the Plannin of June, 2024.	g Commission of the City of Forest Lake on this 12 th day
Attest:	Paul Girard, Planning Commission Chair
Jolleen Chaika, City Clerk	