**Minutes of the Planning Commission,**

**February 24, 2021, 5:30 pm**

**Zoom Meeting**

1. Call to order: Mary Samoszuk called the Mendota planning commission meeting to order at 5:33 pm

2. Present: Roll call Mary Samoszuk, Debbie Donnelly, Judge DeCourcy absent, (came later) Beth Miller, Steve Golias, Tom Loonan, Julia Paulsen-Mullin, Lucas Jones engineer from MSA, Jennifer Haskamp, Mr. Crosby who could not make it due to a death in the family is replaced by Scott England.

Since no agenda was formally submitted, Mary suggested as agenda, Julia Paulsen-Mullin would do the staff summary and a power point presentation of the project we are discussing, Lucas would comment, then Staff Comment, then Mr. Scott England would talk about the project followed by questions and answer session. Finally any comments from the public that have joined the meeting. Motion to approve the agenda by Beth Miller, seconded by Debbie Donnelly.

3. Julia Paulsen-Mullin presented her power point and stated this is the planning commission’s first meeting with a staff report and she is here to help you get set up. The objective is to learn about this development concept. To provide Mr. England with information about our objectives for this area, to ask questions, raise concerns about the plan and to provide some feedback. Like Mary stated this is not a development application so there is no formal action by the planning commission at this time, just conversation. It is a multi-family residential development. There are two different plans, one is a three story building and one is a four story building. They are condominiums so they would be owned, there is innovative underground parking, and it includes some enmities. The site is on Highway 13 and is all wooded at this time. The challenge would be the bluff. Julia showed the maps and land use. Julia stated that our zoning is in the process of being updated, but this property falls into the current zoning rules. This property runs the Mississippi river corridor critical area, which all of downtown Mendota is located in this area. This property also falls into several districts and the district that this parcel falls into is called Separated from river. The different districts put regulations on the parcels. The height in this area is governed by local zoning and in the commercial district is 35 feet and a setback of 40 feet from the bluff is required for any building. This is the basic review for this project. Next thing is the designed guide lines, in the 2040 plan there is a section of design guidelines in our plan. How do you want this area to develop? Public water and sewer do not serve this site now, so that would be a component in this development. Storm water management is a concern also with Mendota, so those would be questions for the developer. Last would be accessing Highway 13, since it is a state highway. MN dot would probably take care of that and approval of this development. No formal action on this tonight. But then down the road looking for a formal application to the planning committee for this development.

Meeting turned over to Lucas Jones from MSA.

Lucas has one clarification, they do have utilities that come to the edge of the property. So they do have water and sewer, water being controlled by St Paul Regional Water so they would go thru them. There is an 8 inch water main by the site, pressure is very high downtown and the pressure is about 150 psi. St Paul Regional Water did install a pressure reducing valve, but it is still in the process of being activated. At the last council meeting residents have stated that the site has some buried items on it, but this should not be the cities responsibility. Lucas knows that nothing has shown up in the soil borings. This is just a warning, because the residents who have lived here all their lives have stated that something is buried on this site. That was all Lucas wanted to present.

Mr. England spoke.

He stated that this was more of an informal and informational meeting. Mr. England apologized for Mr. Crosby not being here. Mr. England and Mr. Crosby are looking for guidance on this project. What we have in front of you is a multi-family project building. On the first floor you can see the state highway on the south side, the property line goes in a straight line, so there actually is a large front yard, right at the curve. Mr. England started talking about the maps we have and explaining what the complex would have. Mechanical parking, mailroom, swimming pool, party room, exercise room. If the condos are modules they are put together at the factory and shipped completely done. The condos are studio, one and two bedroom units. Mr. England is asking for some advice on what people think and this is a working session.

Mary opened it up to staff comments and Steve started. Steve is always excited about new developments in Mendota but has some concerns. People say there is hazardous waste, construction debris and a regular dump under that site. The DNR set the 35 feet height back when Steve was very young. DNR has a 40 foot buffer for the bluff. Also Steve is concerned about what MN Dot is going to say about a building and parking on Highway 13.

Debbie Donnelly stated that she was worried about traffic and if we are going to have backups, concerns about water management and erosion since this has been a problem on the bike path where it has been closed to the public because of erosion. And if the setback will be enough to protect the bluff and the river.

Beth Miller had nothing, Judge DeCourcy had nothing to add at this time. Mary and her husband had looked at this property before and had ruled it out. She had questions about the mixed use. Mary asked if there would be any retail on the first floor of the building, but Mr. England said at this time it would only be living units. Mary asked if a phase 2 had been done at the site yet. Mr. England said no, not yet. They will be doing a phase 2 and more soil borings. Also getting a civil engineer for the water management project. Will there be parking for visitors and guests. Right now one stall per residents but no parking for guests. Mr. England asked if there was parking allowed on the street, and Steve stated that there is parking by the restaurants but said there is no parking on the streets starting at the curve and going all the way up to 35E. Steve mentioned that where he works in the Midway, St Paul has taken away parking for residents in the new units, they expect people to ride bikes, take the bus and ride the light rail. Mendota does not have any public transportation going through town, the closest bus stop is at the corner of Lexington and Hwy 62. Lucas spoke on storm water and will see what they require and make sure everything is done right. Debbie asked about the mechanical parking and how would people be dropped off if someone is stopping by. Steve asked if there would be a sidewalk along their new building. And Mr. England said they are planning on extending the sidewalk from the jail.

Mary said if Mr. England and Mike read the comp plan they could get an idea about what the residents wants for Mendota.

Maria asked about entry to the garage, how close is the garage opening to the trail head. Mr. England said at this time he does not know. Maria asked how would this impact the cost of the police and fire? Mr. England said the building would be sprinkled. So that takes care of fire. The police are based on a formula for the cost. Maria stated that we do not have home mail delivery. We go to the post office to get our mail. All Mr. England’s properties have their own mail room and this is something he would need to bring up with the post master. Also Maria is concerned about parking because you cannot expect residents not to have guests.

Jennifer stated that the comprehensive plan states that there is a 40 foot setback for the Mississippi River corridor. And the height needs to be discussed with the DNR. The district changes things on this site and there are new regulations. Debbie Donnelly stated that there was a petition that went around a couple years ago where the people of Mendota were not in favor of a development like this.

Debbie Donnelly motioned to adjourn seconded by Mr. Mike Decourcy. Meeting closed at 6:30 PM