

Empire Township Planning Commission Minutes

June 21, 2022

The Empire Township Planning Commission meeting was called to order by Tom Kaldunski at 8:00 PM.

Present were: Tom Kaldunski, Trent Larson, Jared Sachs, Marla Vagts, Jane Kansier, Brad Fisher, Charles Seipel-Teng, and liaison Jamie Elvestad. Commission member Doug Clark was absent.

Jane Kansier presented a memo that outlines the concept plan for the proposed development by Summergate at the Siewert Property and Planning Commission reviewed the proposed layout of the concept plan. The plan allows for dedicated right-of-way for the proposed Highway 66 realignment on the north side of the property. Because the plan is for residential development, an amendment to the zoning ordinance and comprehensive plan would be required.

The proposal consists of 126 single family lots, with lot widths at 65' and average lot sizes of 8'450 sq. ft. Because of the smaller lot sizes and widths, this project would need to be developed as a PUD. Because of spacing requirements, the proposal shows road access to Highway 66 and Cambodia Ave.

The Planning Commission discussed how the future Highway 66 realignment would affect access to that road, for this development as well as for the maintenance shop and houses on the north side of the highway. The Township would prefer to have access to Biscayne Ave. for properties north of the highway. Otherwise, the access to this development should align with the access to Highway 66 for the vacated portion of the highway. The Township and developer should work with Dakota County to determine the best access point to Highway 66.

The Planning Commission did not feel that the lot sizes would be sufficient to accommodate three stall garages and landscaping equipment. The Township has seen 15,000 sq. ft. lots sell very well in the past. The Commission asked if the placement of townhomes or twin homes in the development would make it more feasible to have larger lots.

The Planning Commission would like to see dedicated parkland and plans for trail placement built into the plan.

The Planning Commission would like to see more access points. The connection to Cambodia Ave. would require working with the City of Farmington to grant access. A temporary connection to Biscayne Ave. might be possible as it is likely that it will be a long time before Highway 66 is realigned.

The connection to sanitary sewer will require working closely with the City of Farmington to serve parcels to the south.

The plan does have local street access points that will eventually connect to developments to the south.

Bryan Tucker, with Summergate indicated that they can work with lot depth more easily than lot width. It is too early to determine if the placement of townhomes or twin homes would allow for larger lot sizes. With anticipated expenses relating to the sanitary sewer extension, getting to larger lots would possibly make the proposed development less feasible. They are open to providing dedicated park space. It was indicated that this space would be dedicated to Empire and maintained by the Township.

Jane Kansier and Brad Fischer discussed the potential need for more clear township spacing requirements for road and driveway access onto township roads. Currently there are no clear parameters set in Township ordinances, and they refer to the County spacing requirements. The Planning Commission discussed the need to have more clear spacing guidelines and the need to have some leeway for different spacing requirements and exceptions for specific situations. Jane and Brad will look at spacing requirements that other cities have for different zoning districts and land uses.

The Planning Commission reviewed plans for the placement of two ground mounted solar panels at a residential property in the AG District at 1075 210th Street East. It looks like the panel placement will meet the setback requirements and not located in a flood hazard area. It was recommended that the size of the panel be checked into. Because of the large distance from neighboring properties and the township road, special screening requirements should not be needed.

It was reported that at tonight's EFPAC meeting, discussion took place on maintenance of gravel roads in the OAA, Farmington would like to work with Empire on a sewer sizing study for Biscayne Ave., south of Highway 66, and an update on the Highway 3 and 66 roundabout project was discussed. For the sewer sizing study, Bolton & Menk will develop a proposal to help Empire and Farmington determine the cost of the study as well as estimates for the extension. The study will include potential cost sharing scenarios.

It was the consensus of the Planning Commission that the July 5th Planning Commission meeting be cancelled.

Meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM.