MELROSE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2024– 6:00 P.M.

A.I. #1 CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Melrose Planning and Zoning Commission met in a Regular Meeting on Monday, September 30, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. pursuant to due notice being given thereof. Present were Commission Members Jason Seanger, Shawn Mayers, Dave Berscheit, Jean McDonald, Nick Shaw, Joe Matt, Joelene Wieling, City Administrator Colleen Winter, and Community Development Director Sheila Hellermann. Also in attendance was Nate Hiltner with Northstars Property. Chair Jason Seanger called the meeting to order.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

A.I. #2 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Mr. Mayers, seconded by Ms. Wieling and unanimously carried to approve the agenda as presented.

A.I. #3 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Berscheit, seconded by Ms. Wieling and unanimously carried to approve the minutes from the Commission's July 29, 2024, Regular Meeting.

A.I. #4 REPORTS

a. Community Development Director Sheila Hellermann reported that we are working through the chapters of the Comprehensive Plan. Staff is working on a vacant building ordinance. Street projects continue to move forward.

A.I. #5 ACTION ITEMS

a. At its July 29, 2024, meeting the Planning & Zoning Commission approved the preliminary plat for KL Plat No. 1. It was also approved by the City Council at its August 15, 2024, meeting. The purchase agreement has been executed and the title commitment has been issued. The surveyor has presented the final plat to be presented at the September meeting, subject to final review by Stearns County.

A motion was made by Mr. Berscheit, seconded by Ms. McDonald and unanimously carried recommending Council approval of the final plat, subject to final review and minor requests of Stearns County.

A.I. #6 UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Community Development Director Sheila Hellermann stated that at the last meeting Groetsch Properties (PID #66.37103.0000) requested a pre-application review.

The plans and building permit for the remodel were not located. On Monday, August 19, 2024, Staff and Bill Barber, our building official from Inspectron, went

to the property and met with Terry Kurowski. The firewall only goes to the height of the walls. There is only draft stopping in the rafters. To proceed, Groetsch Properties would need to remove the siding, open the gable end on the north side in the parking lot, and put in the necessary fire rated wall. Initial conversations are that this might be cost prohibitive, however, Groetsch Properties is working with our building official on the requirements of the building code.

b. At the Planning & Zoning Commission's April 24, 2023, meeting, it was recommended that the city develop a vacant building registration process. At its July 20, 2023, meeting, the Council decided not to pursue the Vacant Building Registration ordinance that was presented. Given the recent concerns with a collapsing roof on commercial property, staff is asking Council to re-consider an ordinance, with modifications, to provide a process to keep on top of the condition of vacant structures.. The City Council will be holding a work session in October to work on this ordinance, and the Commission's recommendations will be brought to that work session by staff. It was also discussed whether there should be enforcement of building code concerns – for example, bad siding, shingles, roofing, etc. in residential and commercial areas. The Commission by consensus was amenable to removing the snowbirds from the vacant building ordinance, and making other changes amenable to the Council.

c. We continue our discussion of electronic billboards. Attorney Dymoke has offered the following opinion:

Currently, Section 712.03 conflicts with Section 711.03. Section 711.03 lays out regulations for electronic or changeable signs, but then 712.03 prohibits them in the billboard overlay district. Trying to reconcile the provisions, we could say that a changeable sign, such as Spiritz has, mounted on the wall of the building is permitted, but a stand-alone, electronic billboard along 1-94 is not.
I would consider replacing Section 712.03 with language such as "electronic billboard signs shall comply with the requirements of Section 711.03." That would clarify that electronic billboards are allowed in the billboard overlay district and that they have to follow the same rules as other forms of electronic signs.

In moving forward, we would set a public hearing on the zoning ordinance amendment for the Planning & Zoning Commission's October meeting. Are there other provisions the Commission would like to have included? MADA reviewed this matter and expressed concern about electronic signage near residential neighborhoods (for example, the neighborhood near the golf course). Any request would be subject to an application for a conditional use permit and permit from MnDOT, which applies to all billboards. The Commission would like to have regulations in residential neighborhoods. Chair Seanger recommended a distance of 1,000 feet restriction from residential neighborhoods. Staff was directed to research the ordinance of other communities as to distance restrictions in residential areas.

A.I. #7 NEW BUSINESS

a. Director Hellermann reported that on August 15, 2024, staff received from Roach Development a preliminary design of its 17 building/34-unit townhouse project in Railroad West. This property will be re-platted to accommodate This will

eventually be re-platted and brought before the Planning & Zoning Commission

b. On the weekend of July 26-28, 2024, there were murals painted on downtown businesses. At the August 15, 2024, Council meeting, residents spoke with concerns. Commission to discuss whether the city should look at any regulation or keep the current ordinance, which is largely silent. Possibilities include:

- Require written permission of property owners with actual designs before work can commence?
- Regulate location? No 2nd stories? Visibility from major streets?
- Require the need to apply for a city permit with the design approved by P&Z or another person or entity?
- Prohibit words?

At its September meeting, MADA expressed concerned about possible placement on the frontage along Main Street and in residential neighborhoods. Feedback has been received about developing, at a minimum, zoning guidelines concerning placement. The Commission by consensus agreed to prohibit murals in residential areas and Main Street facing buildings.

The Commission by consensus directed staff to draft a zoning ordinance requiring the Conditional Use Permitting process for murals.

c. City staff, building officials, and city attorney have been actively involved in discussions about the structural integrity of the building at 406 Main Street East. Commission to be updated on the situation, including the status of demolition bids and a possible buyer interested in saving the building. Mr. Nate Hiltner was in attendance to discuss his remodel/restore plans. Mr. Hiltner and Mr. Jacob Imdieke currently have a hold harmless agreement with Mr. Wiehoff. Mr. Hiltner has been in contact with a structural engineer and has begun exploring the restoration and design of this property. Mr. Hiltner is asking the Planning and Zoning Commission what would be permissible for reconstruction of the roof. Would the Commission allow a pitched roof? Chair Seanger stated that as long as he meets the building code and zoning code regarding materials, he may move ahead with restoration. Mr. Hiltner was informed that concealed fasteners are required. Mr. Hiltner to work with Community Development Director Hellermann on the restoration process.

d. There has been discussion with property owners and staff regarding a vacation of the alley in Block 9 of HJ Haskamp's Addition.

This is a city council decision; however, the Planning & Zoning Commission is asked to review the proposed alley vacation to determine if they are in agreement with the action. The alley vacation would be subject to a public hearing before the city council in October and after proper notification of all property owners within 350 feet.

A motion was made by Ms. Wieling, seconded by Mr. Shaw and unanimously carried recommending Council approval of the alley vacation in Block 9 of HJ

Haskamp's Addition.

A.I. #8 INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

a. The Commission's next meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 28, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

A.I. #9 ISSUES BY PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEMBERS

a. Director Hellermann informed the Commission regarding the current nuisance ordinance and enforcement. This will also be discussed by the City Council, along with the vacant building ordinance.

A.I. #10 ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Berscheit, seconded by Ms. Wieling and unanimously carried that the meeting be adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Patricia Haase

PATRICIA HAASE – CITY CLERK