

MINUTES OF THE NEENAH PLAN COMMISSION
Tuesday, July 25th, 2023
4:15 p.m.

Present:

Mayor Jane Lang, Chairperson	PRESENT	Alderman Dan Steiner, Vice Chairperson	ABSENT	Gerry Kaiser, Director of Public Works	PRESENT
Kate Hancock-Cooke	PRESENT	Karen Genett	PRESENT	Betsy Ellenberger	ABSENT
Gerry Andrews	PRESENT	Sarah Moore-Nokes	ABSENT		

Also Present:

Brad Schmidt, Deputy Director of Community Development	Kayla Kubat, Administrative Assistant of Community Development	Anthony Mach, Director of Water Utility
Dave Stubbs- Keller, N260 Hwy 55 Kaukauna	Michael Kessechen- 125 Byrd Ave Neenah	Diane Eparvier- 669 Elm St Neenah

Minutes: MSC Hancock-Cooke/Kaiser, the Plan Commission, to approve the June 13, 2023 meeting minutes. All voting aye. Motion passed.

Public Appearances: Chairperson Mayor Lang opened public appearances to topics not related to the agenda.

No one in attendance spoke. Chairperson Mayor Lang closed public appearances.

Public Hearings:

- a. **Special Use Permit – 1539 Freedom Meadows Drive – Water Booster Station Building**

No one in attendance spoke. Chairperson Mayor Lang closed this public hearing.

Action Items:

- a. **Mahler Farms PDD Project Plan Approval – 1554 S. Commercial Street – Day Care**

Deputy Director Schmidt discussed project plan and went over staff recommendations and updates to the plan. Discover Little Miracles Day Care was previously located at 1421 S. Commercial Street in the Neenah Plaza. The applicant is proposing to have a capacity of around 75 children and the facility will be licensed by the State of Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF). In addition, there will be 15 employees working at the day care.

Access to the subject site is from S. Commercial Street via a shared access drive and from Lyon Drive, also from a shared access drive. The off-street parking lot includes 95 off-street parking stalls, including four handicap accessible stalls. Parking on the north and east side includes a two-way drive aisle, while parking on the west and south sides includes a one-way drive aisle. As part of the applicant’s proposal to place an outdoor play area in the parking stalls west of the building, eliminating 12 stalls for a total of 83 which will remain.

The applicant is proposing to construct an outdoor play area west of the building in the existing row of parking along S. Commercial Street which will be 102 feet long by 18 feet wide (1,836

**ORDINANCE
No. 2023-10**

Plan Commission Minutes

July 25, 2023

Page 2

square feet). The area is proposed to be surrounded by a five-foot high chain link fence with privacy slats. There are no permanent structures planned for the play area, except for a storage shed. The shed detail (height and area) has not been included in this submittal and further detail is required prior to construction.

Staff has concerns about location of the proposed play area relative to the safety of children so close to a busy parking lot and a one-way drive-aisle.

To minimize these concerns, staff recommends the following adjustments to the site plan:

1. Maintain a minimum of a 15-foot-wide drive aisle between the building and play area. This provides sufficient room for larger vehicles to access the rear of the property.
2. Reduce the length of the play area to be in-line with the front of the building.
3. Install a bollard or similar permanent vertical post on the north side of the play area, northeast corner, and the southeast corner to provide a safety barrier from vehicular traffic.
4. The fence along S. Commercial Street shall be constructed of high-quality material such as wood, vinyl or similar material and shall not exceed six feet in height.
5. Remove the two parking stalls north of the proposed play area and the two along the south property line closest to the play area.

Member Hancock-Cooke had a question regarding parking at Zuppas during their busy lunchtime. Deputy Director Schmidt went over the variable times when the restaurant is busy during peak times and there is more of a concern with the circling of the building versus the parking.

Member Genett is worried about dropping off and picking up and if the parking lot will be one-way. Deputy Director Schmidt states the current parking lot is already a one-way and it is going to stay that way around the building.

Member Kaiser brought up the parking analysis and that there will be a loss of parking spaces to what is currently there. Deputy Director Schmidt stated there would be more of a reduction of parking with the original proposal, with the play area going the entire west side compared to the staff recommendation.

Member Kaiser asked who is parking on south side of the building. Deputy Director Schmidt stated it would be employees. Member Kaiser said he is not in favor of the drive aisle in between play area and building.

Member Genett asked if the drive aisle is necessary for fire protection. Deputy Director Schmidt said the drive aisle would be the same width as it is currently, and the fire department did review this plan. He also went over the conversation with the applicant and contractor about possibly moving the play area to be attached to the building, however, that also led to some other challenges regarding traffic flow around the building. Also, in moving the play area to the side of the building, it would limit the size of the play area and in doing so it would not meet the minimum requirements of square footage for number of children, etc.

Chairperson Mayor Lang questioned if most people who park behind the building will be employees only and if they will be arriving at different times. Deputy Director Schmidt stated the

Plan Commission Minutes

July 25, 2023

Page 3

employees of the building will be parking behind the building and due to the various businesses, there will be different arrival times.

Member Kaiser asked if the applicant would need to get a fence permit so staff will be able to review materials. Deputy Director Schmidt stated a fence permit would need to be obtained.

Dave Stubbs from Keller stated the need to sit down and go over the new recommendations to change play area to be flush with the building and the update in fence material. Deputy Director Schmidt gave the reasoning for the updated fence recommendations also stated the maximum height would be up to 6 feet due to treating this area like a side yard.

Dave Stubbs went over the pick-up and drop-off traffic going around the building one-way and how it will most likely be the employees of the day care and from other businesses.

Member Kaiser asked for clarification regarding the shed in the play area and if it will be used for a play shed or for storage. Deputy Director Schmidt stated it will be used for storage.

Michael Kessechen stated the shed is designed to put small equipment inside when not in use. He also wanted to discuss safety. He acknowledged it is not ideal, however, they have come up with some solutions to create a safer environment for the children getting to the play area. There will be a painted sidewalk to go across the parking lot and signage for drivers to see, such as Caution Children at Play. Also, there will be two teachers present when children are going into the play area, the children are not crossing alone. He discussed children under 3 years old will be on a "looper" where each child holds onto a ring and the teacher would walk them across. The kids will not be crossing a road, it is a parking lot.

MSC Andrews/Hancock-Cooke, the Plan Commission, recommends Council approve to Ordinance number 2023-10 for the project plan for Discover Little Miracles Day Care, located at 1554 S. Commercial Street, subject to the conditions of the project plan approval letter. All voting aye. Motion passed.

b. Subdivision Concept Plan – Freedom Acres/The Homes at Freedom Meadows

Deputy Director Schmidt discussed the subdivision concept plan for the Freedom Acres and The Homes at Freedom Meadows development. The concept plan represents an update from a concept plan which was approved in August 2020. Since that approval, three phases of the development have been completed or are currently under construction.

The subject area is located on the northwest corner of County Highway G and Woodenshoe Road. The City purchased 130 acres from the developer and has been selling the land back in smaller phases. The original concept plan included 153 single-family lots spread over six phases. In addition, a 2.9-acre neighborhood park was planned. The proposed concept plan (including the three completed phases) includes 242 lots (58% increase), and a 4.5-acre park (ability to expand into a regional park). The developer will be submitting the 2nd Addition to the Homes at Freedom Meadows (34 lots) and the 1st Addition to Freedom Acres (48 lots) for Plan Commission review this summer of early fall.

The concept plan includes an east/west neighborhood collector street, Liberty Avenue, which connects to Woodenshoe Road. Honor Street serves as a north/south collector and connects to County Highway G. All other streets in the concept plan are intended to connect to future street extensions north and west of the development. Sidewalks are planned along nearly every street within the concept plan.

Storm water is managed in two existing storm water ponds, one on Honor Street and County Highway G and the other on Freedom Meadows Drive and Woodenshoe Road. A third storm water pond is planned in the 2nd Addition to Freedom Acre on the southwest side of the development.

A water pump station is proposed to be constructed in the 1st Addition to the Homes at Freedom Meadows. As development progresses west, sufficient water pressure needs to be provided. The water pump station will boost water pressure for the future phases of this development and land adjacent to this development.

Member Genett asked how many exits and entrances will be in this subdivision. Deputy Director Schmidt said there are three; two on Woodenshoe and one on County G. Member Genett asked if that is enough exits and entrances for this many homes. Deputy Director Schmidt stated that a number of streets within the concept plan are planned to be extended as growth occurs to the west and north, providing additional ingress and egress. There are also challenges with how many exits can be placed on County G due to the County Highway Commission restrictions and existing wetlands.

Member Genett asked if wetlands being filled in. Deputy Director Schmidt said they have been delineated on the concept map. The state allows some isolated wetlands up to 10,000 square feet to be filled in but that has not happened to this point. However, there is also a larger wetland on the plan which may be a federal wetland and those have higher restrictions in regards to filling in.

Deputy Director Schmidt went over some of the challenges laying out this concept plan with the existing wetlands and two easements that run through the area.

Member Hancock-Cooke questioned wetlands on the projected properties and asked what the timeframe is for this project. Deputy Director Schmidt said the developer has until 2030 to develop land, however, they are currently ahead of schedule.

MSC Kaiser/Genett, the Plan Commission, to approve the proposed conceptual plan for Freedom Acres and The Homes at Freedom Meadows. All voting aye. Motion passed.

c. Special Use Permit – Freedom Meadows Avenue – Water Booster Station Building

Deputy Director Schmidt went over the plan submitted by the City of Neenah Water Utility to construct a water booster station building located at 1539 Freedom Meadows Drive.

The subject site was recently platted as part of the 1st Addition to The Homes at Freedom Meadows. The parcel is located on the north side of Freedom Meadows Drive and is about 1.57

Plan Commission Minutes

July 25, 2023

Page 5

acres in size. A water boost station was planned to ensure adequate water pressure as development occurs west of Woodenshoe Road. The property is zoned R-1, Single-Family Residence District.

The proposed 1,200 square-foot building is intended to be situated on the north side of the subject property. The building is approximately 75 feet north of the residential lots to the south and 50 feet south of the north property line. A 16-foot asphalt driveway provides access to off-street parking south of the proposed building. The building has a wall height of about 12 feet and total height of about 15 feet. The building will be constructed of CMU block and have an appearance that is consistent with the neighborhood.

Member Genett asked about the noise level. Director Mach stated the noise level should be low to non-existent outside the building. All the pumps are interior. Deputy Director stated there will also be a berm to act as a noise buffer as well as the developer who purchased these lots is aware of the water booster station and will provide additional landscaping.

Director Mach said there will be a generator on site, however, it will be for emergencies only. It will also have some sound dampening materials.

Member Andrews asked if there will be any trees. Deputy Director Schmidt said the developer will be planting trees but not on the water booster site. Director Mach said the plan is to make the building non-existent and not an eyesore, so it blends in with the neighborhood.

Member Hancock-Cooke asked if there was any thought about placing solar on the roof. Director Mach said solar is probably not an option due to height of the berm being placed.

MSC Genett/Andrews, the Plan Commission, finds that the proposed use meets the findings of facts for a Special Use Permit (Sec. 26-48) and recommends Common Council approve a Special Use Permit for a water booster station building located at 1539 Freedom Meadows Drive subject to the conditions of the Special Use Approval Letter. All voting aye. Motion passed.

Comprehensive Plan 2040 – 5-Year Review:

a. Chapter 1: Introduction and Chapter 2: Issues and Opportunities

Deputy Director Schmidt stated there would be no big changes in the first chapter as it is the introduction.

Deputy Director Schmidt then discussed Chapter 2: Issues and Opportunities. Many of these changes in this chapter would come from the 2020 Census data or 2015-2019 American Community Survey Data.

Member Andrews was surprised the density increased. Deputy Director stated since 2015 we have not annexed a lot of land and much of our development has been in multi-family properties. Also, in some subdivisions, there are smaller lot sizes.

Deputy Director Schmidt went over added I-41 signage and Downtown Plan and South Commercial Street Plan.

Deputy Director Schmidt discussed the goals, objectives, and recommendations in the plan. One of these objectives was community entrances regarding working with the Department of Transportation to provide additional signage to the downtown and other places of interest. The BID did help install a downtown Neenah sign on I-41. There were a lot of accomplishments with Public Art with the development of the Arts Council Committee, working on developing public art selection guidelines, creating a database of existing public art and the review of ordinances to determine restrictions on murals.

Discussion Items:

a. Inflation Reduction Act – Impact on Zoning and Building Codes


Member Hancock-Cooke provided information regarding the Inflation Reduction Act. She discussed available tax credits and upfront discounts incentives for homeowners to electrify their new or existing home. She indicated that the City should review its house building standards to ensure new homes are equipped with the appropriate electrical infrastructure to allow future home owners to have the ability to install new electrical devices.

Announcements and Future Agenda Items: Next meeting is scheduled for August 8, 2023.

Member Kaiser stated a need for a special plan commission meeting to review the S. Commercial St right-a-way plat. This will need to be held in the upcoming week due to time sensitivity of the project. An email will go out to committee members to find a time suitable for a majority of members to attend.

Adjournment: The Commission adjourned its meeting at 5:11 p.m. MSC Genett/Hancock-Cooke. All voting Aye. Motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted,



Kayla Kubat
Administrative Assistant, Department of Community Development