

MINUTES OF THE ZONING COMMITTEE
Thursday, April 27, 2017 - 3:30 p.m.
City Council Chambers, 3rd Floor
City Hall and Court House
15 West Kellogg Boulevard

PRESENT: DeJoy, Lindeke, and Makarios
EXCUSED: Edgerton, McMahon, and Reveal
STAFF: Jake Reilly, Cherie Englund, Allan Torstenson, and Peter Warner

The meeting was chaired by Commissioner Makarios.

Metro State University - 17-023-698 - Conditional use permit to expand the campus onto lots zoned RT1 two-family residential to expand a parking lot., 381-393 Bates Ave., NW corner 6th Street E. and Bates Avenue

Jake Reilly presented the revised staff report with a recommendation of approval for the conditional use permit with a condition. He stated District 4 recommended approval, and there were no letters in support, and 1 letter in opposition.

Commissioner Lindeke asked what the rules are for the public library parking lot verses the main parking lot. Mr. Reilly said he is unsure, but there are lots that are designated for parking for no more than 30 minute, where anyone can park, and there are no reserved spaces. He added that students are encouraged to parking the main parking ramp.

Commissioner DeJoy asked if the parking ramp and lot is free. Mr. Reilly said parking for students is free because it is built into the student fees for the University and patrons of the library pay a \$5.00 charge to park in the ramp.

Mr. Reilly responded to questions by Commissioner Lindeke about compliance with the comprehensive plan which he noted are addressed in the revised staff report in finding 5. He clarified that the use refers to the university as a whole which is required to provide parking as set by the minimums in the zoning code.

Commissioner Lindeke asked if we give variances on parking minimums. Mr. Reilly said he has not worked on any. Mr. Torstenson said he didn't know if we have ever given a variance for parking minimums on a campus. He added that the requirements are structured so that they can grow without adding parking for a while, but at some point they need to provide extra parking or apply for a variance.

Mr. Torstenson said in this case the work that was done years ago for campus expansion the university looked at where they were going, how they are going to expand, and how they would provide parking to accommodate that growth. He added that when the parking ramp was built this lot was part of that plan. He said that at some point they could apply for a variance, if appropriate.

The public hearing was reopened.

The applicant, Chris Maas, 700 East 7th Street, Director of Facilities said he had nothing to add to the staff report. He said that he would like to wrap up the existing intent of the original project to address any safety concerns with the retaining wall.

Mr. Maas responded to Commissioner Lindeke that the parking fee per semester is \$12.00 per credit and a full time student would pay \$144.00 per semester.

Commissioner Lindeke said they did not need the additional parking at this time with only 65% to 70% occupancy with the current parking ramp, but may need a retaining wall. Mr. Maas said that the funds are from student revenue which is designated for parking.

Mr. Warner said the application is to expand the campus onto this parcel of residentially zoned property. He added the testimony from staff is that they don't have adequate parking to meet City zoning requirements, so whether they charge a fee or not is beyond the standards that the City can analyze.

Commissioner Lindeke said he is frustrated by the thought of paving over residential property for something that they don't need and that the City requires. He said that he encourages Metro State to work within the comprehensive plan and consider long term planning with the Gold Line and fee structures.

Commissioner Lindeke asked how the number of full time students is decided and how it compares with students who work or study on different campuses. He also asked what the trend looks like in comparison with the 1,111 parking spaces.

Mr. Maas said the projections are based on what the future may look like. He said the Metro Baccalaureate initiative could affect this in the future and other initiatives within the system as well as online student enrollment. He added that the parking estimate is projected to 2025.

Commissioner DeJoy asked if the City's zoning code is requiring the amount of proposed parking spaces, and does the current student population affect this. Mr. Reilly said that is correct and parking is based on enrollment from 2012 and is projected to 2025. He added that the number of proposed parking spaces is based upon the current enrollment of student and faculty members.

In response to Commissioner DeJoy, Mr. Reilly said that the proposal is based upon fulfilling the zoning requirements set by the City, and even with the construction of these parking spaces they do not meet the minimum standard requirements.

Chair Makarios asked if there are plans to build additional parking to meet the minimum standard requirements. Mr. Maas said that they would continue to lease parking from First Lutheran and would reevaluate the parking requirements in the future.

Commissioner Lindeke asked about the public library parking lot rules and how the 54 parking spaces are used and if the expansion of the new parking lot will affect how this lot gets used.

Tom Torgerud, 700 East 7th Street, Parking Coordinator said the public library parking lot has a one hour parking limit with a 30 minute grace period and it will not be affected by the new parking lot.

No one spoke in favor.

Danielle Winner, 355 Bates Ave., said she appreciates the renderings provided by the university and did not expect to win the argument. She said she appreciates the thoughtfulness of the committee by encouraging alternative forms of transportation and long term planning with street lines. She noted a recent article in the Economist regarding the problematic St. Paul parking issues.

The public hearing was closed.

Mr. Torstenson said it has been a long time since the City has looked at college parking requirements in the zoning code and there has been a lot of change in how campuses work, where students come from, who they are, and how often they are on campus. He said that it may be good to get together with some of these campuses to structure the parking requirements. He added that not all campuses are the same with each requiring different needs for parking and the City needs to be mindful of those needs to make the appropriate changes in zoning requirements.

Commissioner Lindeke said that this is also damaging to St. Paul's bottom line and environment. He said for every church, school, or university there is a large parking lot that is tax-exempt property. Mr. Torstenson said that is correct and the City Planners are aware of this and our zoning code may be off and if so a study would need to be done. He added that the Planning Commission has a role in deciding our priorities in these situations. He said we have made significant changes and parking reductions in our zoning requirements for many uses in the last 10 years, but did not take on college parking requirements.

Commissioner DeJoy agreed that this warrants another look at the zoning code, but in looking at this application we have to observe the current code requirements and the fact that the university is trying to fulfill this.

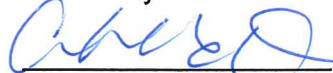
Commissioner DeJoy moved approval of the conditional use permit with a condition. Commissioner Lindeke seconded the motion.

Commissioner Lindeke voted nay stating he does not believe this application meets the requirement in finding 5a.

The motion passed by a vote of 2-1-0.

Adopted Yeas - 2 Nays - 1 (Lindeke) Abstained - 0 ()

Drafted by:



Cherie Englund
Recording Secretary

Submitted by:



Jake Reilly
Zoning Section

Approved by:



Kyle Makarios
Chair

