

**MINUTES OF THE WORKSHOP MEETING
CITY COUNCIL
LITTLE CANADA, MINNESOTA**

MAY 24, 2023

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof a Workshop meeting of the City Council of Little Canada, Minnesota was convened on the 24th day of May, 2023 in the Council Chambers of the City Center located at 515 Little Canada Road in said City.

Mayor Tom Fischer called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and the following members of the City Council were present at roll call:

CITY COUNCIL: Mayor Fischer, Council Members T. Miller, Gutierrez, and D. Miller.
Absent: Kwapick.

ALSO PRESENT: City Administrator Chris Heineman, Community Development Director Corrin Wendell and City Clerk/HR Manager Heidi Heller.

REVIEW PROPOSAL FOR A MULTI-HOUSING DEVELOPMENT ON RICE STREET & DEMONT AVENUE BY REUTER WALTON

The Community Development Director explained that City staff has been working with the owner of properties located at the northeast corner of Rice Street and Demont Avenue since 2020 for a redevelopment project. She stated that development company, Reuter Walton, has secured an option to purchase and develop the property into multi-family housing. She reported that tonight Paul Keenan from Reuter Walton will review the background of the site, the preliminary site plan, and discuss the planning process of the proposed development. She stated that Reuter Walton is requesting to redevelop five parcels to construct approximately 175 housing units with underground parking as well as surface parking. She noted that a neighborhood meeting is scheduled for June 7 to share the proposal and hear comments from neighbors. This proposal also includes the relocation of the Flameburger restaurant.

Paul Keenan, Reuter Walton, explained that they would buy five properties that are currently owned by Tom Duray, and the Flameburger would move to the existing building on the corner of Rice and Demont, which is also owned by Mr. Duray. He noted that the property owner and the restaurant operators are open to moving next door, but are concerned about the cost for the remodel that the other building would need for a restaurant. Mr. Keenan stated they will be requesting funding from Ramsey County and the State of Minnesota, but not the city. He explained that he would request a resolution of support from the City to apply for housing funds on June 14 and the funding application is due in July. He explained that if they are not approved for funding in July, the project would be on hold for six months and they would apply for funding again in January 1.

The City Administrator explained that there is an existing sidewalk on Rice Street that ends at the south side of Mama T's and picks up again on the north side of County Road C, so there is a gap that the City may want to look at how to fund. Mr. Keenan stated there could be some other funding sources to help with the cost. He noted that Tom Duray and the Flameburger property

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owner and operators will need to come to an agreement on the land swap and remodeling costs, in order for Reuter Walton to move forward with the development.

There was Council consensus for the City to look at participating in some way to assist with the move of the Flameburger and possible sidewalk connection.

REVIEW PROPOSAL FOR A SENIOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AT 99 COUNTY ROAD B EAST BY LUPE DEVELOPMENT

The Community Development Director reported that in October 2022, City staff was initially contacted by Lupe Development to inquire about zoning, land use, and development potential for the site located at 99 County Road B East for a senior housing development. She explained that the purpose of this workshop is to introduce the design and architecture team, review the background of the site, view the preliminary site plan, and review the planning process of the proposed development.

Zac Rosenow, Bryan Schleif and Dominic Cartier from Pope Design Group and Aaron Diederich from Lupe Development Partners, LLC are requesting to develop the existing vacant 2.08-acre parcel to construct 106 affordable senior housing units within a 4-story structure with underground parking as well as surface parking. The Community Development Director stated that Lupe Development has already obtained some funding from Ramsey County, and will also be looking to apply for funding through the Metropolitan Council this fall. She reviewed the land use application process which includes rezoning the parcel from C-1, General Commercial District to R-3, High Density Residential District, which is in line with the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map, and a PUD (Planned Unit Development – Residential) Overlay for the parcel to allow for increased density (from 36 units/acre to 50 units/acre), and location of driveway within the required driveway setback. She noted that if a PUD is applied, then no variances would be required.

Zac Rosenow with Pope Design Group, stated there are no neighbors to this property and it currently contains a billboard. He explained that the topography is challenging on the site and the current driveway is hugging the property line and it makes sense to leave the driveway where it is. He stated the grade where the proposed parking lot is more challenging than they originally thought, so they are still figuring out how to fit the building and parking lot into the existing grades. He stated the apartment building would be a mix of studio, 1-bedroom and 2-bedroom units, with most being 1-bedroom units. He explained the building will be affordable independent senior housing.

T. Miller asked if they were concerned about the railroad tracks next to the site and noise. Aaron Diederich with Lupe Development, stated they will do some landscaping to help deaden the sound, and will work with a sound engineer for windows and construction materials to help lessen the train sound.

Zac Rosenow stated the topography is the biggest challenge to make this project work, so being able to use the Planned Unit Development process would help with fitting the building into the site, but they want to meet the R-3 zoning requirements as much as possible.

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Fischer asked if the existing billboard would be removed. Mr. Diederich stated the current property owner has negotiated to end the lease and the billboard would be removed.

There was Council consensus for support of the existing plan and proposed planning requests.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Thomas Fischer, Mayor

Attest:

Christopher Heineman, City Administrator