

**WILLMAR PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF WILLMAR, MN
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2022**

MINUTES

1. The Willmar Planning Commission met on Wednesday, February 16, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. at the Willmar City Offices Conference Room #1

Members Present: Jonathan Marchand, Jeff Kimpling, Stephanie Carlson, Cletus Frank, Steven Dresler, and Stacy Holwerda

Members Absent: Khalif Ahmed

Other Present: Kayode Adiatu – Planner, Willard Huyck – Main Street Coordinator, Justice Walker - Planning and Development Director, Tim Ostby – Vinje Lutheran Church, Cheryl Schmidt – Vinje Lutheran Church, and Jan Dahl – Vinje Lutheran Church

2. MINUTES: Minutes from January 19th, 2022 and February 2nd, 2022 were reviewed and approved.
3. CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA: There were no changes or additions to the agenda.
4. UPDATES ON JAMES HOUSE, TINY HOMES, AND INDOOR GUN RANGE: Planner Adiatu provided the Commission with updates on James House, Tiny Homes, and the Indoor Gun Range. Commissioner Kimpling asked if the proposed Tiny Homes project would fit into an R-1 district. Director Walker responded that it would be a Planned Unit Development (PUD). Commissioner Kimpling also stated that the City should see if there is an appetite for creating a PUD before accepting a Purchase Agreement from Mr. Paffrath. Director Walker responded that staff and the Commission would review and approve the landscape and structural plans before creating a PUD. Chairperson Marchand asked if the City would allow interested persons to purchase and reuse the equipment in the closed gun range facility at the City Auditorium. Director Walker responded that he has not discussed such plan with Mr. Peterson.
5. COLUMBARIUM – CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT (CUP) PRELIMINARY: Planner Adiatu presented a proposed Conditional Use Permit Application by Mr. Ostby on behalf of the Vinje Lutheran Church located at 1101 Willmar Ave SW. Planner Adiatu further explained that the CUP application is to allow for the installation of a Columbarium on the South side of the Church, and that a Columbarium is allowed as

an accessory use in a R-2 district. Planner Adiatu then introduced Mr. Ostby to the Commission.

Mr. Ostby explained that a Columbarium is a receptacle for cremated remains and that Vinje Lutheran Church has been discussing these plans for three years. He further explained how they plan to install the Columbarium at the South entrance of the Church. Mr. Ostby informed the Commission that both the Utilities and Engineering Departments confirmed to him that there are no electrical, water or sewer lines laying under the proposed location of the Columbarium.

Commissioner Carlson asked how much the Columbarium weighs. Mr. Ostby responded that that he does not know but would circle back when he finds out. Commissioner Carlson sought clarification on how far down the footings will go. Mr. Ostby responded that the company they are working with is very specific in what the requirements are. Commissioner Dresler stated that he does not see them digging more than 6 ft down. Commissioner Carlson asked if they only plan to install one Columbarium. Mr. Ostby responded that they are only going to install one for now with a possibility to expand in the future.

Commissioner Kimpling stated that if the Commission approves the Conditional Use for Vinje Lutheran Church to install a Columbarium as an accessory use, the same process should be considered for other Churches if they approach the City. Director Walker responded that each CUP application would be allowed with unique conditions. Commissioner Frank and Commissioner Kimpling sought for clarification on the Ordinance that allows for a Columbarium as an accessory to a building. Staff noted their concerns and promised to do more findings on how other cities have allowed the installation of a Columbarium.

Commissioner Frank asked about the motivation for installing a Columbarium. Ms. Dahl responded that she facilitated the idea because she went through the process with another Church in the metro area. She further stated that the conversation has been ongoing with the same company that did the one in the metro area since 2018. She further clarified that the Columbarium could be moved to a designated cemetery location if the Vinje Lutheran Church no longer exists.

Director Walker stated that staff would look into incorporating a Columbarium as an accessory to an existing building in the City Ordinance. Commissioner Frank added that City staff and the City Council should look into this issue to determine whether a burial of cremated remains around Church buildings is a welcomed development in the City of Willmar. Commissioner Holwerda asked about their plans for pedestrians along road traffic during an interment with large congregation. Mr. Ostby responded that there are open green spaces in the side yards and could be a space for additional spots or structure around the facility.

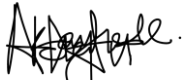
Director Walker reiterated his commitment to working with applicants as things develop.

6. MISCELLANY: Chairperson Marchand requested that Commissioners review the newly drafted Planning Commission handbook and possibly consider it for adoption. Planner Adiatu also explained that he is working with City staff to see how the handbook could be made into a smaller size booklet. Chairperson Marchand asked that Commissioners should return their review, suggestion and/or recommendation by the next Planning Commission Meeting.

Commissioner Kimpling motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Dresler. The motion carries.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kayode Adiatu", with a period at the end.

Kayode Adiatu

Exhibit A

