

CITY OF WILLMAR  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
6:30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023.  
CONFERENCE ROOM #1  
WILLMAR CITY HALL

Chair: Jonathan Marchand

Vice Chair: Kelsey Vosika

Members: Steve Dresler, Stacy Holwerda, Yvon Fils-Aime, John Christianson and Christopher Buzzeo.

## AGENDA

1. Meeting Called to Order
2. Minutes from May 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting
3. Zoning Text Amendment - GB / AP Rentals - Public Hearing
4. Zoning Text Amendment - New GB-2 and Park Minimum - Public Hearing
5. Les Schwab Tires, Subdivision - Preliminary.
6. Rail Park, Subdivision - Preliminary
7. Purchase Agreement
8. Clay Bridgette, Plan Review - Preliminary
9. Miscellany
10. Adjourn

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### 1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

### 2. MINUTES FROM MAY 3<sup>RD</sup> MEETING

### 3. ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT - GB / AP RENTALS AND PUBLIC HEARING

AP Rentals of MN, LLC. (Paul Borgerding) is requesting approval for a text Amendment to the Ordinance 1060 Section 06 setbacks. The zoning related to the change is General Business (GB) and the current setbacks for front in the 1<sup>st</sup> Street S are 25ft. All front or street setbacks along state / federal highways shall be a minimum of fifty feet, exceptions applied. Currently the front setback is 25ft, and the text amendment proposed is to bring the setback to 5ft.

**Staff Recommendation:** Staff recommends deciding on a setback distance to be incorporated into the new General Business zoning district for north of Willmar Avenue. This distance will be included in the new General Business District when it is presented to the Planning Commission.

#### **4. ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT – NEW GB-2 ZONING AND PARKING MINIMUMS/ PUBLIC HEARING**

This is a city-initiated Map Zoning Amendment that creates a new Zoning called General Business 2 (GB-2). The changes occur in the General Business (GB) zoning located throughout the 1<sup>st</sup> Street S, south Willmar Ave. All uses from the GB will be permitted on GB-2 and new uses will be permitted. Lot size will be changed from 15,000 square feet to 30,000 square feet. Map and Text to amend Ordinance 1060, Section 05 is attached to this Agenda as Visual. Other changes made on the same Ordinance, but Section 04, a text amendment that will change the parking minimums, according to proposal attached to the agenda as a visual.

**Staff recommendation:** Staff recommends in favor of the new General Business district and removing the parking minimums.

- Staff wants to encourage more car-oriented development patterns south of Willmar Avenue for retail and other uses.
- Staff have reviewed multiple projects where parking minimums have been a barrier to investment more than ensuring sound development.

#### **5. LES SCHWAB TIRES CENTER, SUBDIVISION (23-02) - PRELIMINARY**

##### **Overview:**

- Les Schwab Tires is planning to build a Tire Center at 1<sup>st</sup> St S. corner.
- The land is being subdivided (minor subdivision) due to:
  - Result in less than 4 lots or parcels,
  - All utilities and easements are provided,
  - They comply with the design standards and minimum lot area and width
  - No new or changes to current street, utilities, easements, and
  - The plat does not abut or contain a wetland, lake, state, highway, county road or county-aid highway.
- Buildable area will be about 11,763 sq ft

##### **Comments:**

**Fire Department:** It looks good from the fire department side.

**WPD:** No areas of concern from the WPD side.

**WMU Electrical:** No areas of concern on the Utilities Electric.

**WMU Water:** They have no additional comments or issues with the Les Schwab Tire Center.

**Engineering:** Grading plan or stormwater calculations are being requested for Final Plat comments and approval.

## **6. RAIL PARK SUBDIVISION, SUBDIVISION - PRELIMINARY**

### **Overview:**

- This is a major subdivision to reorganize all the existing lots in one lot, about 145 acres.
- There will be a new zoning district for the area (I-3, Industrial 3) created
- This would be rail related industry district.
- MB rail will need to provide grading plans for rail construction to be approved.
- At this moment their approach is just to build the rail and allow other interested companies to build the buildings that they need. This means there will be more subdivisions associated with this property, and that as buildings come in they will be subject to the full scrutiny of plan review.

### **Comments:**

**Fire Department:** They said that at this point in the project the Fire Department has no comments.

**WPD:** No areas of concern from the WPD side.

**WMU:** They support the MB Rail project at this planning stage and the early plat. They will need additional information on easement and service requirements for both water and electric as the project moves forward. At the earliest WMU would like any copy of construction and or civil plans for the property to be able to answer the future service questions that may come up.

### **Engineering:**

1. The applicant shall obtain all necessary regulatory agency permits and submit a copy to the City of Willmar for our files prior to construction.
2. The applicant shall submit a grading plan for the review of the City of Willmar.
3. The applicant shall submit a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan for the review of the City of Willmar.
4. The applicant shall submit a Stormwater Management Plan for the review of the City of Willmar.
5. The Preliminary Plat shall be signed by a Land Surveyor licensed in the State of Minnesota.
6. Current title commitments for the property identified in the Preliminary Plat shall be obtained for verification of the legal description.
7. All construction shall be in accordance with the City of Willmar Standards.
8. A pre-construction meeting shall be held prior to any construction at the site.

## **7. WMU PURCHASE AGREEMENT**

### **Overview:**

In 2010, WMU completed a facilities study to address future building needs. As a result, WMU purchased the former Taco John's property in 2010, and the former Gerry's Liquor property in 2013 for future building space needs.

WMU updated the facilities study in 2016. The 2016 study outlined the value of a new “green field” site consisting of 8-10 acres or more in size to accommodate a singular new facility, rather than operating from multiple locations.

With the updated 2016 Study the Municipal Utilities Commission (MUC) is focused on finding a new, larger space, the adjacent properties, commonly known as the 810 Litchfield Ave property became expendable.

In 2022, the main floor tenant reached out to WMU and expressed interest in purchasing the property. WMU had the property appraised and conferred with City Attorney Robert Scott regarding selling the property to the main floor tenant, and in April of 2023, the MUC directed staff to sell the property.

A verbal price agreement was established with the tenant and a purchase agreement has been drafted with the City Attorney’s Office. The agreement is currently under review by the tenant.

In summary, WMU is requesting the approval of the Planning Commission to sell the property at 810 Litchfield Avenue SW, and the adjacent parking property consisting of (4) total parcels to the main floor tenant, subject to approval by the MUC and City Council.

## **8. CLAY BRIDGETTE, PLAN REVIEW - PRELIMINARY**

### **Overview:**

- Clay Bridgette is requesting a Plan Review to build an apartment on the second floor of an existing building.
- The lot is zoned as GB (General Business)
- It is located at 1020 Hwy 71 NE, Willmar.
- They will add a two-bedroom apartment to the second floor on existing 600 square feet space.

### **Comments:**

**WPD:** No areas of concern from WPD aspect.

**Fire Department:** At this point FD has no issues.

**WMU Water:** The apartment will need to be metered separately from the existing account and per our policy at WMU, access to both the meter and the shut off for both accounts is necessary as needed.

**WMU Electric:** They have no comments or concerns on this project. They are good to go. If they want to change any of the service for this apartment, they should take a look at upgrading their service to underground at this time.

**Engineering:** If no construction is being proposed on the exterior of the building, they do not have any comments.

## **9. Miscellaneous**

## **10. Adjourn**