

**WILLMAR PLANNING COMMISSION  
CITY OF WILLMAR, MN  
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2020**

**MINUTES**

1. The Willmar Planning Commission met on Wednesday, October 21, 2020, at 7:03 p.m. virtually via GoTo Meeting.

\*\* Members Present: Christina Nelson, Rolf Standfuss, Steve Gardner, Jeff Kimpling, Terry Sieck, and Cletus Frank.

\*\* Members Absent: Khalif Ahmed Bashir, Jonathan Marchand, and Stephanie Carlson

\*\* Others Present: Sarah Swedburg – Planner, David Ramstad – Director of Planning & Development, Alex Rau – Planning & Development Intern, Larry Walter – Innovative Systems, Shelby Lindrud – West Central Tribune, Robert Scott – City Attorney

2. MINUTES: Minutes of the September 16, 2020 meetings were approved as presented.

3. INNOVATIVE SYSTEMS PLAN REVIEW – FILE NO 20-03: Staff presented a request by Cornerstone of Willmar, Inc on behalf of Innovative Systems, Inc for a plan review permit to allow a printing shop on property described as follows: That part of Government Lot 3 described as follows: Commencing at a point on the Easterly Right-of-Way line of Business Highway 71 and 669.60 feet northerly of the South Line of Government Lot 3 of SD Section 11, then Easterly 259.2 feet, then northerly 200 feet, then Northwesterly 80 feet, then Northeasterly 40 feet, then Northwesterly 159.20 feet then southwesterly 5 feet, then Northwesterly 20 feet, then Southwesterly 35 feet, then continuing Southwesterly 200 feet to point of beginning (1000 Business 71 N). Innovative Systems currently operates just north of town & this renovation of the old Trow Nutrition site will allow them to be located in City Limits. The property is currently zoned I-2 (General Industry) and they will only be renovating the northern portion of this site at this time.

Larry explained that Innovative Systems is a transactional printer, primarily printing utility bills & other such mailers. They have clients all over the nation. At this time, they operate with 5 full time staff, with up to 10 staff at their peak times of year.

Staff comments were reviewed and discussed (see Attachment A). Staff noted that parking is calculated by square footage or staffing volume, whichever is greater. In this case, square footage requirements (40 spaces) well exceeds the parking requirements calculated based off of staffing.

Mr. Gardner made a motion, seconded by Mr. Frank to approve the Plan Review as submitted with the following condition:

- a. The use shall meet all applicable local, state, and federal rules and regulations at all times.

The Planning Commission reviewed and made affirmative findings of fact as per Zoning Ordinance Section 9.E.3.a.1-7.

The motion carried.

4. RENAISSANCE ZONE TEXT AMENDMENT – FILE NO 20-03: The public hearing opened at 7:14p.m. Staff presented phase 3 of the Renaissance Zone. This Zoning Ordinance Amendment will establish the administration process, performance standards, and “Open Zoning” process in Section 12 regulating the “Renaissance Zone” overlay district that was established during phase 1. The overlay district allows for exemptions from the standards set in the Willmar Zoning Ordinance, together with other development incentives. This Ordinance also establishes a Heritage Preservation Commission and creates a voluntary Heritage Designation process

Dr. Ramstad emphasized that the heritage district is being put in place so that new construction in that area is contextually appropriate for the existing, historic buildings in this location. While we’re encouraging creativity, there are two bodies in place for check & balances (Planning Commission & Community Development Committee/Council) to make sure these projects are feasible & contextual for the community.

Attorney Scott reminded the Commission that the light blue font in the ordinance is already existing, the black underlined font is the new amendment for tonight’s review. As the Ordinance has been drafted, the key has been to balance this new case-by-case special CUP process, while also making sure review of projects is objective.

No one appeared to speak for or against the public hearing closed at 7:31pm.

The Commission discussed Section 3.a. Housing at length. It was determined that Staff’s intent was to require all projects with a multi-family housing component to designate at least 5% of the units reserved for and affordable by tenants making a maximum of eight percent of the Area Median Income (AMI). The Commission would like to see clarification in the ordinance that this requirement would not apply to single family homes, duplexes, or any projects not utilizing Renaissance Zone provisions.

Staff will work with Attorney Scott on text amendments as discussed & bring them back to the commission for review prior to a final vote.

Mr. Gardner made a motion, seconded by Mr. Frank to table the Renaissance Zone Text Amendment.

The motion carried.

5. INTRODUCTION OF DRIVEWAY STANDARDS: Staff presented initial thoughts on content for an ordinance amendment to better regulate and set standards for driveway approvals in town. Staff has long talked about the creation of standards, such as these, but

have never put an ordinance together. Prior to moving forward with drafting of an ordinance & setting a public hearing, staff wanted to introduce the item to the Commission.

Some concern was raised about the 50' distance between driveways. The Commission is not in favor of one property establishing first, dictating where everyone else's garages/driveways will be placed along a block.

Commissioner Kimpling suggested exploring a wider standard for industrial zones, as that has been a frequent request on industrial projects in the past several years.

Staff will continue with the drafting of this ordinance amendment and bring it back to the Commission for review and public hearing in the near future.

6. PLAN REVIEW NO 19-04 APPROVAL EXTENSION: Staff presented a request submitted by Papa Murphy's to extend Plan Review 19-04 approval, allowing for a drive thru window at 1516 1<sup>st</sup> St S. As stated in the Zoning Ordinance, Plan Review & Conditional Use Permit approvals are valid for one year, unless a request for extension is received in writing and approved by the Commission. There have been no changes to Zoning Ordinance standards since this Plan Review was approved in 2019.

This approval extension will be for 1 year & the Commission will likely see another extension request once more before the project is finalized.

Mr. Frank made a motion, seconded by Mr. Standfuss to approve the extension of the approval of Plan Review 19-04 for Papa Murphy's.

The motion carried.

7. TINY HOMES UPDATE: Staff is working on an ordinance amendment for the Tiny Home task force to review before bringing to Planning Commission.

The task force met with Dan Fitzpatrick, president of the Tiny Home Industry Association with a background in municipal government, to get some specialized advice on reviewing this topic for our community. Commissioner Gardner shared Mr. Fitzpatrick's emphasis that the Tiny Homes must meet building code. Mobile tiny homes or smaller versions of mobile homes is not what's currently being envisioned for the Willmar Community. Additionally, Mr. Fitzpatrick highly advised that this amendment to City Ordinances be contextual for the community rather than simply copying what another city or county has implemented.

Dr. Ramstad recommended the Commission consider a minimum acreage requirement for a Tiny Home development. He also expressed his opinion that these developments should be home-owner occupied rather than rental.

The task force will also be considering limitations/ratios on accessory structures and community space provision standards for these areas.

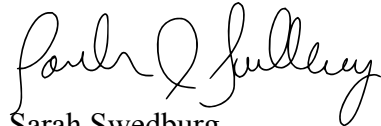
Information & ordinance drafting continues and will be presented once this package is complete. Basic notes will be forwarded to the Commission from staff.

8. MISCELLANY: Staff anticipates 2 meetings in November, as a few applications have already been received.

Dr. Ramstad updated the Commission on the Comprehensive Plan process. The basic data package is complete, and staff is working to finalize a boiler plate Comprehensive Plan. Once complete, staff will be working to establish the Comprehensive Plan Task Force, consisting of 4 commissioners in addition to 8 or 9 others to assist in this effort. The Task Force will can then be split into subcommittees to dive deeper into specific topics, with one Planning Commissioner leading each subcommittee. The subcommittees may change throughout the drafting process, depending on the topics and tasks at hand during each step of this document's creation.

9. There being no further business to come before the Commission the meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Sarah Swedburg  
Planner

**PLANNING COMMISSION – OCTOBER 21, 2020**

***STAFF COMMENTS***

1. INNOVATIVE SYSTEMS PLAN REVIEW -- FILE NO 20-03:

- The applicant is Cornerstone of Willmar, Inc of Willmar, MN on behalf of Innovative Systems Inc.
- The applicant is requesting a plan review to allow a printing business on property legally described as: That part of Government Lot 3 described as follows: Commencing at a point on the Easterly Right-of-Way line of Business Highway 71 and 669.60 feet northerly of the South Line of Government Lot 3 of SD Section 11, then Easterly 259.2 feet, then northerly 200 feet, then Northwesterly 80 feet, then Northeasterly 40 feet, then Northwesterly 159.20 feet then southwesterly 5 feet, then Northwesterly 20 feet, then Southwesterly 35 feet, then continuing Southwesterly 200 feet to point of beginning (1000 Business 71 N).
- The parcel is zoned I-2 (General Industry).
- The property is surrounded by GB (General Business) to the north & south, P (Park) to the west, and G (Government) to the east.
- The parcel fronts Business 71 N, and is accessed via a parallel frontage street.
- The business currently operates in the area, but is located outside of City Limits. The renovation of the old “Trouw Nutrition” site will allow them to be located within Willmar.
- Parking requirements for this use are as follows: :At least eight (8) spaces, plus one (1) space for each two (2) employees on each shift based on maximum planned employment, or at least eight (8) spaces plus one (1) space for each eight hundred (800) square feet of floor area, whichever is greater.”
  - a. Based on size of building: 40 spaces required
  - b. Based on maximum planned employment: ??? spaces required
- Site plan shows provision of 41 parking spaces.
- This Plan Review is only for the northern half of the existing building. Innovative Systems Inc also purchased the southern half, but does not plan to renovate that portion at this time.
- The property is legally non-conforming, due to parking setbacks. However, this renovation will not increase any existing non-conformities.
- Sign permits are ancillary from the Plan Review.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve the plan review permit with the following condition:

- A. The use shall meet all applicable local, state, and federal rules and regulations at all times.