

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
LITTLE CANADA, MINNESOTA**

**FEBRUARY 15, 2018**

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof a regular meeting of the Planning Commission of Little Canada, Minnesota was held on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2018 in the Council Chambers of the City Center located at 515 Little Canada Road in said City.

Commissioner Nick Sandell called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and the following members of the Planning Commission were present at roll call:

PLANNING COMMISSION:           Mr. Nick Sandell  
  Mr. Eric Thorson  
  Ms. Dawn Kulousek  
  Ms. Taelor Johnson

ABSENT:                                 Mr. Bill Buesing  
  Mr. Nick Schwalbach  
  Mr. Chris Kwapick

ALSO PRESENT:                       Ms. Jessica Jagoe, Associate Planner  
  Mr. Joel Hanson, City Administrator  
  Ms. Heidi Heller, City Clerk  
  Mr. Kevin Helander, Cable TV Tech

**MINUTES**           The January 11, 2018 Planning Commission meeting minutes were approved as submitted.

**PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT, ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW, PRELIMINARY & FINAL PLATS AT 2736 & 2744 RICE STREET; APPLICANT: SUITE LIVING OF LITTLE CANADA – HAMPTON COMPANIES**

The Associate Planner stated that Developer Hampton Companies and Suite Living are applying for a 32 unit senior assisted living development at 2736 and 2744 Rice Street. She explained that this is the site that was previously approved for the Cash for Homes townhomes, but they were delinquent in many of their requirements to proceed with the development, so the City's Economic Development Authority has entered in to a purchase agreement for the properties.

The Associate Planner reported that Suite Living of Little Canada is proposing a one story building with 32 private suites consisting of 18 assisted living and 14 memory care units. She explained that Suite Living's objective is to provide a home-like atmosphere and there are

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amenities such as a dining room, craft room, salon, library/video room, and gathering spaces in both wings of the building.

The Associate Planner explained that the site is 1.73 acres consisting of two properties that are zoned Planned Unit Development, PUD. She noted that the area to the north is also zoned PUD and is a mix of commercial and residential, and the area to the south is zoned R-1, Single Family Residential. She stated that the underlying base use for this proposal would be consistent with the R-3, High Density Residential, but as a PUD, the project will be reviewed as to whether it could result in a higher quality project above what the base zoning would require. She reported that the applicant is proposing LP smart siding with stone accents that wrap around all of the building. She noted that there are several other design elements that keep the building look consistent with the area. The Associate Planner stated that with a PUD there is flexibility for the setback requirements, but the site plan shown is consistent with the previous townhome development, and staff is supportive of the building layout as proposed. She reported that 21 off-street parking spaces are shown on the plan, and the applicant has indicated there will be three to five employees and one to three visitors a day, which equates to a need for four to eight parking spaces used. She noted that none of the residents who live here will have vehicles.

The Associate Planner stated that the applicant is requesting to be allowed signage in excess of what is allowed by code, and is proposing a free standing sign on Rice Street, along with two wall signs on the west and north elevations, with a sign area greater than 35 square feet. She explained that the applicant has indicated that although they are a residential property, they also have a commercial component and need to attract residents due to turnover; therefore they believe there is a higher need for a sign along Rice Street. The R-3 District signage regulations would allow one sign on the property that is no larger than 35 square feet. The Associate Planner stated that staff requests the applicant remove the wall sign on the west elevation due to the larger sign area on the monument sign, and resubmit a site plan showing this sign is setback a minimum of five feet from the property line. She noted that staff also requests more details for the sign proposed on the north elevation.

The Associate Planner reviewed the submitted lighting plan and stated that staff does not feel there will be any issues with glare on the rear of the building that would affect the adjacent neighbors. She reported that when reviewing the landscape plan, staff took into consideration the concerns from the adjacent Iona Lane neighbors during the previous townhome review. She stated that staff feels there is adequate screening for the neighbors on Iona Lane, but she noted that it will be difficult to preserve the existing trees on the property these two sites due to the grading

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necessary for this project, but has added the condition that there be a no disturbance zone established around the drip line of the existing oak trees on the adjacent single family properties. She explained that the previous townhome project required a fence on the south property line to shield headlight glare, but since this will not be an issue with this building, staff is not recommending a fence. She explained that staff is recommending a decorative handrail or additional landscaping or shrubs between the pond and the walkway as a safety feature for the residents who use the walkway.

The Associate Planner reviewed the City Engineer's memo, and stated that approvals would also be contingent on the Engineer's conditions. She stated that staff believes the plat is consistent with the desire of the PUD District to create a higher quality development through design and flexibility of standards. She reported that staff recommends approval of the PUD, architectural review, comprehensive sign plan and preliminary and final plats subject to the conditions in the staff report.

Sandell asked for clarification if the applicant was requesting more square footage of signage. The Associate Planner stated that was correct, and staff is recommending they have two signs instead of the three that are requested.

Joel Larson, Hampton Companies and Suite Living, stated that they want to try to save trees and will make an effort to do that. He explained that they are proposing to use the same materials and design features as in their new facility in Vadnais Heights. He noted that he would prefer to remove the sign above the front door on the north elevation and keep the sign on the Rice Street side, but he will comply with staff's request. Sandell asked if staff has a preference on which sign the applicant kept. The Associate Planner stated that the rationale for no sign on the building is that since it is a residential facility, there is not typically signage on those buildings.

Sandell asked if Mr. Larson was agreeable to staff's recommendations. Mr. Larson stated that he understands what staff was trying to accomplish during the townhome review, and will comply with what the City wants.

There were no comments from the public.

Johnson recommended approving the Planned Unit Development for Suite Living Little Canada at 2736 & 2744 Rice Street, subject to the recommendations in the staff report.

Motion and amendment seconded by Kulousek.  
Motion carried 4 – 0.

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Johnson recommended approving the Architectural Review and Comprehensive Sign Plan Review for Suite Living Little Canada at 2736 & 2744 Rice Street, subject to the recommendations in the staff report.

Motion and amendment seconded by Kulousek.  
Motion carried 4 – 0.

Johnson recommended approving the Preliminary and Final Plats for Suite Living Little Canada at 2736 & 2744 Rice Street, subject to the recommendations in the Planner’s report and City Engineer’s report.

Motion and amendment seconded by Kulousek.  
Motion carried 4 – 0.

**DISCUSS  
PLANNING  
COMMISSION  
MEETING START  
TIME CHANGE**

The Associate Planner stated that there is no determined start time for the Planning Commission in the City Code, and the Parks & Recreation Commission moved their meeting start time up to 6:30pm several years ago. Staff is proposing that the meeting times be moved to an earlier start. There was consensus to move the meeting start time to 6:30pm contingent to agreement from Commissioner Schwalbach.

**ADJOURN** There being no further business, Sandell adjourned the meeting at 8:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Heller  
City Clerk