



**PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**City Hall—Council Chambers, 590 40th Ave NE**  
**Tuesday, May 02, 2023**  
**6:00 PM**

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## MINUTES

### CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Acting Chair Vargas

Commissioners Present: John Gianoulis, Mike Novitsky, Mark Vargas, Clara Wolfe

Commissioners Not Present: Laurel Deneen, Tom Kaiser, Eric Sahnaw

Council Liaison: Councilmember Connie Buesgens

Staff Present: Aaron Chirpich, Community Development Director; Andrew Boucher, City Planner; Alicia Howe, Administrative Assistant; Sara Ion, City Clerk

### APPROVE MINUTES

**1. Approve February 7, 2023 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes**

*Motion by Novitsky, seconded by Wolfe, to approve the Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of February 7, 2023. All ayes of present. MOTION PASSED.*

### INTRODUCTIONS

Andrew Boucher, City Planner

John Gianoulis, Planning Commissioner

Chirpich stated he would like to introduce the new City Planner to the Commission. City Planner Andrew Boucher introduced himself and mentioned he grew up in the northern Minnesota and went to University of Minnesota State Morehead, receiving a B.S. in Sustainability with an emphasis on Environmental policy and economics, and a professional certificate in GIS.

Chirpich asked the newly appointed Planning Commissioner to introduce himself. Planning Commissioner John Gianoulis stated he has lived in Columbia Heights for 9 years, has a work background in education, and was a part of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan in 2016. He noted he went to school to study philosophy but began work in the construction industry about 5 years ago after meeting and working with a master carpenter. He expressed his excitement to work on the Planning Commission and his love for the City.

### PUBLIC HEARINGS

**2. Renaissance Fireworks Interim Use Permit for Seasonal Fireworks Sales Tent**

Boucher stated Renaissance Fireworks, Inc. has applied for an interim use permit to allow

the operation of a seasonal fireworks sales tent at 4001 Central Avenue NE. The set up would take place over 3 days from June 19, 2023—June 22, 2023 and take down would occur July 6, 2023—July 10, 2023. Sales would occur June 23, 2023—July 5, 2023 between the hours of 9 am – 10 pm.

Boucher noted a correction in the packet of the recommended motion to change the date to June 23, 2023 – July 5, 2023.

Boucher stated the City's 2040 Comprehensive Plan designates the property for commercial use. The proposal for seasonal fireworks sales, a retail activity, is consistent with the intent of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Boucher explained the findings of fact. Fireworks tents are specifically listed as an interim use in the Central Business District, and are considered a retail sales activity, which is permitted. The Comprehensive Plan designates the property for commercial use, including retail sales. The proposal is consistent with the intent of the City's Comprehensive Plan. The proposed temporary use should not impose hazardous or disturbing influences on neighboring properties because of its proximity to Central Avenue. The proposed use has been and will be screened from adjacent residential uses by the surrounding commercial buildings. The Fire Department will conduct an on-site inspection prior to any temporary sales. As a condition of interim use permit approval, all State and City requirements regarding fireworks sales must be met. The traffic generated by the fireworks tent will not significantly increase the flow of traffic on the public streets. Additionally, the site is large enough to handle additional on-site traffic. The fireworks tent should not have a negative impact on other uses in the immediate vicinity, which are all zoned commercial. Boucher mentioned the fireworks would be stored in a temporary storage container.

Boucher stated Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve the Interim Use Permit to allow the operation of a seasonal fireworks sales tent at 4001 Central Avenue, subject to the following conditions:

1. The fireworks sales tent, display area, access aisles, and surrounding area shall be reviewed by the Fire Department prior to operation. The applicant must contact the Fire Department to set up an inspection prior to any sales occurring on the property.
2. The sale of fireworks shall meet all requirements of Chapter 24 of the Fire Code and NFPA Chapter 1124.
3. The fireworks sales tent shall be accessory to a commercial use.
4. Fireworks sales tents located within the public right-of-way are prohibited.
5. All goods shall be displayed on a designated impervious surface area.
6. All goods shall be displayed in an orderly fashion, with access aisles provided as needed.
7. Music or amplified sounds shall not be audible from adjacent residential properties.
8. The fireworks sales tent shall not reduce the amount of off-street parking provided on-site below the level required for the principal use.

9. An appropriate transition area between the use and adjacent property shall be provided by landscaping, screening, or other site improvements consistent with the character of the neighborhood.
10. Signage shall be limited to two (2) professionally made signs, with a combined square footage not exceeding thirty-two (32) square feet. Signs related to the proposed retail activity shall be subject to sign permit processing.
11. Fireworks sales tents may be allowed for a maximum of ninety (90) days per calendar year.
12. Any electrical use associated with the temporary sales will require an electrical permit and is required to be inspected by the State Electrical Inspector.

Vargas opened the public hearing.

Wolfe asked if this was the same as previous years and if there was anything different. Boucher stated it was the same as previous years.

*Motion by Wolfe, seconded by Vargas to close the public hearing and waive the reading of Resolution No. 2023-PZ03, there being ample copies available to the public. All ayes of present. MOTION PASSED.*

*Motion by Vargas, seconded by Novitsky to adopt Resolution No. 2023-PZ03, being a resolution approving an Interim Use Permit for a fireworks sales tent at 4001 Central Avenue NE, from June 24, 2023 to July 5, 2023, subject to the conditions stated in the resolution. All ayes of present. MOTION PASSED.*

Chirpich explained the desire for the proposal to the Planning Commission to consider the interim use to become an administrative use that would not need to be repeated by the Planning Commission.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Chirpich stated the EDA discussed the plans for the Rainbow site redevelopment and expect to enter into the entitlements phase and would come to the Planning Commission in the summer. The EDA would like to get the project through the land use process with a hope of breaking ground in spring 2024. There are currently 700 housing units in the design with about 80,000 square feet of commercial and retail. In addition, there is a grocery partner and space for a restaurant.

Chirpich noted the redevelopment of Medtronic could potentially come before the Planning Commission. He stated the building is for sale and is a good redevelopment opportunity. He explained there is currently a multifamily developer that has a letter of intent with the seller and would like to sit down with the Council in a work session.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

*Motion by Vargas, seconded by Wolfe, to adjourn the meeting at 6:20 pm. All ayes. MOTION PASSED.*

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alicia Howe". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line through the middle of the letters.

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Alicia Howe, Administrative Assistant

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