

**CITY OF COHASSET
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
305 NW FIRST AVENUE, COHASSET, MINNESOTA
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2022 – 6:00 P.M.**

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Josh Casper called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

2. **Roll Call**

- a. **Voting Members Present:** GiGi Pehrson, Lucas Thompson, Harlow Zeppelin, Josh Casper & Steve Lavalier
- b. **Absent with Notice:** Scott Gerling, Mike Rock
- c. **Ex-Officio Members Present:** Zoning Officer, Tony Valtinson and City Council Liaison Andy MacDonell
- d. **Others Present:** Steve Anderson and Brad Hagfors

3. **Review and Approve the Agenda**

Additions: None

Deletions: None

A motion was made by Lavalier/Thompson to approve the agenda as presented. Voting in favor: Pehrson, Thompson, Gerling & Zeppelin; Voting against: None; Absent: Gerling & Rock, Motion carried.

4. **Resident Input:** None

5. **Approve August 3, 2022 Planning Commission Minutes:**

Due to lack of motion on October 5, 2022 the August 3, 2022 minutes will be moved to November 2, 2022 PC meeting for formal approval.

6. **Public hearing (starts at 6:05 p.m.) to act on a variance request from Franklin Outdoor Advertising (Timothy Hron landowner) to erect a 35 foot tall 10' 6" X 24' two sided (V shaped) sign no less than 5ft. from the right-of-way. (ordinance states – Public Roads - shall be no less than 20 feet (no centerline setback) and no less than the height of the sign from the right-of-way (ROW) whichever is more restrictive.) located at 36642 US HWY 2, Cohasset, MN 55721 (PIN# 05-003-3310) and legally described as SW SW LESS PT S OF RR R/W & LESS E 200FT N OF TH 2 & S OF N 557FT, SECTION 3, TOWNSHIP 55 NORTH, RANGE 26 WEST, ITASCA COUNTY, MINNESOTA. Make recommendation to the City Council on a request from North Country Development (Charles Nelson) to allow a Campground including RV Park as a Conditional Use in the General Business zone district.**

Valtinson presents Request for Planning Commission Action packet which includes property owner information, area map for the property in question, a site plan which shows an aerial of the area map as well as a red dot where it shows proposed sign, pictures of what the sign would look like, a letter from Brad at Franklin Outdoor Advertising.

Valtinson then reviewed the Variance application received from Franklin Outdoor Advertising.

Casper asked the representative from Franklin Outdoor Advertising to take us through what your proposed idea here is and what the basic plan is.

Steve Anderson, Leasing Manager for FOA, then reviewed their plan as well as reasons for requesting the Variance.

A motion was made by Lavalier to decline.

A motion was made by Thompson/Zeppelin to Approve as written and discuss the Variance request. Voting in favor: Pehrson, Thompson, Zeppelin, Casper & Lavalier; Voting against: None; Absent: Gerling & Rock, Motion carried.

Casper then was able to start discussion.

Valtinson then reviewed the Zoning ordinance for signs and setbacks.

Lavalier then stated his concerns with billboards. Discussion was then had between Planning Commission members, the Zoning Officer and the representatives from FOA.

Casper cited some examples from past applications for Variances for billboards.

More discussion was had regarding the concerns with billboards which included safety and tree removal.

Casper then moved on to Findings of fact.

Lucas presented #1?

By the practical results in complying with the zoning ordinance, practical difficulties means the property owners proposed improvements or reasonable economic considerations alone shall not constitute practical difficulties? Why do we need the proposed improvements? The set back is larger than most setbacks. They can still build it 30 feet back. The sign will still be there. So yes.

Harlow presented #2.

Are the circumstances which justify the variance unique to the property and not created by the applicant? Why can't the proposed improvement meet the set back? The first word is "circumstance" and the next phrase is "not created by the applicant". Neither of those have been caused by the applicants, so I would say yes to that.

Casper stated ot just what Harlow said, but also I think a property owner has a right to see if they have a business on the property, make income off of their property.

GiGi presented #3?

If granted, will the variance maintain the essential character of the locality? I say yes.

And are the proposed setbacks significantly different than other setbacks?

In the locality? Steve stated I haven't would have a tough time. Telling a resident that we approved this variance. When we've got a comprehensive plan that really promotes environment, so I have to say no.

Casper stated I'm going to say yes, just from the standpoint that 30 feet farther in the exact same billboard could be there so they could build it. Regardless, we've done our homework on this exhaustively over multiple years I've been on personally, so I'm going to still say yes with that one.

Lucas, yes, Harlow agreed. Steve presented #4?

If granted will variance be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the zoning ordinance? Great business. I have to say no because if you want my reasoning. Because I think it affects the character and quality of the environment and the safety.

Casper stated- And I respect your answer on that. I'm going to differ and say yes. We have again gone through and said 1000 feet minimum for a billboard. This is in general business, it's. Allowed 30 feet farther in, so again the applicant can. Still build the Billboard regardless of what we if we didn't decline this, they're still going to be able to build it that far in. It's still going to have the same issues that you've brought up which are very valid issues, but it could still be done. But again, you know, we've gone through this, we've talked about this 1000 feet, I'm going to say yes.

Casper presented #5.

If granted, will variance be consistent with the comprehensive plan? And again I went over that one double edged sword. I'm going to say yes because we are promoting business. We are looking for ways of bringing business into the area and this could help out with that. Lucas stated It's in general business, so yes.

A motion was made by Thompson/Harlow to amend previous motion and approve the variance as stated with the condition that it is approved from through MNDOT as well. Voting in favor: Pehrson, Thompson, Zeppelin, & Casper; Voting against: Lavalier; Absent: Gerling & Rock, Motion carried.

7. Make recommendation to City Council regarding refund request from Zoning Department to Beverly Dallas for unneeded Variance fee.

Valtinson presents a variance fee was charged that was not needed. She plans on raising the height of an existing garage at 3019 golf course Rd, Grand Rapids, MN. 55744. And initially I was informed that golf course Rd was considered a major collector, which is what we believed which would make the required set back from center line 110ft and if she was doing that, she the garage was closer already and so I told her that she needed a variance. She came in and paid for the variance. And I contacted a couple of resources regarding Golf Course Rd and it is not a major collector. It is requires a 60 foot set back from center line and 35 from the right of way, and she's well within that. So she paid for it to get the process started, and I found out that she never even needed to do.

A motion was made by Casper/Zepelin to approve recommendation to City Council regarding refund request from Zoning Department to Beverly Dallas for unneeded Variance fee. Voting in favor: Pehrson, Thompson, Zeppelin, Casper & Lavalier; Voting against: None; Absent: Gerling & Rock, Motion carried.

FYI: None

Adjourn: Chair Josh Casper adjourned the meeting at 7:17 p.m.

Submitted by Deputy Clerk Crystal Jarvi
Approved: 11/02/2022