

CITY OF PARK RAPIDS
REGULAR MEETING
PLANNING COMMISSION
JULY 23, 2018, 6:00 p.m.
Park Rapids Library, 210 First Street West – Lower Level
Park Rapids, Minnesota

1. CALL TO ORDER: The July 23, 2018, Regular Meeting of the Park Rapids Planning Commission was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Bradow.

2. ROLL CALL: Present: Commissioners Dick Bradow, Thomas Petschl, Nancy Newman, Bruce Johnson and City Council Member Liz Stone. Absent: None. Staff Present: City Planner Ryan Mathisrud and Planning/Administrative Assistant Carmen L. Lockhart. Others Present: Doug Kingsley of DNR Fisheries, Scott and Bev Mercer, Gail Petschl, Jay Echtenkamp. and Joe and Diane Christensen.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA: A motion was made by Petschl, seconded by Stone, and unanimously carried to approve the agenda as presented.

4. APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF JUNE 25, 2018: A motion was made by Johnson, seconded by Petschl and unanimously carried to approve the June 25, 2018 Regular Meeting Minutes as presented.

5. PUBLIC HEARING:

5A. CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT REQUEST FROM PINE TREE PARTNERS LLC, JAY ECHTENKAMP, TO EXPAND A RECREATIONAL CAMPING AREA WITH AN ADDITIONAL 30 RV SITES TO THE EXISTING 40 RV SITES FOR A TOTAL OF 70 SITES, LOCATED AT 501 CENTRAL AVE S IN THE BIG PINES RV PARK, IN AN R-2 SINGLE, 2-FAMILY AND TOWNHOUSE RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT, PID#32.25.04000:

Mathisrud explained this request is for a Conditional Use Permit request from Pine Tree Partners, LLC to expand a recreational camping area with 30 additional recreational vehicle sites located at 501 Central Ave S in an R-2 Single, 2-Family and Townhouse Residential District. The applicant is currently licensed for up to 70 rv sites with the MN Department of Health. At the current time their location is built out to 40 recreational vehicle sites. It is primarily a summer use where rv's come in and spend time here and then leaving. The request is to add an additional 30 sites to this location consistent with the terms of their license with the MN Department of Health. The owner is Jay Echtenkamp of Pine Tree Partners, LLC of Hamel, MN.

Mathisrud stated this parcel is not in a platted area but is approximately 11.37 acres plus an additional 2.46 acres with this parcel that is zoned C-1 Conservation District. The existing land use is the 40 site rv park which is currently established and operates under a Conditional Use Permit associated with the R-2 District. The City's Comprehensive Plan shows this area is a multi-family district and it's currently zoned

R-2 Single, 2-Family and Townhouse Residential District. The site is located within the city's designated Shoreland Overlay District however the proposed layout for the future rv sites is located outside of any wetland or areas prone to flooding. This site is also under the Airport Safety Zone C which does not further regulate this particular property so there are no further restrictions that would affect this request. This site is adequately served with city sewer and water utilities and a stub located adjacent to this site where they can tie into for those private utilities needed on site to provide the city sewer and water services for the rv's.

Mathisrud advised under the Zoning Ordinance R-2 under Conditional Uses this request is listed as a conditional use - #19 Recreational Camping Area which:

- a) Meet all Minnesota Department of Health general requirements for a recreational camping area;
- b) Is a minimum of 10 acres;
- c) Does not exceed 25% impervious lot coverage.

Mathisrud explained in your packets there is an image of the current layout showing the areas in yellow as existing sites and the request is to add the 30 additional units to the south. Mathisrud indicated he walked the site and provided images in your packets. Further to the south and closer to the water there are some topographic changes where it drops down to the river and a nice park area for picnics, etc. Looking north from the water you can see there is a hill and the lower area would probably be more susceptible to flooding and would not be a good site for rvs and this request does not include that site for development at this time. On top of the hill looking north there are some existing electrical outlets from a previous use that look pretty old. The area is relatively flat with gravel roads in place and the elevation of the site is approximately 25 feet higher than the water and there is no proposed cutting and filling so we don't anticipate any shoreland alterations or any other impacts to the bluff impact zone which would add additional steps to a Conditional Use Permit process. There are a many mature trees on the site and they should be preserved and anytime you do a project there are sometimes the need for removal of a tree here or there but the site should really be sensitive to those mature trees.

Mathisrud provided some history stating the Developer did apply for a Conditional Use Permit back in 2012 to establish the initial expansion of this rv park and added 28 rv sites and there was also a change to the ordinance to allow that type of use in the R-2 District which is why you see in our Code the special provision for this.

Mathisrud recommended the following responses for the Findings of Fact:

1. Are there characteristics of the proposed use that may violate the public health, safety or general welfare of Park Rapids City Residents? **No.**
2. Is the proposed use inconsistent with the intent of the Park Rapids Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance? **No.**
3. Does the proposed use present any unique concerns regarding erosion, runoff, water pollution or sedimentation? **Yes. Impervious surface condition should be considered.**
4. Could the proposed use create any special problems with parking? **No.**
5. Would the proposed use cause any problems with access or traffic generation? **No.**
6. Is the proposed use incompatible with other uses located in the zoning district? **No.**

Mathisrud stated staff's recommendation is to approve the request with the following conditions:

1. All east RV sites shall maintain a 25' setback from the east property line.
2. The owner shall operate the business in accordance with all local, state and federal regulations.
3. A lighting plan shall be provided by the owner to be approved by the City Planner.
4. The owner shall demonstrate conformance with all MDH requirements for RV parks and provide a copy of licensure for the file.
5. Owner shall provide an updated impervious surface calculation for the file.
6. The applicant shall obtain a new CUP if further expansion is desired.

The Public Hearing was opened at 6:11 p.m.

Scott Mercer stated Jay Echtenkamp and I have a really good relationship so I'm not coming in to complain or anything. Jay joked and said well we will see. Mercer said his only concern and question I have is because our land abuts one another is we've had some campers not knowingly really they kind of walk over down in our front yard down to the river and stuff like that and now with all these additional sites where I have a little concern is that we are going to have a lot of new neighbors right next to us. No different than a house because you might have one or two houses that abut the footage that we have. We will have 30 new neighbors times as many people are in their campsite. This is something Jay and I could have possibly talked off line before coming here, but we've been busy and you've been busy. Mercer said he just wondered about a possible fence to separate. Bev Mercer said like a privacy fence. Scott Mercer said not a gaudy fence just something so people aren't walking over and vice-versa and that is a just a concern we have. Bev said and we had kids there a couple weekend ago was it the 4th of July weekend and we have an 18x28 6 ft. deep pool and they wanted to come swimming and I don't want to be responsible if we're not home you know and there's kids on that side. Scott Mercer said those two lots on the corner are just arm's length to our backyard.

Petschl asked is your house on South Street then? Scott Mercer said correct. Petschl said so you're right on the corner there. Scott Mercer said otherwise, we've not had problems with any of the people staying there I think it's great. We knew Jim and Marilyn Vedeen very well and had a great relationship with them. This is an additional lot of new faces that will be coming in. Echtenkamp said you can see their house on the map. Scott Mercer said that is my concern. Echtenkamp said I tell you what the first thing I'm going to do is right away is we're going to get some private property beyond this point signs. Bev Mercer said except for the signs though don't keep the kids from coming. Echtenkamp said that will happen right away and then what we'll do is you know, let's get together and talk about that because either vegetatively screen it with trees which I would prefer but that's not going to keep them out, it's probably max about a couple hundred feet there? Mercer said right. Echtenkamp said we may have to just put a fence up. Bev Mercer said and that's what we would like. Echtenkamp said yep. Scott Mercer said because like I said I mean it's not like a, if you have one or two dwellings you know you can't ask just a neighbor building a house to say hey build your own fence but I'm not asking for 30 times however many, so anyway, but we can talk off line and that but I was concerned about it. Echtenkamp said your concern is well placed and let's get something worked out and set down and figure out you know get some ideas on materials and fencing and that and I want you guys to even be involved in that so we get something that matches up with what you guys want to see you know it just

makes sense to me. Mercer said right and that was our big concern. Echtenkamp said it is duly noted and I couldn't agree with you more. Mercer said thank you.

Bradow asked if there were any more comments from the public?

Joe and Diane Christensen said they are neighbors on the other end on the north end of the park on the east side across the street. The plan showed (inaudible) going in along the border across there and the question is will you spring for some trees? Echtenkamp said along the street there? Diane Christensen said along the old driveway where the old entry used to be? Echtenkamp responded there are two entryways are you talking about the one on the south end? Joe Christensen said the old entryway, the original one way on the north end. Echtenkamp said he doesn't remember that as it was way before his time. Echtenkamp asked are you talking about up by where the playground is? Christensen said yeah. Echtenkamp said there is a wide-open spot there. Joe Christensen said it shows vegetation on the map but there is none across that north end. Mathirud asked what area are they talking about? Christensen said over to the right – right next to the street. Echtenkamp said that used to have trees on it until the city put their water main through there. Christensen said it was a driveway that came in at an angle at one time. Echtenkamp asked Mathisrud isn't there a main line that goes through right there? Mathisrud said I know we did a utility project. Christensen said what I'm thinking or would like to ask is will you spring for some spruce trees? Echtenkamp said are you talking about the north side now or the Central Ave side? Christensen showed the area on the powerpoint map and asked for 8 or 10 spruce trees or something that would provide some screening. This doesn't exist from here on up, there is city water and I know storm sewer or the sanitary sewer goes across right there but would it be possible to put a few trees in? Echtenkamp said as a matter of fact I've talked to the folks who have the nursery on Fair Ave? Commissioners advised the Jessen's – Forest and Floral. Echtenkamp advised they are looking as in the spring you can get what's called conservation grade trees because they are I don't know, \$300 to \$400 a piece for the 6 to 8 footers but the conservation grades are less than that so I've got him on that and he usually calls me in the spring for that. Christensen said in the old days (inaudible). Echtenkamp asked what's that? Christensen said in the old days use that timber? Echtenkamp said well if I can get some 16 footers of the conservation grade there's nothing better I mean it's just the (inaudible) and I have no problem putting some in there. I can't guarantee how fast I can get them in there so and also do you put them in there late in the fall or do you get them early in the spring as it kind of depends on when you can get them.

There was discussion between Christensen and Echtenkamp about talking to the caretaker and Christensen asked if he could plant them himself as he has some little ones in his backyard and was thinking about them and I'm getting kind of old and there's some hard gravel on that old driveway and it might be hard digging. Echtenkamp said he has no problem putting those up I just don't know if fall is the best time or spring is the best time and I will let Tom figure that out and it is kind of a wide open area there and I don't disagree with you. Christensen said he would be willing to water them, I guess I can run hose across the street. Echtenkamp said okay, I might have you water them for me once a week. Echtenkamp said again your concern is well placed and just give me some flexibility on the timing and we will get that done. Christensen said planting some shrubs or natural vegetation all the way across there. Echtenkamp said again, I think a lot of that came down when they put that water main there back in 2006 or 2007. Christensen said it was open and we could always see across. Echtenkamp said there were couple big Norway I remember coming out of there too.

Echtenkamp said to the Planning Commission if you want to make that a condition of the permit approval fine, if not I'm happy to work with neighbors and we will just work that out to our mutual satisfaction on that and we will just work on it. Christensen said you are good neighbors and your operation looks great and glad it's working so that you can have some more.

Bradow asked the Mercers and Christensens if they are comfortable with working with Echtenkamp directly or do you want that as a condition? Mercers said yes, we don't know how the process should go because we're not coming here demanding it we would just like you know to see where we stand. Bradow asked again okay are you comfortable working with him? Mercer said yes. Mathisrud said there are two ways we can do that, you can take his word for it or you can add two conditions to the permit. Bradow asked what would you prefer to see, work with him and take his word with it for that or do you want it as a condition? Scott Mercer said I guess I still kind of believe, believe it or not, on kind of the handshake rule in this society, but um, I guess I've done work with him through plumbing and we've had a good working relationship so I guess if we just want to keep it going we're going to be neighbors for a long time so I guess I'm willing to give it a shot and just do it as a verbal. Bradow said okay, you're all okay with that? Echtenkamp said well Bruce has known me since I've been about 8 years old so if I don't get this done I'm in real trouble. Bruce Johnson said I know who to call. Stone asked Christensens if they are comfortable? Christensens said they were happy. Echtenkamp asked them to leave their contact information so he can get ahold of them.

Doug Kingsley introduced himself as the Area Fisheries Supervisor for the DNR Fisheries Department in Park Rapids. We have property on the west side of the rv park, both the existing units and the proposed units and the cover letter that accompanied the application for this CUP indicated they are going to be putting a 25 ft. setback on all property boundaries and the staff recommendations are 25 ft. setback on only the eastern boundary and I would like to see that extended to the western boundary as well. The other thing is the rv units that are on the existing sites on that western boundary have no setback at all and in fact some of the storage sheds are pushing against our property line and fence and it would be nice to have a setback on those as well.

Bradow asked on the existing ones? Kingsley responded yes. Bradow asked what kind of problem does that present? Echtenkamp said again Doug and I we've known each other from the past, he brings it up it's like yeah, you know it's like in my mind I was thinking about Central and I was thinking about the two ends and I can see where their DNR fence is right there and again, I think we can work out something that will be reasonable. If the sites are 90 feet deep and you've got a 40 ft. wide rv and you need to have a little area for their fire ring and chairs around there and it didn't even occur to me you know and it's human nature that everybody brings their stuff so they want to have their little Rubbermaid storage shed back there, well where are they going to put it, they are going to stick it right against the fence line so there's enough room there. I think Doug in order to get those sheds off by 10 feet and those rv's a lot of those are going to I guess I would really have to walk back there and look. Kingsley said you can see on the aerial photo that all of them that are out there are right on that property line. Echtenkamp said so if you pulled them off 25 ft. I mean I guess what we could do is we could just have those repositioned, I don't know where the standpipes are if they pulled them all forward and had enough room for the car, then their backyards are going to be the fire pit you know so we're going to have to work with everybody you know for the start of next season because some of those are seasonal folks and they come back so just pull everything forward. Kingsley said well even a 10 ft. setback up on those existing ones would be an improvement. Echtenkamp said yes, if you could live with 10

ft. I can you know, I can get that done for you, even if we can pull them further you know, just so they've got a place to sit around the campfire and that makes sense. You guys are concerned about that fence there's just enough wiggle room there. Kingsley said you know the fence has been there for a long time and it's not in the best of shape right now but the problem is that we have problems then with trees that are growing on our side of the fence and branches that may fall or a tree may fall over onto the other side of the fence and having those units right up against the fence, in fact we've had requests to come and remove some of our trees and branches already, it would just reduce some of that problem I think with having that setback. Echtenkamp said so let's get the utility sheds 10 ft. at least and if you, I mean I think we should go out there and walk again and see where those are at and measure them out and see if we can pull them forward. Kingsley asked Mathisrud isn't 10 ft. a requirement of the Department of Health? Mathisrud said that appears to me to be the minimum standard for the MN Department of Health so that seems like it should be the minimum setback in that location. Kingsley said he thinks that would be reasonable. Echtenkamp said he can live with that. Kingsley said he would like to get that included as a condition of the permit if we could because there is a lot of turnover in staff and I'm hoping I'm not going to be here that long for my position so probably will have new people coming in and that would be helpful for them I think. Mathisrud stated he recommends we update that condition #7.

Bradow asked where does that 25 ft. setback come in on recommendation #1? Mathisrud said he believes the 25 ft. setback is a MN Dept. of Health minimum setback however that was the condition that was in the last Conditional Use Permit, that all the east sites be setback a minimum of 25 ft from the roadway but that was listed as a condition so I carried that condition forward on this request. Bradow asked why is the other one 10 ft. then, a sideyard? Mathisrud said that's going to be a Dept. of Health minimum setback. There was discussion concerning different side yard setbacks and Mathisrud said we interpret it as a side yard and doesn't know exactly what the thinking is on that one but that is how he interprets it so we can bring that in as a 10 ft. required setback on that line or do something else. Stone said she thinks the 10 ft. seems reasonable and makes sense. Bradow asked if the owner is okay with the 10 ft. mark and also asked Kingsley if he was okay with the 10 ft.? Bruce Johnson said that's on the west side, you're not affecting the east side rule. Bradow asked if they can live with that and they both said yes.

Petschl asked how deep are the lots that are there in the rv lot and how far are we coming in I mean how many feet is that long, is it 40 ft. and we're coming in 10 as a setback or how far are they? Echtenkamp said depth on the first 16 were 90 ft. so we carried that 90 ft. along the west side. The news ones, the 24 we did in 2012 those were 100 ft. deep and 50 ft. wide and the state standard is 2,000 sq. ft. and we made those 5,000 or so and some are pushing 6,500 sq. ft. kind of like a city lot and by design I did it that way because when you're in town and you're not on a lake or anything the one thing you can offer folks is a little bit of elbow room and privacy for the rvs so that's why I made them that size.

Petschl asked Mathisrud to bring up the developer's site plan and inquired that he was reading in the developer's cover letter now 16 of the existing 40 have water sewer connected to them, which ones aren't? Echtenkamp said all 40 do, we did 16 first back 2008, new sewer and new water, and then we did the 24 sites in 2012.

The Public Hearing was closed at 6:31 p.m.

The Findings of Facts were reviewed. The commissioners came to the following conclusions: Is the proposed use identified as a conditional use in this zoning district? YES.

1. *Are there characteristics of the proposed use that may violate the public health, safety, or general welfare of Park Rapids City residents? NO.*
2. *Is the proposed use inconsistent with the intent of the Park Rapids City Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance? NO.*
3. *Does the proposed use present any unique concerns regarding erosion, runoff, water pollution or sedimentation? YES. IMPERVIOUS SURFACE CONDITION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED.*
4. *Could the proposed use create any special problems with parking? NO.*
5. *Would the proposed use cause any problems with access or traffic generation? NO.*
6. *Is the proposed use incompatible with other uses located in the zoning district? NO.*

For each response answered affirmatively, are there conditions that could be attached to the granting of a permit that would mitigate the adverse impact? YES, *Mathisrud and the Commissioners recommended the following conditions:*

1. All east RV sites shall maintain a 25' setback from the east property line.
2. The owner shall operate the business in accordance with all local, state and federal regulations.
3. A lighting plan shall be provided by the owner to be approved by the City Planner.
4. The Owner shall demonstrate conformance with all MDH requirements for RV parks and provide a copy of licensure for the file.
5. Owner shall provide an updated impervious surface calculation for the file.
6. The applicant shall obtain a new CUP if further expansion is desired.
7. The Owner shall obtain a survey and move the existing rv sites to a 10 ft. minimum setback and establish future sites at a 10 ft. minimum setback from the west property line.

A motion was made by Johnson, seconded by Stone, and unanimously carried to recommend to the City Council approval of a Conditional Use Permit Request from Pine Tree Partners, LLC, Jay Echtenkamp to expand a Recreational Camping Area with an additional 30 recreational vehicle sites to the existing 40 recreational sites for a total of 70 sites located at 501 Central Ave S in the Big Pines RV Park, located in an R-2, Single, 2-Family and Townhouse Residential District, PID#32.25.04000; with the following conditions:

1. **All east RV sites shall maintain a 25' setback from the east property line.**
2. **The owner shall operate the business in accordance with all local, state and federal regulations.**
3. **A lighting plan shall be provided by the owner to be approved by the City Planner.**
4. **The owner shall demonstrate conformance with all MDH requirements for RV parks and provide a copy of licensure for the file.**
5. **Owner shall provide an updated impervious surface calculation for the file.**
6. **The applicant shall obtain a new CUP if further expansion is desired.**

- 7. The Owner shall obtain a survey and move the existing rv sites to a 10 ft. minimum setback and establish future sites at a 10 ft. minimum setback from the west property line.**

6. GENERAL BUSINESS:

6A. Charles Street Lot Discussion: Mathisrud explained there are two lots adjacent to Walmart that are each approximately 8 acres in size and currently owned by Northwoods Bank who has expressed an interest in donating these lots to the city for any purpose the city would like to use them for. They would do this primarily for a tax write-off but then the city would have a couple of lots for whatever purposes we needed. Mathisrud explained he isn't sure if it is a good proposal or not for the community as there are positives and negatives but thinks there is an opportunity if we want to look at it. Mathisrud explained he wanted to bring this to the Planning Commission to see if we wanted to explore it further and pursue other options with it. Mathisrud indicated the site is zoned B-1 Highway Business District. Mathisrud provided a sketch of a proposed layout with part commercial use and multi-family housing along with a street to connect to existing streets. It costs a lot of money to put in streets and utilities.

There was discussion concerning:

- Combining mixed uses – commercial/residential
- Annual tax consequences for nonexempt
- Potential uses including city uses for a well site or liquor store
- Utility and street costs
- Market analysis costs
- Empty existing commercial properties in the city
- Commercial development and its effect on downtown businesses
- Further information gathering before making a recommendation

6B. Green Step Cities Discussion: Mathisrud explained that Carter Hedeem asked this be on the agenda today for a discussion as he is leading a group starting a Green Step Cities in Park Rapids and a number of months ago they had a meeting and had a speaker come in. This would be similar to Tree City USA where you plant trees or do certain things to get a community award for taking actions to become a Green Step City. The program is by the MPCA where they have a series of projects or steps to take to make your city more efficient or livable and environmentally friendly. There are 29 best practices including updating Zoning Ordinance, Comprehensive Plan and making buildings more energy efficient. Taking steps to put in electric vehicle charging stations and that sort of thing. There were a number of people interested in starting this for Park Rapids and what it would require if we pursue this is the City would adopt an Ordinance declaring that are a Green Step City and then identify the things we've done to qualify and then start working towards the steps of increasing energy efficiency. Mathisrud asked if the Planning Commission felt this is something we wanted to pursue and to have a presentation from the coordinator to gauge our interest in pursuing this? Petschl stated he wanted a presentation. Bradow said he went to the website and some of the steps we've already done like our Urban Forest etc. and there is no cost to the program and you can adopt what steps you want and work at your own pace and I don't see any downside to it. Johnson said he can give one downside because he's at the opposite side of the fence on this kind of thing as we already have a lot of different program that people in Park Rapids and Hubbard County can get in involved with like COLA, Friends of the Historical Society and people don't get involved and adding yet another program everybody stands up and waves the flag at the ceremony but when it's time to put the

rubber to the road there is nobody at the meeting except for two people, so for me, I'm especially concerned about things that bring money to the city which are very touchy subjects with groups like this, snowmobiles, atv's, camping, outboard motors, restrictions on boats on what lake. Johnson gave an example that people are upset about a group of guys that practice music on a pontoon boat at the mouth of the Potato River and they've developed quite a following as all kinds of people show up on pontoon boats on Sunday afternoon and get a free show while these guys are practicing. No one is charging any money and it is getting bad mouthed, so things like this make me nervous and I'm not saying it's a bad idea I'm just throwing a couple of things out there that put off warning bells in my head when I see it.

Petschl said he is looking at the energy level and what they bring to try to get you to go more energy efficient I think that's a big plus for the town itself. Johnson said energy efficient is one thing but there are also free energy audits available from the power company and how many people get those? All these things that are available that people don't really take advantage of but it sounds good at first glance but I guess it depends on if they want money. Bradow said there is no cost and no requirement to do any or all of the steps as you pick the ones you're interested in. Johnson said he is just playing devil's advocate. Bradow said they are not charging you anything and if you don't want to do it, don't do it. Lockhart asked if we report to anyone or get certificates. Bradow said you get a certificate but if you're all worked up about getting a certificate you can. Petschl asked about signs? Bradow recommended he look on the website to see other communities involved with this. There are no requirements but they give you guidance if you're interested they provide best practices. Petschl said he wants a presentation to understand and have them explain it. Stone said she is a little hesitant but a presentation would help, how long is it? Bradow said he doesn't see any downside to it. Mathisrud thought a presentation would be approximately 15 minutes.

Other Discussion: There was discussion regarding recruiting a new member for the Planning Commission.

7. INFORMATIONAL/DISCUSSION: None.

8. ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made by Stone, seconded by Petschl, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Vice Chair Tom Petschl

ATTEST:

Carmen L. Lockhart
Planning/Administrative Assistant