

**Excerpt from the
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Minneapolis Community Planning & Economic Development (CPED)**

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 30, 2014

TO: Zoning and Planning Committee

FROM: Jason Wittenberg, Manager, Community Planning & Economic Development – Land Use, Design and Preservation

SUBJECT: Planning Commission decisions of August 25, 2014

The following actions were taken by the Planning Commission on August 25, 2014. As you know, the Planning Commission's decisions on items other than rezonings, text amendments, vacations, 40 Acre studies and comprehensive plan amendments are final subject to a ten calendar day appeal period before permits can be issued.

Commissioners present: President Tucker, Bender, Brown, Forney, Gagnon, Gisselman, Luepke-Pier and Slack – 8

Not present: Kronzer (excused)

Committee Clerk: Lisa Kusz (612) 673-3710

6. 2316-2320 Colfax Ave S (BZZ-6674, Ward: 10), ([Aaron Hanauer](#)).

A. Variance: Application by Collage Architects, on behalf of The Lander Group, for a variance to reduce the minimum front yard requirement adjacent to Colfax Ave from approximately 19 feet to 15 feet to allow the building and open porches located at 2316-2320 Colfax Ave S in the R6/Multiple Family District.

Action: The City Planning Commission adopted the findings and **approved** the application for a variance to reduce the minimum front yard requirement adjacent to Colfax Ave S from approximately 19 feet to 15 feet to allow the building and open porches for the proposed project located at 2316-2320 Colfax Ave S.

Aye: Bender, Brown, Gagnon, Gisselman, Luepke-Pier and Slack

Nay: Forney

Absent: Kronzer

B. Variance: Application by Collage Architects, on behalf of The Lander Group, for a variance to reduce the minimum rear yard requirement adjacent to the west property line from 5 feet to 0 feet to allow a pergola over the parking area for the property located at 2316-2320 Colfax Ave S.

Action: The City Planning Commission adopted the findings and **approved** the application for a variance to reduce the minimum rear yard requirement adjacent to the west property line from 5 feet to 0 feet to allow a pergola over the parking area for the proposed project located at 2316-2320 Colfax Ave S.

Aye: Bender, Brown, Gagnon, Gisselman, Luepke-Pier and Slack

Nay: Forney

Absent: Kronzer

C. Variance: Application by Collage Architects, on behalf of The Lander Group, for a variance to reduce the minimum parking requirement from 38 to 27 spaces for the property located at 2316-2320 Colfax Ave S.

Action: The City Planning Commission adopted the findings and **approved** the application for a variance to reduce the minimum parking requirement from 38 to 27 spaces for the proposed project located at 2316-2320 Colfax Ave S, subject to the following conditions:

1. The final plans shall include the additional compact parking spaces as proposed.
2. A space shall be dedicated for the shared vehicle on the final site plan/floor plans.
3. The proposed project shall provide no less than the proposed 48 bike parking spaces that meet the zoning code's requirements for long term bike parking. The bike transit center shall be maintained in the final construction plans that will allow for a space for residents to complete bike repairs.

Aye: Bender, Brown, Gagnon, Gisselman, Luepke-Pier and Slack

Nay: Forney

Absent: Kronzer

D. Variance: Application by Collage Architects, on behalf of The Lander Group, for a variance to reduce the minimum two-way drive aisle width from 22 feet to 20.3 feet for the property located at 2316-2320 Colfax Ave S.

Action: The City Planning Commission adopted the findings and **approved** the application for a variance to reduce the minimum two-way drive aisle width from 22 feet to 20 feet for the proposed project located at 2316-2320 Colfax Ave S.

Aye: Bender, Brown, Gagnon, Gisselman, Luepke-Pier and Slack

Nay: Forney

Absent: Kronzer

E. Variance: Application by Collage Architects, on behalf of The Lander Group, for a variance to allow a transformer within the corner side yard for the property located at 2316-2320 Colfax Ave S.

Action: The City Planning Commission adopted the findings and **approved** the application for a variance to reduce the corner side yard requirement to allow a transformer for the proposed project located at 2316-2320 Colfax Ave S, subject to the following condition:

1. The applicant shall work with Public Works and CPED to ensure that the transformer and proposed screening will be located in a position to ensure the site triangle is preserved for the vehicles entering and exiting the site.

Aye: Bender, Brown, Gagnon, Gisselman, Luepke-Pier and Slack

Nay: Forney

Absent: Kronzer

F. Site Plan Review: Application by Collage Architects, on behalf of The Lander Group, for a site plan review for the property located at 2316-2320 Colfax Ave S.

Action: The City Planning Commission adopted the findings and **approved** the site plan review application to allow a four-story, 42-unit apartment building at 2316-2320 Colfax Ave S, subject to the following conditions:

1. All other areas of the site not governed by 530.160 and 530.170 and not occupied by buildings, parking and loading facilities or driveways will be covered with turf grass, perennial flowering plants, vines, wood mulch, shrubs or trees. The proposed landscaping outside of the project's property lines will require an encroachment permit.
2. Rooftop mechanical equipment shall be screened to be in compliance with Section 535.70 of the zoning code.
3. The cement board lap siding on the north and west elevation shall be replaced with stucco.
4. The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development staff review and approval of the final building elevations, floor, site, lighting and landscape plans. A lighting plan shall be submitted that is in compliance with Section 535.590 and 541.570 of the zoning code.
5. Site improvements required by Chapter 530 or by the City Planning Commission shall be completed by August 25, 2016, unless extended by the Zoning Administrator, or the permit may be revoked for non-compliance.
6. The applicant shall work with staff and the utility company to move the transformer away from the street, if possible.
7. The applicant shall work with staff on a stormwater management plan that does not impact the public realm.

Aye: Bender, Brown, Forney, Gagnon, Gisselman, Luepke-Pier and Slack

Absent: Kronzer

Staff Hanauer presented the staff report.

President Tucker opened the public hearing.

Pete Keeley (not on sign-in sheet): I'm with Collage Architects here to represent the Lander Group. The idea with the variances on the parking was to move towards a project that has some built in affordability, which a different type of living environment which de-emphasizes the car and uses the savings from building the infrastructure for the automobile to do a higher efficiency building to lower rental costs.

Janne Fustrand (2112 Dupont Ave S): I walk passed this site twice a day and I'm very excited to see this coming to my neighborhood. I also own/occupy a four unit apartment building. There are nine bedrooms in my property and I have four parking spaces on-site. I have not been able to rent any of my parking spaces to any of my tenants for three years. I am personally pleased to see recognition of changing transportation patterns in this particular neighborhood. I have nine bedrooms on the property and at the moment there is one car between all of the tenants. I think this is a wonderful example showing how living patterns are changing in this particular neighborhood. Thank you.

Nan Kalke (1011 W 24th St): I'm concerned about the parking. Though the planner talked about bike rates and bus rates, they didn't talk about car ownership. I bike and I bus 80% of the time. I take my car rarely, but I have a car. I'd like to know what the rates are for that. I expect there are still lots of bikers and bussers that own cars in The Wedge. The woman that just spoke talked about how she cannot rent out her parking spaces, but I suspect that is because there are free parking spaces on the street. I'm concerned that we aren't going to keep those any longer. Please don't approve the variance for parking. Also, the transformer, it won't be the only one on that side of the street, but I'd sure appreciate if the commission could condition that the cost of

painting the transformer with a design that our neighborhood association approves could be included. I support the condition that the cement board lap siding on the north and west elevation be replaced with stucco. Thank you.

William Wells (2838 Fremont Ave S): The development itself actually has 48 bedrooms and with guests there will be around 50 people in this development, but they're only providing 27 parking spaces. I, too, as a neighbor wanted to say that I'm extremely concerned about the variance that significantly reduces the parking. This is going to push all the parking for the residents and the guests on to the streets. I don't think there is enough parking being provided with this level of density. The developer could meet the zoning code simply by putting the parking underground or changing the unit mix. They could change to more two bedrooms and they could meet the zoning code. Instead they are doing teeny tiny one bedroom units and then asking you for a variance. My guess is they're doing that simply to make more money. If you look at the floor plan dimensions, you can see it's 12 feet. I've never seen a dwelling unit at 12 feet. This is concerning to see the width of a unit like this being proposed in our neighborhood. We'd like to see bigger units that are more livable. Small units like this create very transient populations. I'd like to voice my neighbor's concerns about the transformer in the front yard on 24th Ave. That is very unsightly and we should not be creating a precedent to let transformers in the front yard. That is a self-imposed hardship. There is also no lighting plan provided. This applicant asks to move the building closer to the setbacks from the property lines and didn't provide any lighting plan. I'm concerned about the cement board and the mix of materials and also the landscaping around the parking area. The tree that they're proposing is probably not going to grow. The City standard is a seven foot wide tree island and they're only providing four feet, which is very unusual. They've also provided no stormwater calculations. In the PDR report, it's mentioned that there is flooding in this area and the applicant has not dealt with stormwater or provided enough information. I think there are a lot of problems with this development and I just wanted to point those out. Hopefully we can get them resolved.

Nick Magrino (215 Oak Grove St): I think it's cool that the developer has been able to reduce the amount of parking that's required for this development. I think we all know that structured parking costs something like \$20k per spot to add to a development and by getting rid of a lot of it you're able to bring unit costs down. I think some of the estimates that have been thrown out were something like \$1000 a unit in this building, which is pretty good for new construction. I don't have a car. It's unfortunate that we have to subsidize other people's car choices. When you live in a place, your rent includes that. When shopping at places, the costs at the store include their parking lot or parking ramp. When you go to events, it includes the cost of parking. Developments like this are a step in the right direction, especially considering the transit and bike options that the location offers. Thank you.

Ethan Cherin (908 W 26th St): I think this is a great project and exactly what our neighborhood needs. I'm excited that reducing the parking allows us to improve utility efficiency and lower the cost for residency. I participated in the zoning and planning neighborhood committee meeting and it was very positive about the project. As controversial as this project has been, it was really nice to have a very positive meeting about moving forward on this.

President Tucker closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Luepke-Pier: I have a question for the architect. Can you talk about the transformer location and the stormwater management.

Pete Keeley: We'll meet the requirements of the City on the stormwater. Essentially, given the coverage of what's there and what's proposed, there are very little requirements, but it does tie to some better best management practices that we're pursuing on this that we're going to be installing. Some of the pavers are on

the tree root system. Instead of the seven foot island, which is kind of the grass area, it's really about getting water to the root structure which is using the pervious pavers to allow that. We will meet the requirements and it can certainly be a condition. There is very little...most of this is pervious surface. As far as the transformer, we haven't gone through the whole exercise with Xcel. Unfortunately, we don't have a ton of choices in terms of where transformers end up. They are often dictated to us based on what Xcel can do or not do. There is some existing power in place right up on that corner. Our preliminary discussions were that it needed to stay on that corner. If we can move it in the back, we prefer to have it in the back. In terms of our residents, it's ugly. We want to dress it up and disguise it. If we can move it, great. We can't necessarily move it and that is the one location that's been identified as the place that the transformer may need to come down.

Commissioner Luepke-Pier: In terms of disguising it, the one speaker suggested maybe working with the neighborhood to do some sort of artistic gesture. Do you guys have something in mind if you have to keep it there?

Pete Keeley: We were going to use landscaping. I think there have been others done in the neighborhood that are very good. I think we'd be amenable to doing that. I'm not amenable to trying to work in a committee environment with a neighborhood group that has some animosity. I think we would make it look good. We're trying to make the best project that we can and we're trying to make all these unsightly things go away and look good for our residents.

President Tucker closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Brown: I will move approval of A, B, C, D and E (Gagnon seconded). Regarding the issue of parking, since it has come up, I'm comfortable at this location having a reduction in the amount of vehicle parking. I agree that it's part of the city where affordable housing is an important issue and by reducing the amount of parking we can try to address that. I also think the proximity to transit and the bike options and additional bike parking spaces that are part of the condition will help mitigate any concerns around parking. Regarding the transformer, I'm comfortable with staff's language for the condition related to screening of the transformer and I think that will make it as attractive as possible.

Aye: Bender, Brown, Gagnon, Gisselman, Luepke-Pier and Slack

Nay: Forney

Absent: Kronzer

Commissioner Brown: I'll move approval of item F (Luepke-Pier seconded).

Commissioner Luepke-Pier: I'm wondering if we can add a condition that they will work with staff on stormwater management in the best way possible so it doesn't impact the public realm.

Aye: Bender, Brown, Forney, Gagnon, Gisselman, Luepke-Pier and Slack

Absent: Kronzer