

**BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS  
CITY OF WILLMAR, MN  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2014**

**MINUTES**

1. The Willmar Board of Zoning Appeals met on Monday, February 24, 2014 at 5:00 p.m. at the City Office Building.

\*\* Members Present: Ross Magnuson, Larry Brown, Beverly Dougherty, and Andrew Bjur.

\*\* Members Absent: Jim Rudnick.

\*\* Others Present: Gabriel Olson, and Megan M. DeSchepper- Planner.

2. REORGANIZATION: Ms. Dougherty made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bjur to nominate Mr. Magnuson as Chair and Mr. Brown as Vice Chair.

The motion carried.

3. AEHC, LLC BUILDING AND PARKING SETBACK VARIANCE- FILE NO. 14-01:

The public hearing opened at 5:05 p.m. Gabriel Olson presented the request for construction of a stand-alone extended stay facility with a 6' 1/2" building side setback, a 6' parking setback, and 15 less parking stalls than required by the proposed number of units on property legally described as follows: part of Government Lot 7, Section 11, Township 119, Range 35 (616 Business Hwy. 71 N.). Mr. Olson explained that they are often full at the existing extended stay facility on the property and wish to build an additional building to fulfill the need. They are extended stay units, as licensed by the State of Minnesota Department of Health that can be anywhere from three to six months. The property is zoned GB (General Business) and the use is unchanged from the previous Viking Hotel that operated on the site. Mr. Olson stated that many of their clients do not own vehicles and they do not see the need for as many parking spaces as required.

The Board reviewed and discussed staff comments (see Attachment A).

With no one to speak for or against the request, the public hearing was closed at 5:20 p.m.

The main concern of the Board was the lack of parking. The existing 25 units plus the 22 proposed units would require a total of 52 parking spaces, whereas the site plan depicts 37 total parking spaces (15 spaces under). The Board discussed that some people staying at the hotel may not have vehicles, but in some instances a couple each with a car could also be staying at the site. Mr. Olson explained that they did purchase the vacant land across the street for future development, but that off street parking could be provided on that property if needed.

Mr. Bjur made a motion, seconded by Ms. Dougherty, to approve the building setback variance and the parking setback variance with the following condition:

- A. All the required parking spaces shall be supplied and defined on the site plan on this property or the property across the street with a recorded parking agreement (a copy shall be supplied to the City).

The Board of Zoning Appeals talked about the variance requests in three parts, the building setback variance, the parking setback variance and the number of parking spaces variance. The setback variances would be in harmony with the purposes and intent of the Zoning Ordinance as the property is commercially zoned and the extended stay hotel fits in that district. The setback variances are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan as the area will remain commercial as designated in the plan. The request will put the property to use in a reasonable manner as there is already a functioning extended stay hotel on site and this will be a continuation of that. The property is unique as the parcel is an odd L shape unlike other properties in the area. The variances would not alter the essential character of the neighborhood as it will meet the prevailing setback in the vicinity.

The motion carried.

4. There being no further business to come before the Planning Commission the meeting adjourned 5:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Megan M. DeSchepper, AICP  
Planner/Airport Manager

**BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS-FEBRUARY 24, 2014**

***STAFF COMMENTS***

1. AEHC BUILDING AND PARKING SETBACK VARIANCE- FILE NO. 14-01:

- The applicant is AEHC, LLC, Litchfield, MN.
- The applicant requests variances to build a stand-alone extended stay facility with a 6' 6 ½" building side setback, a 6' parking setback, and 15 less parking stall then required by the proposed number of units on property legally described as follows: part of Government Lot 7, Section 11, Township 119, Range 35 (616 Business Hwy. 71 N).
- The Zoning Ordinance requires a 25' side building setback from the property line (edge of right-of-way); off-street parking shall be no closer than 15' from street r/w, and for motels/hotels one space per each unit plus one space for each ten units, and one space for each employee on any shift.
- The applicant has purchased property across the street from the existing property for future development.
- The current building does not meet setback nor does the building to the north.
- Any site flow issues would be dealt with by the Planning Commission.

RECOMMENDATION: Review variance standards in Section 9.D.3.a.1-4 to see if there are practicable difficulties, reasonableness, uniqueness, and essential character.