

**PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
MARCH 4, 2025**

ROLL CALL

The Planning Commission of the City of Prairie Village met in regular session on Tuesday, March 4 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at 7700 Mission Road. Chair Greg Wolf called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the following members present: Jonathan Birkel, Dave Herron, James Kersten, Melissa Brown, Melissa Temple, and Jeffrey Valentino.

The following individuals were present in their advisory capacity to the Planning Commission: Chris Brewster, Multistudio; Nickie Lee, Deputy City Administrator; Mitch Dringman, Building Official; Terry O'Toole, Council Liaison; Adam Geffert, City Clerk/Planning Commission Secretary.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Brown made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 4, 2025, regular Planning Commission meeting as presented. Mr. Valentino seconded the motion, which passed 5-0, with Mr. Birkel and Mr. Herron in abstention.

After approval of the minutes, new commission member Dave Herron introduced himself.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

NON-PUBLIC HEARINGS

PC-25-3	Site plan for fence, with an exception 7820 Dearborn Drive Zoning: R-1B Applicant: Bob Washburn
---------	--

Mr. Brewster said that the applicant was requesting an exception to raise the height of an existing 6' privacy fence to 8' in specific locations due to sloping ground. The intent is to provide better screening and an even appearance of the top of the fence, stepped with other portions of the fence which are placed on a higher grade.

The property is a corner lot on the southwest corner of Tomahawk Road and Dearborn Drive. The lot fronts on Dearborn Drive and the location of the requested fence height exception is a side and rear yard fence along Tomahawk Road. The fence is set back between 16' and 19' from the lot line along Tomahawk Road, and is approximately 28' to 32' from the street.

Mr. Brewster stated that the fence standards in Section 19.44.025 of the City's zoning regulations applied to this property, specifically:

(b) Design.

(3) Height. No fence shall exceed 6' in height, except tennis court enclosures which may not exceed 12' in height, and except fences which are located within the building envelop of a lot shall not exceed 8' in height.

(c) Location.

(2) Fences located on the side street of a corner lot shall be on private property and at least 18" from any public sidewalk, whichever is greater, except that if an adjacent lot faces the side street, the fence shall be set back from the right-of-way line a distance of 15' or not less than one-half the depth of the front yard of an adjacent building, whichever is the greater setback.

The adjacent house to the southwest faces Tomahawk Road, so the greater street side setback applies. The fence is between 16' and 18' from the side lot line and meets the ordinance requirements in Section (c)(2). Since the fence is also more than 15' from the side lot line (which is the required building setback in R-1B), a significant portion of the fence is located within the permitted building envelope in R-1B zoning. Mr. Brewster said that ordinarily the proposal would be eligible for an 8' high fence according to (b)(3), for the majority of the fence except the last 25' nearest the south lot, which would be in the required rear yard setback. However, the lot also has a platted building line at 35' along Tomahawk Road, so although a large part of the fence is in the eligible building envelop according to the zoning ordinance, it is not according to the plat. Therefore, the proposed fence needs an exception to the 6' height requirement.

Mr. Brewster noted that the existing fence does extend close to the front of the adjacent house along the subject lot's rear lot line. However, the fence location is still approximately 17' from the side lot line and 28' from the street, ensuring views along the streetscape for the house to the southwest. Additionally, the nearest portion of the adjacent house is the garage rather than livable space where views could be more important. Further, the grade of the adjacent house is elevated from the streetscape of Tomahawk Road and the grade of the subject lot, minimizing the impact of the fence height exception.

The view of the fence from the Tomahawk Road streetscape is a similar situation. The combination of distance, grade of the right-of-way, and grade of the lot permits views into the rear yard more than typical situations, and the fence height exception at this location will not have a significant impact on the appearance or views along the streetscape. Lastly, there are three significant street trees along this lot line, which in combination with the large lawn area soften any impact from the fence.

Mr. Brewster stated that the following factors affected the proposed exception:

- The fence exceeds the side setback requirements and is between 16' and 19' from the side lot line.
- The right-of-way provides an additional approximately 12' buffer between the fence and the road, which results in the fence being approximately 28' to 32' from the street.
- The adjacent house most impacted by the fence has the garage located on the side closest to the fence and is also elevated above the adjacent lot and fence location due to grade.
- A significant portion of the fence is located in the eligible building envelop (where a structure could be located) according to the zoning ordinance, except for the fact there is a platted building line along the street side lot line.
- The grade of the streetscape and lot permits views into the rear yard area making a fence compliant with the standards less effective.
- The fence design and location meets all other applicable standards.

In addition to the site plan review criteria, the following are the specific criteria the planning commission must consider for exceptions to the fence standards:

- Results in a design that is more compatible
- Provide better screening
- Provides better storm drainage management
- Provides more appropriate utilization of the site

Mr. Brewster said that the requested exception impacted the second and fourth criteria. The proposed location and height will allow better utilization of the site based on the corner location and orientation of the house, and provide better screening due to the topography of the site, streetscape, and adjacent house. Additionally, the impacts on the adjacent house and streetscape are minimal due to the distance of the fence from the street and the grading.

Mr. Brewster stated that staff recommended approval of the site plan with the exception to the fence height based on the listed factors.

Applicant and property owner Bob Washburn was present to discuss the application. He noted that the existing 6' fence did not provide enough privacy in the backyard swimming pool area due to the grade of the land. In other areas of the property, the height of the new fence would remain 6' high.

Mr. Herron asked if a landscape solution had been considered. Mr. Washburn stated that three large evergreens had been planted in the yard, but they did not provide adequate privacy.

Mr. Birkel made a motion to approve the application with the conditions listed by staff. The motion was seconded by Ms. Temple.

Mr. Valentino suggested that the commission should review the fence regulations to allow for more consistency and clarity when considering future applications. Mr. Brewster said that staff could bring them forward for review at a future meeting.

After further discussion, the motion passed 6-1, with Mr. Valentino in opposition.

PC-25-4 Site plan and exterior building review for municipal complex improvements
7820 Mission Road
Zoning: R-1A
Applicant: Jean Stoverink, Clark & Enersen

Jean Stoverink, project manager with Clark & Enersen, 2020 Baltimore Avenue, #300, Kansas City, Mo., provided design plans for a proposed new city hall building on the Mission Road Bible Church property that had been acquired by the City.

The following is a summary of the plan elements under each of the site plan criteria:

A. General Criteria and R-1A standards

- The property is zoned R-1A. Despite the R-1A standards geared primarily for detached houses, the development standards applicable to the site (and which will be confirmed at the building permit stage) are:
 - Height - 35'
 - Setbacks - front - 30'; sides - 7' / 20% of lot cumulative; rear - 25'
 - Building coverage - 30%
 - Impervious surfaces - 40%
- Public and civic buildings permitted in residential districts are eligible for exceptions to these standards. For example, the height may be increased 1' for each additional 1' setback up to 75'.
- The site is located in the "civic center" place type in the comprehensive plan and locating city hall in this location is consistent with the comprehensive plan.

B. Site Design and Engineering

- The plan removes the south access point to Mission Road and expands the north access point to a three-lane access: one entry lane, one left-out lane, and one right-out lane.
- Internal circulation has changed and winds through the site to three main parking areas - a primary lot near the building front (28 spaces); a secondary lot on the rear of the property (60 spaces - existing, also accessing service areas for trash and mechanical equipment), and a front drive lane with accessible spaces (four spaces) and the two left/right exit lanes.
- Pedestrian access to the building is from an expanded sidewalk / plaza area on the north side of the building (side orientation). Additionally, a connection to the existing municipal buildings (future renovated police station and municipal court) is provided through a central plaza at the interior of the site and then connecting through the parking and across the fire station access lane.
- This site is part of a larger municipal complex that includes pools, tennis courts, a skate park, park grounds and a community building. A detailed engineering and site / stormwater analysis has been performed as part of the project and is included with the plan sets that public works is recommending.

C. Building Design.

- The proposed building will replace the existing church and is situated to the southeast corner of the site.
- Although the building has a side orientation with the primary entrance internal to the site, the Mission Road (east) elevation has some glazing, secondary entrances, and ornamentation that addresses the public streetscape.
- The façade composition on all facades is a combination of wall planes, broken up by angular roofs, offsets, materials, and glazing.
- The building is primarily a one-story massing, but larger open areas and gathering spaces have larger volumes. The overall structure height is 30', although the primary massing varies in height at different places.
- The material palette is:
 - Brick (three patterns: grey textured finish (“Manganese Ironspot Velour”); red textured finish (“Mountain Shadow Velour”); and red textured finish with a custom pattern (“Mountain Shadow Velour” - modular custom)
 - Stone panel: natural (rainscreen pattern - Portland, Smooth Matt)
 - Perforated metal panel: color to be determined
 - Insulated glazing

D. Landscape Design.

	Landscape Requirements	Proposed Plan
Streetscape / Frontage	1 large tree per 40' lot frontage (n/a) 212' of frontage so 8 trees required	3, with 3 additional outside of the ROW and along the parking area on the north side near the fire station access (However, these are substantially back from the ROW) Recommend 2 to 4 more trees along the street or frontage, potentially in an alternating pattern of ROW / Frontage trees to frame the site, building and streetscape.
Foundation	1 ornamental tree per 25' building frontage (5 required) 5 shrubs per 25' building frontage (25 required)	The plan includes 5 ornamental trees along the foundation / frontage of Mission Road and a large area of ornamental grasses, which can substitute for the shrubs. Additionally, the functional building frontage (south elevation) includes shrubs and ornamental grasses to accent the plaza and public spaces and interfaces.
Parking	1 large tree per 40' parking perimeter (12 required) 1 large tree per 40 parking spaces (3 required) 5 shrubs per 25' parking perimeter (96 required)	19 large trees (double counting the three parking trees at the frontage); 4 existing trees preserved 130+ Shrubs associated with the parking area
Buffer	performance standard based on site	No buffer requirements apply to this site; all elements requiring screening are internal to the site or incorporated into the other building or landscape designs. All trash enclosures and mechanical equipment is screened with a combination of structural or landscape elements.

Mr. Birkel asked why the building and parking lot were not connected to the municipal campus property to the north. Mr. Stoverink said that there was an existing driveway to the fire station

that bisected the properties which prevented the connection for vehicles, but that there was a pedestrian connection between the two areas.

Mr. Birkel added that if the building were located on the north portion of the site rather than the proposed parking lot, it would be closer to the existing municipal buildings. Rick Wise with Clark & Enersen stated that the initial plan was to place the building on the north side of the site, but that the council had requested the building face more toward Mission Road. As a result, it was logical to have the driveway to the new building on the north side rather than coming around behind it from the south. He added that there was also geothermal infrastructure on the southeast portion of the existing municipal complex that needed to be avoided to reduce expense. Lastly, a significant grade change existed between the two properties.

Ms. Brown said that landscaping and pedestrian pathways could be designed to provide a better sense of continuity between the two sites.

Mr. Valentino asked if the parking stall count could be reduced to allow for more green space. Mr. Wise stated the proposed number of stalls would be fewer than were currently located at the site, but were similar to the number of stalls at the existing city hall.

Mr. Kersten asked why there were two generators proposed rather than a single, larger unit. Tim Schwartzkopf, Prairie Village Assistant City Administrator, said that a large generator would require diesel fuel, which the City hoped to avoid using. Instead, the two smaller generators would operate on natural gas.

Mr. Kersten asked if there was a water-retention system proposed. Dan McGee with Lamp-Rynearson, 9001 State Line Road, Suite 200, Kansas City, Mo., stated that there was a plan to provide some underground detention below the parking lot to the north of the building as well as the building roof.

Ms. Brown asked if internal roof drains were included in the building design. Mr. Wise said they were, and that there were no external downspouts.

Mr. Herron asked if consideration had been given to rotate the building so that it faced east and sat on the west side of the property by the fire station. Mr. Wise said that option had not been considered in order to avoid a large parking area being the first thing that visitors saw when they arrived. He added the grade of the land increased to the west which would require the building to be partially buried.

Mr. Birkel suggested that the parking lots should be placed closer to the building for pedestrian access.

OTHER BUSINESS

Planning Commission training and review

Mr. Brewster gave a presentation defining the role and responsibilities of the planning commission. He noted that the basis for the commission's decision-making was the City's

comprehensive plan, “Village Vision 2.0”, which is used to guide zoning and development decisions, coordinate public and private development, and prioritize public investments.

The planning commission’s role is to do the following:

- Make the comprehensive plan (Village Vision)
- Approve the “location, extent and character” of all public improvements
- Review and recommend the Capital Improvement Program (CIP)
- Adopt subdivision regulations
- Approve plats
- Review and recommend zoning changes
- Address decisions referred to the commission by zoning ordinance
- Review the comprehensive plan annually

Mr. Brewster added that most planning commission decisions were of an administrative nature rather than legislative or judicial, meaning decisions are made based on the laws developed by the governing body, and these types of decisions allow for very limited discretion. He added that the commission ensures that standards are met, and that recommendations given are based on the broad perspective and expertise of commission members. If there are no specific standards identified, the commission should verify whether there is a desired outcome expressed in the zoning regulations.

Mr. Brewster also shared details about zoning updates that had been made in 2024.

Ms. Lee provided information about recent bills in the state legislature that addressed statutes affecting planning, zoning and permitting. She noted that the City had a lobbyist to provide testimony sharing the City’s opinions on issues that arise.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the commission, Mr. Wolf adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Adam Geffert
City Clerk/Planning Commission Secretary