WAYZATA PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 7, 2025

AGENDA ITEM 1. Call to Order

Chair Cameron called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Chair Cameron read a prepared statement that outlined multiple options for joining remotely or submitting comments and questions.

AGENDA ITEM 2. Roll Call

Chair Cameron asked Community Development Director Sharpe to take roll call.

Present at roll call were Commissioners: Plantan, Severson, Elg, Cameron, VanLoy, and Ankeny. Community Development Director Alex Sharpe, Planning Consultant Eric Zweber, and City Attorney David Schelzel were also present.

Absent at roll call was: Commissioner Schwalbe

AGENDA ITEM 3. Approval of Agenda

Chair Cameron asked for a motion to approve the agenda for the meeting.

Commissioner Elg made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ankeny, to approve the April 7, 2025, agenda as presented.

The motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 4. Consent Agenda

a.) Approval of the March 24, 2025, Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

b.) ~~Approval of Report and Recommendation of Approval for a Planned Unit Development (PUD) Concept and General Plans, a PUD Zoning District Amendment, a Shoreland Residential PUD/Conditional Use Permit (CUP), a Shoreland Impact Plan (SIP)/P and Design Review Deviation for Street Tree Spacing and Denial of Design Review Deviation for Massing Break with Views of Lake Minnetonka, for 200 Lake Street E~~ (moved to item 7.a. for separate discussion)

Chair Cameron read the items on the consent agenda and asked if any Commissioner wished to pull an item for further discussion.

Commissioner Plantan stated that she would like to pull item 4.b. for separate discussion.

Commissioner Elg asked if Commissioner Plantan was willing to share the reason behind pulling that item from the Consent Agenda.

Commissioner Plantan explained that she would like the Commission to have additional discussion regarding their recommendation of approval and the massing breaks. She noted that she had a few comments that she wanted to add along with her vote for approval, so it was on the record.

Chair Cameron suggested that they move that Consent Agenda item 4.b to Other Items and renumber the remainder of the agenda.

Chair Cameron asked for a motion to approve Consent Agenda, as amended with item a.

Commissioner Plantan made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ankeny, to approve Consent Agenda as amended with item a.

The motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 5. Old Business Items

None

AGENDA ITEM 6. Public Hearing Items

a) Consider Development Application for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for Xcel Energy at 701 Central Avenue N

Planning Consultant Zweber gave an overview of the request by Xcel Energy for a monopole for a private LTE tower at 701 Central Avenue N in order to help Xcel communicate with their equipment in the area of the west metro. He reviewed the project location, the zoning and land use for the surrounding neighborhood, a summary of the application, existing conditions, site plan details, CUP details, setbacks, the height of the proposed structure, and coverage area expectations. He noted that the City had received 2 public comments that asked if other Xcel locations had been considered, and also voiced concerns about potential health and aesthetic impacts from this pole.

At the conclusion of Mr. Zweber's overview, Chair Cameron asked if the Commission had any questions for Staff.

Commissioner Severson asked how tall the existing transmission lines are along the Luce Line.

Mr. Zweber explained that Xcel has stated that those transmission lines are 100 feet tall.

Chair Cameron asked if there were other communication towers located in Wayzata.

Mr. Zweber stated that the water tower was a communications tower by default because there are antennae located on the water tower. He noted that there was also another communications tower behind the Brost Clinic that was stand-alone.

Chair Cameron asked how tall the stand-alone tower was.

Mr. Zweber explained that the tower was 77 feet tall.

Commissioner VanLoy stated that he thought there was also one near the middle school.

Mr. Zweber stated that there was another tower located near the middle school, but he did not know the height of that tower. He noted that the commercial telecommunication ordinances allowed towers to be up to 150 feet, and also had a provision that they could be taller than that if the applicant showed that it was needed.

Commissioner Ankeny asked if there would be any benefit to the City to have this type of communication tower located in Wayzata.

Mr. Zweber explained that he noted that the applicant could address this further, but noted that its intent would be to provide additional reliability to electric services.

There being no further questions for staff, Chair Cameron invited the applicant to address the Commission.

Mr. George Wojcicki, Siting and Land Rights Department at Xcel Energy, explained that his role at Xcel was to lead the charge when it came to cadastral and zoning permits or land acquisition efforts. He explained that this would not really be like towers that people would see out in the countryside, and noted that it was not a traditional sub tower because this monopole would not be used by anyone as a cellular network to take or make phone calls. He explained that the entire purpose of this project would be to take existing Xcel Energy meter data off the public cellular network, which is a significantsecurity upgrade. He stated that he would like to address the questions that City staff had sent to him earlier today, that the City had received from the public. He stated that for the concerns raised about potential health impacts, the private LTE technology uses the same kind of radiation as Wi-Fi, microwave oven, or FM radio signal, but noted that it was at a lower power level. He explained that non-ionizing radiation does not have enough energy to damage DNA or cells. He noted that the FCC has pretty strict exposure limits on this type of radio-frequency radiation. He stated that public health agencies such as WHO and CDC have not found consistent evidence that links cell signal explore to negative health effects. He noted that he had not been able to find any peer-reviewed, double-blind studies that would confirm the finding that this type of radio-frequency does not have known health affects. He stated that the final concern was related to aesthetics, and explained that the monopole would be galvanized steel and would resemble the other structures that are currently on the site. He noted that they would replace an existing galvanized steel pole and put in a different galvanized steel pole that sits just a bit higher. He stated that he has been to many of the Xcel substations around the metro area and can confirm that this location would be one of the most screened-off because of the trees in the area. He noted that there was another question about siting and why they chose Wayzata. He explained that all the substations within the metro network were vetted as possible locations. He explained that their goal was to encompass as much of the metro area as possible, with minimal redundant overlap with the other monopole locations. He stated that they also have monopoles like this set

up in Eden Prairie and Coon Rapids and if, for example, they located it in Plymouth or Minnetonka, that would create a lot of unnecessary redundancy. He explained that one thing that helped them determine that the Gleason Lake location was where they wanted this located was the sheer number of smart meters and substations that would be included in this network and the other locations they considered provided less than desirable results. He stated that he would describe this as more of an upgrade than anything, especially related to cybersecurity. He noted that he believed that had been possibilities raised about co-locating this on other telecommunications facilities or a water tower and explained that Xcel Energy's security team was pretty serious about the kinds of facilities they will locate these types of projects on, and have determined that they have to be in facilities that were fenced in and meet the existing security requirements. He noted that the only location in the whole area that meets those standards would be the Wayzata substation property.

Commissioner Severson asked for more information on this particular monopole, what they will have on there, what they would be doing with it, and what the benefits may be to an Xcel customer.

Mr. Wojcicki stated that it goes back to the issue of security, and reiterated that this was a massive security upgrade for the customer data from the smart meters. He stated that establishing this network and making sure that it stretched as far across the metro area as possible, really locked down what was potentially sensitive information that was being transmitted. He explained that they want to do anything they can to help prevent cyber-attacks, and stated that being able to make sure all of this information was off the public cell network was important.

Commissioner Severson asked for more specific information on what customer data he was referring to.

Mr. Wojcicki introduced Josh Lange, and explained that he worked in the IT Department at Xcel and may be able to answer that question better than he can.

Josh Lange, PLTE Lead, Xcel Energy, explained that the customer data that would be transmitted was from meters, for example, usage, command, and control, which would be Xcel facing rather than customer facing. He noted that they wanted to pull all of that data off of the customer networks. He referenced Salt Typhoon, which has been a persistent cyber-attack, where many of the commercial carriers have been impacted by hacking, and explained that the goal of this type of proposed project would be to remove those types of overseas cyber-attack capabilities. He stated that his previous employment was with a cellular carrier in the area, and he can say that Xcel has focused more on security than the cellular carrier had done. He stated that this proposed change definitely has a more secure mindset than if they co-located on another tower in another location.

Commissioner Ankeny asked if they had considered keeping the height of the pole in Wayzata at 100 feet and then doing another pole elsewhere in order to keep the height the same as the existing pole.

Mr. Wojcicki explained that the strategy with this project was to maximize the extent of the network and minimize the redundant overlapping of the networks, while also building as few of this type of tower as possible. He stated that as the height of the monopole decreases, the strength

and effectiveness of the network drops off significantly, and noted that their proposed 135 feet in height provides a strong coverage area with just a few gaps near Delano.

Chair Cameron stated that it did not appear from the depiction of the coverage areas that this would be anywhere close to reaching Coon Rapids.

Mr. Wojcicki stated that the Coon Rapids monopole would fill in the gaps.

Commissioner Ankeny noted that Wayzata would be covered whether the pole was at 100 feet or 135 feet and asked what the benefit would be for the City to have this located in the City.

Mr. Wojcicki stated that the benefit would come to the customers with the additional security enhancements that Mr. Lange had described.

There being no additional questions from the Commission for the applicant, Chair Cameron opened the public hearing on the application at 7:03 p.m.

A gentleman spoke from the audience and asked if those in attendance could ask questions directly to Xcel Energy.

Chair Cameron asked City Attorney Schelzel to answer the question.

City Attorney Schelzel explained that the way a public hearing worked was that it is a chance for the public to provide comment and perspective on the application. He stated that if they have questions, they were welcome to voice them during their comments, but the public hearing was not a question and answer session, or back and forth discussion with the applicant or with staff. He noted that the questions voiced during the hearing would be noted, and at the end of the public hearing, Chair Cameron could ask that those questions be addressed by staff or the applicant.

Lisa Peterson-Nelson, 655 Harmony Circle, explained that she had submitted some questions about possible alternative locations because the Xcel Plymouth location was only about 2 miles away, near the Home Depot, and had a huge substation. She stated that her concern was that their neighborhood was residential on the south side and the north side of the substation, and anyone in the area, including those walking on the Luce Line, would be able to see the height of this pole. She stated that she understood the technical reasons why Xcel may have chosen this site, but one of her thoughts was that if she were on the Commission, she would probably ask Xcel to create a similar circle diagram to show the coverage areas from the Plymouth location. She stated that she felt that it would be interesting to see and be able to compare their proposed Wayzata location with the Plymouth location that was in a non-residential area. She explained that people who live on Harmony Circle were concerned about their property values because anytime there is a tall structure in a residential neighborhood, there will be people that come to look at the home when they were trying to sell it and not like it, which means that their property value could decline. She stated that it was clear that residents had concerns about this pole and just wondered about other locations it may be able to be located. She stated that they do want security and all the benefits described by Xcel that come with this new technology, but just question whether it needed to be located in the proposed location, and reiterated her suggestion to consider the Plymouth location.

She noted that there was also a small substation to the west that was in a virtually undeveloped area and asked why they wouldn't consider that location as well. She stated that her concerns were more about the residents in the area not wanting to look at this tall pole, and not about potential health concerns.

Gilles Stassart, 660 Harmony Circle, stated that he also had concerns about this proposed location and explained that they already have a substation next to their neighborhood. He stated that in the 13 years he had owned this property, the size of the substation had significantly increased because they have continued to add transformers and replace the power lines along the Luce Line that were now what he considered an ugly rust color. He stated that he will admit that their service has been better than it was 13 years ago when they used to have frequent electrical outages. He explained that his main concern was about the aesthetic impact because Wayzata is a small town with a beautiful lake and, within that, their neighborhood has small, beautiful homes. He stated that the idea of adding massive towers that everyone can see, in his opinion, would definitely be a negative for the City. He stated that he was also not very worried about any potential health concerns, but did hear from the school that they had received communication last week, but that was in the middle of spring break, which meant that nobody received the communication from Xcel Energy until this morning. He stated that he believed that because this antennae would be located within 150 feet of the playgrounds on the school, the parents should be given the opportunity to weigh in on this proposal. He distributed information to the Commission and explained that for possible alternate locations, he had done some research on the location just down the Luce Line and depicted the coverage area using the same general dimensions as what was presented tonight in that location. He stated that he understood that his depiction and dimensions were not perfect, but now that he knew the other monopole locations that the Xcel Energy representative had shared, he had a hard time believing that the same area would not be covered if they used the alternate location within Plymouth. He shared additional information with the Commission regarding possible economic impacts to their property. He explained that it was a study that was conducted in Georgia just before COVID that concluded that if a home was located within 1,500 feet of one of these towers, the value of the home fell an average of 7.6%. He stated that if they used the 1,500 feet parameter in Wayzata, that would been that there would be a few hundred homes that would be decreased value because of this pole. He asked the Commission to give the school and the parents the opportunity to voice their opinion on this topic because the notice came during spring break. He stated that he would also ask the Commission to ask themselves if this was something that they wanted in the City because they already have one that is 100 feet tall and did not need a taller one.

Mike Caticchio, 17805 4th Avenue N, Plymouth, asked what properties would be affected by this if the pole fell down. He noted that a few years ago, there was a question about windmills, and the determination was made that they could not build them because they would fall outside of their property. He asked what it would look like from the neighborhoods from the north and northwest, and stated that he felt it would be an eyesore. He asked if this was the highest elevation of a site that Xcel Energy owned that they can build into. He noted that what they are proposing was for the pole to be 40% taller than what was currently there, and expressed concern about possible upgrades or lighting.

Patrick Mandile, 300 Narcissus Lane, stated that he had lived here for about 40 years and frequently passes by the substation. He noted that you would think you would get used to the sight

of the substation, but he had not. He stated that he had a lingering concern about the rust-colored poles that are there because they are big eyesores on that property and would ask that the City request that those poles be painted a more neutral color. He referenced the long-term plans for the site and stated that he did not believe the public had been notified about the rust-colored poles that were installed and encouraged the Commission to drive by them if they had not seen them already. He stated that one of the things that surprised him about the Xcel Energy representative was that he was not able to find a map that showed the other substation location. He noted that he would echo the suggestion that has been made to put this in another location that is not in the middle of a neighborhood and near a school. He referenced the other locations mentioned by Ms. Peterson-Nelson, and noted that the one they were proposing did not appear to be the most centrally located of the available options. He noted that he was interested in the issue of radio-frequency exposure and felt that there should be more studies done on that issue because this was a concern, especially in a populated area. He asked how the public would be notified of the City's decision on this application.

Chair Cameron stated that the Planning Commission would make a recommendation to the City Council, and explained that the Planning Commission did not have decision-making power within the City. He stated that the City Council would ultimately make the decision on this application.

Mr. Mandile stated that there was mention somewhere that there was not a home structure within 100 feet of this pole, and explained that he hoped that claim had been vetted by the City, because he felt that people in Harmony Circle and people across 3rd Avenue lived near this proposed pole. He asked the Commission to consider this as they would if someone wanted to put a pole like this in a substation within their neighborhoods. He stated that they would also like the Commission to take into consideration the feedback that had been shared by residents about the adverse impacts that they felt this would have on the neighborhood.

Jim Nelson, 655 Harmony Circle, stated that his major concern was that they would propose something like this without having all the infrastructure and complete plans to identify if they even had the desired overlap or not, and to see if it was even necessary. He stated that, to him, it appeared that the area that it picked up was all the way into Minneapolis, and noted that they have been told that there were other locations in the area, and that they were looking to get the coverage area overlapped. He clarified that they had been told that but have not been shown those locations and the coverage areas to see if they actually would overlap or have any details about long-range plans. He stated that he felt it would be difficult for the Commission to determine this if they did not know whether what they were approving was actually a waste of time or could be done differently with similar results, but affect fewer people. He stated that he felt it was remiss from Xcel's standpoint not to be able to actually show and explain the location of the other poles, and what the overlap of their coverage areas would be so the City could make a reasonable determination with that information.

Bill Muske, 17825 3rd Avenue N, Plymouth, stated that he wanted to echo the comments made by Mr. Nelson and Mr. Caticchio about knowing information about the actual options. He stated that they were basically given one choice, take it or leave it, with the Gleason Lake location, and noted that it did not make sense to him that there weren't other alternatives that could be looked at. He stated that he understood that Xcel had probably looked at them and that what they were proposing

was probably the most convenient for them, but he would say it was not convenient for anyone who had a home close to it. He noted that there are more locations nearby that do not interfere with homes, home values, or aesthetics. He stated that he appreciated the question that Commissioner Ankeny had asked about what was actually in this for Wayzata, and noted that the answer related to security did not make sense to him because it sounded like a 100 foot tower could not give security, but a 135 foot tower could, which he could not understand. He stated that he also could not see why they could not install more smaller towers, which he felt would do the same thing without interfering with property values and aesthetics.

Jamie Stassart, 660 Harmony Circle, stated that her questions are around community benefit. She noted that Xcel talked about security, but she felt that this sounded like it was a one-way communication to their applications. She stated that other than usage information, she felt that they had failed to say what would be at risk, for example, would the information be names and addresses. She reiterated that all the Xcel representatives shared was usage information, and encouraged the Commission to have Xcel elaborate more on how this would provide a benefit to the citizens of Wayzata. She noted that if the CUP was approved, she asked if there would be anything that would prevent them from renting out space on the tower for additional antennae for other communications companies.

Mr. Sharpe stated there were no people who called into the meeting that have asked to speak at the public hearing.

There being no one else wishing to provide additional comments on the application, Chair Cameron closed the public hearing at 7:29 pm.

Chair Cameron asked the Commission to share their questions and feedback on the application.

Commissioner VanLoy stated that he had been hoping that there would be a presentation from Xcel that would paint a picture as to why this was the best location for this pole, why 140 feet was better than lower heights, and if they had considered any other masking of the pole. He referenced a recent trip he had taken to Disney World, where he saw a huge cell tower that looked like a pine tree. He stated that he had not heard why this was the best location, the impact of moving this to a nearby commercial location, or why it needed to be this particular height.

Chair Cameron stated that if they used the existing shield pole whether they would need a CUP in order to put antennae on it.

Mr. Zweber stated that they would need a CUP request in that example as well.

Commissioner Ankeny asked the Xcel representatives if the Coon Rapids and Eden Prairie towers located in residential areas.

Mr. Wojcicki stated that they were not located in residential neighborhoods. He stated that he wanted to clarify a point made by one of the residents about him not being able to ‘find’ a map, and explained that he had stated that he could not provide a map of the entire network. He

explained that because this was a private LTE, he did not have the appropriate security clearance to have access to that information and divulge the map of every single tower.

Commissioner Ankeny asked if Wayzata was the first city to be asked to place a 140 foot tower in a residential area.

Mr. Wojcicki stated that he believed that was accurate.

Commissioner Plantan asked how tall the poles were at the Plymouth substation.

Mr. Wojcicki stated that he did not perform the propagation studies for the siting locations, so he did not have that information off the top of his head.

Commissioner Ankeny stated that she was not sure that the City needed to 'lead or bleed' on this item.

Commissioner Severson stated that she worked at a utility company that was similar to Xcel, so she understood the two sides and was empathetic, but she did not hear a compelling reason why Wayzata was the right place to do it. She stated that she understood that Xcel felt this was the best location for it but did not believe that Xcel was able to sell the Commission on why this would also be the right fit for the community. She stated that she did not see why this needed to be located in Wayzata or within a residential area.

Commissioner Elg stated that he would have liked to see where the other towers were located and the potential overlap of coverage areas. He stated that related to smart meters, he would like to know where the highest density of those meters were located and if there was a high density of them to the west, because if there wasn't, or if the higher density was to the east, he felt that moving the pole two miles to the east to the other more commercial location that had been mentioned may make sense. He stated that he felt the residents who spoke proposed a really good alternative to this location with the spot in Plymouth near 494. He noted that without being able to see the specific overlap from other towers, he agreed that this request was not compelling enough to show him that it needed to be in this location. He understood the information shared about the safety and moving this to its own frequency and appreciated getting it off the cellular frequencies, and that they would be able to keep it more private, but what was presented was not a compelling argument for why it should be put in this location. He explained that he respected the concerns shared by the neighbors about aesthetics and property values.

Commissioner Plantan stated that in looking at the primary questions the Commission should consider with a CUP request, she did not see this request having a positive impact for the residents or for having it within a residential area. She stated that she felt that alternative locations could be considered, and explained that she did not think this proposed use fit the character of a small residential community.

Chair Cameron stated that he echoed some of the thoughts that were shared by Commissioner Plantan, and noted that he agreed that this would potentially impact housing values for the homes nearby. He noted that he heard what Xcel had shared about what they want to do with their

network, but wanted to point out that putting smart meters in their homes was Xcel's decision because the residents of Wayzata had not asked for them. He stated that he did not feel that this request would have any benefit for the City, even though it would make Xcel's network more secure. He stated that he would also echo the idea of using the Parker's Lake substation, which was significantly larger and located within an industrial area and not in a residential area.

Commissioner VanLoy stated that he agreed that location should be looked at, but reiterated that if there was a reason that location would not work and it needed to be the one proposed tonight, Xcel had not made that case along with the other things he mentioned earlier.

There being no further discussion, Chair Cameron asked for a motion on the application.

Commissioner VanLoy made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ankeny, to direct staff to prepare a draft Planning Commission Report and Recommendation with appropriate findings reflecting a recommendation of denial for Development Application for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for Xcel Energy at 701 Central Avenue N for review and adoption at the next Planning Commission meeting.

The motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 7. Other Items:

a) Approval of Report and Recommendation of Approval for a Planned Unit Development (PUD) Concept and General Plans, a PUD Zoning District Amendment, a Shoreland Residential PUD/Conditional Use Permit (CUP), a Shoreland Impact Plan (SIP)/CUP and Design Review Deviation for Street Tree Spacing and Denial of Design Review Deviation for Massing Break with Views of Lake Minnetonka, for 200 Lake Street E (formerly Consent Agenda item 4.b)

Commissioner Plantan explained that after reviewing the draft report and recommendation, she wanted to add some comments to her vote for approval. She stated that she had voted for the approval report, but wanted to emphasize that that was with conditions for modifications which she felt were very important and significant. She stated that if those conditions for modifications were not in place or were not included, she would not have voted in favor of the application. She noted that the conditions for modification was to conform with the Design Standards for massing breaks. She stated that these are to be full massing breaks, and she would argue that in the Design Standards for this district, without the significant modifications to that building, it failed to meet the City's criteria for PUD approval. She explained that in no instance would architectural detail mitigate a 750-foot-long building, nor does it invoke 'charm'. She stated that within the City's Comprehensive Plan, it states that they are stewards of the most important asset, which is Lake Minnetonka, and stated that without those massing breaks in the proposed building, the City would not be good stewards of Lake Minnetonka. She noted that the Design Standards for Lake Street say that they have to protect the view to Lake Minnetonka, but she would argue that the view 'from' Lake Minnetonka was equally important. She stated that these were the things she wanted on the record along with her vote for a recommendation of approval to the Council.

Commissioner Severson asked if anything had been missing from the draft report and recommendation.

Commissioner Plantan stated that there was not anything missing, and she just wanted to emphasized and make it clear how important she felt the massing breaks were, and noted that they also had not addressed the views 'from' Lake Minnetonka. She reiterated that her intent was just to get her comments and the reason for her vote into the record.

Chair Cameron stated that he felt Commissioner Plantan had brought up a good point, and asked Community Development Director Sharpe to put together a workshop in order to discuss Design Standards as they really had not included anything that addressed the views from the lake, and he felt they should be incorporated.

There being no further discussion, Chair Cameron asked for a motion.

Commissioner Severson made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Elg, to Approve the Report and Recommendation of Approval as presented for a Planned Unit Development (PUD) Concept and General Plans, a PUD Zoning District Amendment, a Shoreland Residential PUD/Conditional Use Permit (CUP), a Shoreland Impact Plan (SIP)/CUP and Design Review Deviation for Street Tree Spacing and Denial of Design Review Deviation for Massing Break with Views of Lake Minnetonka, for 200 Lake Street E. The motion carried unanimously.

b) Review of Development Activities

Mr. Sharpe stated that he had no official updates at the moment but was anticipating some permit applications coming forward soon.

c) Planning Commission Meeting Schedule

Mr. Sharpe reminded the Commission that the next City Council meeting would be on April 15, 2025, and the next Commission meeting would be on April 21, 2025.

AGENDA ITEM 8. Adjournment.

There being no further business on the agenda, Chair Cameron asked for a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Plantan made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Severson, to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting.

The motion carried unanimously.

The Planning Commission meeting was adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kayla Atkins Rokosz
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.