

**CITY OF ELYSIAN  
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 5, 2023**

The Elysian Planning and Zoning Commission met in regular session Tuesday, September 5, 2023 at City Hall at 6:00 pm.

Present were: Chairperson Tom McBroom, Sr.; Commissioners Dan Engebretson and Jeremy Henninger; Zoning Administrator Lorri Kopschke. Absent: Commissioners Shelly Ims and Al Linse.

On motion by Henninger, seconded by Engebretson, all voting in favor, to approve the agenda of the September 5, 2023 meeting as presented.

On motion by McBroom, seconded by Henninger, all voting in favor, to approve the minutes of the August 1, 2023 Regular Meeting as presented.

On motion by McBroom, seconded by Engebretson, all voting in favor, to close the Regular Meeting and open the Public Hearing at 6:02 pm.

Jacob Lee, the owner of the property located at 406 State Highway 60 West, PID# 16.410.1035, is requesting a conditional use permit to convert the 60 x 42 foot Car Wash building into a short term rental unit with six bedrooms with private bathrooms.

The property is located in the C-2 Highway Commercial District and this use would be allowed under section (D) Conditional Uses (2) Hotels and motels.

The building is currently being used as a self-service and automatic car wash and there is also a pet wash on site. The owner is proposing to remodel the building and change the use to short term rental units. The short term rentals would be used in conjunction with The Ahavah Cottage and would be available for other types of rentals in the "off season" for weddings.

The building would include (6) six 300 square foot bedrooms with private bathrooms with a shared living area in the middle of the building.

The property abuts a wetland on the east, a commercial storage business on the south, a retail/restaurant on the west, and State Highway 60 on the north. The lot on three sides of the building is blacktopped. There are some existing trees on the east side of the property with no additional landscaping/screening on the lot. There is existing shared access to State Highway 60.

Mr. Lee has submitted a drawing showing the proposed parking plan and screening for the rental unit. The ordinance does require parking spots to be 10 feet wide and 20 feet deep. This will have to be confirmed with the applicant.

The C-2 Commercial Highway District includes General Conditions that relate to height, setbacks, identification, and roofing. Additional general regulations are set forth in performance standards (§§ 156.105 through 156.124) of the same chapter.

Approval of a conditional use permit shall include site specific conditions. Types of conditions include:

1. Ingress and egress to the property;

2. Off-street parking and loading area requirements;
3. Refuse and service areas;
4. Utilities;
5. Screening and buffering;
6. Signs;
7. Required yards and open spaces;
8. General compatibility with adjacent properties;
9. Increased setbacks from ordinary high water level;
10. Limitations on natural vegetation to be removed or the requirement for additional vegetation;
11. Special provisions for sewage treatment systems, etc., and;
12. Protection of steep slopes.

Mr. Lee did receive approval of a conditional use permit to convert the sheds next to the Ahavah Cottage into a similar short term rental. The City Council approved that request with the condition that it be licensed as a short term rental property and abide by the conditions of the City of Elysian Code of Ordinance TITLE XI: BUSINESS REGULATIONS: Chapter 112. SHORT TERM VACATION PROPERTIES.

The Commissioners were provided with copies of all conditions/regulations.

Jacob Lee stated this will be a remodel of the existing building. It will be quite extensive changing from a car wash to a rental unit. The current plan is to rent the entire building for a flat rate per night not on a room by room basis. Lee stated he hoped to begin the remodel process on the two Morton buildings next to the Ahavah Cottage in the next six weeks and the remodel of the Car Wash building will follow.

Engebretson stated there are rental units similar to this proposal in Lanesboro, Minnesota, and they are rented by single room. They are very popular there. There is a need for that type of rental in Elysian. The Commissioners encouraged Lee to consider that type of rental for these units.

Public Comment:

Kim Greenwald-Mitchell, owner of Mama Mercantile, 410 State Highway 60 W, stated she is in full support of the conversion to a rental unit. This type of business will be advantageous to both her and Mr. Lee. The amount of people the wedding venue draws to the City has helped her business tremendously.

There were no further public comments.

Written comment:

“Clinton Stoen  
217 Jill Lynn Circle  
Elysian MN  
9-5-2023

To: Planning Zoning / City Staff

I am writing in regards to the request of converting the car wash into rental units.

I do not feel the benefits of adding more lodging outweighs the loss of the current car wash.

It was apparent that it will be missed when people complained about the lack of upkeep and maintenance. Many people locally and outside of town used it.

I am curious if all options have been looked at as far as lodging. Can something more be done on the current site of the sheds that are being renovated for lodging? Or is it possible to do something on the large parking lot at Ahavah Cottage? Or is there vacant land in the community?

Having a car wash in a small town is a huge asset. Is it worth losing a business that currently serves many people's needs?

I am respectfully asking for Planning and Zoning to deny the request. If this is denied. I would hope the current owners will realize and see the need for a car wash.

Thank you for your time.

Clinton Stoen"

There were no further written comments.

Lee stated he understands and agrees with the written comments but the amount of money it would cost to get The Car Wash operable does not make sense.

Henninger agreed that the loss of The Car Wash will hurt the community, but the bottom line is Lee will not be able to keep it open due to cost regardless. The remodel will provide a business to be open in that building.

Engebretson commented that there are lots of businesses that a small city cannot support because they need volume to survive. It is not economically feasible.

On motion by McBroom, seconded by Henninger, all voting in favor, to close the Public Hearing at 6:22 pm and reopen the regular meeting.

Lee stated he would provide screening along State Highway 60 West as allowed by MnDOT. He is planning on arborvitae.

On motion by McBroom, seconded by Engebretson, all voting in favor, to approve the request of Jacob Lee for a conditional use permit for the property located at 406 State Highway 60 W (PID# 16.410.1035) to convert The Car Wash building into a six bedroom short term rental unit subject to the following:

1. Conditions of City of Elysian Code of Ordinance TITLE XI: BUSINESS REGULATIONS: Chapter 112. SHORT TERM VACATION PROPERTIES.
2. Screening along State Highway 60 West.

The request will be considered by the City Council at their September 11, 2023 Regular meeting.

Minnesota Valley Council of Governments provided the results of the City of Elysian Comprehensive Plan Survey. There were 130 responses received. Commissioners will review the results and discuss at the October meeting. A representative of MVCOG will be asked to attend that meeting and discuss next steps with the Commissioners.

There was no further business to come before the Commission.

On motion by McBroom, seconded by Henninger, all voting in favor, meeting adjourned at 6:37 pm.

Attest:

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Tom McBroom, Sr., Chairperson

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Lorri Kopischke, Zoning Administrator