

To: **Mayor and City Council**  
Through: **Ryan Schroeder, City Manager**  
**Jim Hartshorn, Comm. Dev. Director**  
From: **Melissa Sonnek, City Planner**  
Date: **January 11, 2021**

**Site Plan, Preliminary and Final Plat Review for 1365 Robert St. – Linn Investments Properties**

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Sambatek, on behalf of Linn Investments Properties, LLC, has applied for site plan, preliminary and final plat approval for the construction of a new commercial self-serve laundromat building (Tumble Fresh) at 1365 Robert Street.

The project would include a complete teardown of the existing building and the construction of a new building in a similar location to where the current Perkin’s building sits. Please see the attached Planning Commission report for additional information related to the request.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- Application, Narrative, and Public Notice
- City Attorney’s Office Memo
- Planning Commission Memo
- Submitted Plans/Plat Resolutions



## PLANNING COMMISSION REVIEW:

The Planning Commission held a virtual meeting and a public hearing on December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020. No one called in to speak on any of the applications for this project.

The Planning Commission discussed the following items:

- Building location in relation to Robert St.
  - Commissioners discussed that while the current zoning code does allow for a front yard building setback of 20-90 ft., they would like to see the building moved up, closer to Robert Street to align with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and the Renaissance Plan.
  - As the applicant stated that this creates a safety concern for customers, the Commission asked about additional safety measures such as video cameras. The applicant explained that they have camera on site, as well as a security system that allows the police department to log in and view the cameras at any time, the building also automatically closes after a certain time.
  - As is further detailed in the attached memo written by Amanda Johnson from the City Attorney's Office, after the adoption of the original Renaissance plan the zoning code was amended to what it is today. Which requires that buildings in the B1, B2, B3, B5, and B6 zoning districts be placed 10-40 feet from the front property line, while the B4, I1, and I2 districts were allowed a larger setback of up to 90 feet as these areas more typically include larger sized buildings, such as big box stores or shopping centers.
    - If the City Council feels that this exception no longer aligns with the intent of the Renaissance Plan and/or Comprehensive Plan, City Staff would advise further internal discussion to determine more appropriate requirements.
- Building orientation and parking location
  - Since the applicant stated they strongly prefer to have parking in front for added visibility and safety, the Commission inquired about rotating the building to allow for an east-west orientation rather than a north-south orientation. The applicant was not able to comment on this as they did not have appropriate drawings prepared to speak on this option.
- Sidewalk along Emerson Avenue
  - The Commissioners voiced that they would like to see a sidewalk on the north side of the site along Emerson Avenue to make the site and the general area more pedestrian friendly. The applicant stated they would look into this option and see if a sidewalk would be possible.
- Proposed vacuum along Robert St.
  - The Commission voiced concerns about the proposed vacuum location on site, as it directly abuts Robert St. it could be too noisy for pedestrians walking by the site or even the church across the street. Additionally, the Commission voiced their preference to either move the vacuum to the rear (west) of the building or to add screening around the vacuums to off-set any noise or unpleasant mechanicals of the vacuums.
  - As a result of this, the applicant has placed additional landscaping around the proposed vacuum station and supplied the manufacturer specifics on noise levels.
- MnDot letter requiring the closure of the Robert St. access

- The Commission voiced concerns on looking at a site plan without full knowledge on if/when MnDot would require the closure of the Robert St. access on the site. Staff advised the Commission that they are to view the application and the site as it currently exists.
- Both City Staff and the applicant will continue to work with MnDot to determine an access design that works for all parties.

**Votes:**

**Site Plan**

- Recommended for Approval 6-1, (Stevens as nay vote)
  - With the added condition that the building be relocated up to Robert St. with all parking to the rear (west) of the building and to close the Robert St. access, in the interest of protecting the public interest to align the site with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and the Renaissance Plan.

**Preliminary and Final Plat**

- Recommended for Approval 7-0

**STAFF REVIEW:**

With the above noted comments from the Planning Commission, City Staff would like to detail that the proposed plans do comply with the current zoning code requirements for the front yard building setback (allowing 20-90ft. front yard building setback). However, the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and Renaissance Plan Update call for redevelopment along Robert Street to be more pedestrian friendly and place the buildings up to the street with parking lots to the side or rear, particularly on corner lots. In light of this, City Staff has listed an additional optional condition, condition number eight.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

With the above noted comments from the Planning Commission, City Staff would again like to mention the memo written by Amanda Johnson from the City Attorney’s office as it pertains to the proposed building location and associated setbacks.

**Staff recommends APPROVAL of the SITE PLAN to allow for the construction of a self-serve laundromat in a B4 – Shopping Center District at 1365 Robert St. subject to the submitted plans and the following conditions:**

1. Approval of the site plan is contingent on the corresponding preliminary and final plat application,
2. The applicant shall apply for and obtain all applicable building and sign permits,
3. The applicant shall revise the proposed signage to comply with section 153 of the zoning ordinance,
4. The applicant shall ensure that all lighting levels will not exceed zero foot candles at all abutting property lines, and no direct glare shall extend into the public street, public open space, or neighboring properties,
5. The applicant shall consider the recommendations of the Environmental Committee per the attached memo dated December 8, 2020,

6. The applicant shall ensure that all rooftop mechanicals are properly screened per zoning code section 153.032(F)5, and
7. The applicant shall adhere to all items outlined in the WSB Engineering memo dated December 7, 2020.

**The City may add reasonable conditions to an approval, if said conditions preserve the public interest, health, safety, and/or welfare. Therefore, if City Council finds the 8<sup>th</sup> condition below to be reasonable, it may be added to the above listed conditions of approval:**

8. Applicant shall move the building closer to Robert St. as detailed in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

**Staff recommends APPROVAL of the PRELIMINARY PLAT and FINAL PLAT for 1365 Robert St. subject to the submitted plat drawings and the following conditions:**

1. Approval of the preliminary and final plat is contingent upon the corresponding site plan application,
2. The applicant shall continue to work with City Staff and MnDot to come to an agreement on the Robert St. access for the site, and
3. The final plat shall be recorded within one year of approval and prior to application of a building permit.