

**Saint Paul Planning Commission
City Hall Conference Center
15 Kellogg Boulevard West**

Minutes April 18, 2014

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, April 18, 2014, at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

Commissioners Present: Mmes. DeJoy, Noecker, Padilla, Reveal, Shively, Thao, Wencil; and Messrs. Edgerton, Gelgelu, Lindeke, Makarios, Nelson, Ochs, Oliver, and Ward.

Commissioners Absent: Mmes. *Merrigan, *Underwood, *Wang, and Messrs. *Connolly, and *Wickiser.
*Excused

Also Present: Donna Drummond, Planning Director; Katie Knutson, Mayor's Office, Bill Dermody, and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

I. Approval of minutes March 21, 2014.

MOTION: Commissioner Shively moved approval of the minutes of March 21, 2014. Commissioner Noecker seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

II. Chair's Announcements

Chair Wencil announced that the Planning Commission has a full table of 10 attending the Great River Gathering Dinner on May 8, 2014.

III. Planning Director's Announcements

Donna Drummond announced that Cecile Bedor, Director of Planning & Economic Development has resigned. Cecile has been the director for almost 8 years, which is longer than any other PED Director. She will become the Executive Vice President for Greater MSP, the Regional Economic Development Organization. Her last day is May 8th. Also the Mayor announced the appointment of a new Deputy Mayor who will be starting in May, Kristin Beckmann from Habitat for Humanity.

At the commissioners' places is a new committee list since the appointments have been finalized, along with a new contact list. If there are still some corrections needed, commissioners should let Sonja or Donna know.

Finally, the City Council had laid over final adoption of the Transit Street amendments. Councilmember Thune has some concerns about whether or not the Fort Road Federation had the opportunity to fully analyze the impact of the amendments. In particular, he is concerned about the reduction in the parking requirement for residential projects in T1 and T2, so he asked the

Council to lay this over for 45 days and asked the Planning Commission to check back in with the district councils. The other amendment that is part of that package is to allow additional height, from 35 ft. to 45 ft., with a conditional use permit. There did not seem to be any concern about that amendment.

IV. Zoning Committee

SITE PLAN REVIEW – List of current applications. (*Tom Beach, 651/266-9086*)

Two items to come before the Site Plan Review Committee on Tuesday, April 22, 2014:

- Mount Airy, construct new 4-plex and enlarge existing parking lot at 71 Mount Airy Street.
- Custom House, renovate Federal Post Office building for apartments and hotel at 180 Kellogg Blvd East. (Preliminary review)

NO BUSINESS

V. Comprehensive Planning Committee

Thrive MSP 2040 – Consider and recommend to the Mayor the draft City of Saint Paul comments that will be sent under the Mayor's signature. (*Donna Drummond, 651/266-6556*)

Commissioner Reveal said that with Thrive MSP 2040 the Met Council is starting the next full cycle of comprehensive planning, which involves setting an overarching policy document and then doing system plans for the system elements that they operate, like transit. This is the first cut of the overarching plan and it has been sent out to all of the jurisdictions in the region for comment. She thought the City has done a more comprehensive job than other jurisdictions. The draft of the City's comments and a resolution recommending these comments to the Mayor for consideration is before the commission today.

Donna Drummond, Planning Director, added that the Comprehensive Planning Committee suggested a few edits to the comments, which are in the track changes version at the Commissioners places on pages 4 and 6. Also, on the first page she crossed out "and climate mitigation and resilience." Looking back at the document it does say that the Met Council will be convening stakeholders around that issue so that will be deleted.

Ms. Drummond said that the Met Council has organized its vision around five outcomes - stewardship, prosperity, equity, livability and sustainability, and are proposing to set up metrics to measure the region's progress toward those. The three guiding principles to guide that work are integration, collaboration, and accountability. The City believes these are the right outcomes and the right approach to take to these issues. But there could be stronger language on some of these topics in terms of implementation. The Met Council under state law is responsible for several regional systems related to waste water treatment, regional parks and transportation. This Met Council appointed by Governor Dayton has taken a more proactive role and sees its role in a broader sense as a convener around regional topics. One area they could be more proactive in is helping the region develop an economic development strategy. There is the entity recently created, Greater MSP, that's focused mostly on marketing and business attraction to the region.

There could be more focused effort to have a regional economic development strategy that brings together job training, education, real estate development and marketing.

The Thrive document highlights the whole idea of equity and the fact that the region is becoming increasingly diverse. That is projected to continue and grow into the future and the income gap and the education gap is alarming and reflects poorly on this region compared to other regions. Thrive recognizes the need to address this. These draft comments talk about how we can use an economic development approach to address those issues more directly. The comments also address the need to focus on infill development and redevelopment rather than on green fields at the edges of the metro area. The comments also address the debate about affordable housing and whether we are over-concentrating affordable housing on the Green LRT Line.

Other comments include the need for the Met Council to be stronger in making the case for more resources for maintaining public infrastructure especially roads and highways. Public Works staff has talked about the fact that we have 191 miles of arterial roads in the city and we get enough municipal state aid money to pay for replacing or rebuilding about 4 miles every year. They are crumbling and needing replacement. We are patching them together every year and that is a critical need throughout the state. Comments from Parks address better outreach to all the diverse communities in the metro area and making sure that we are meeting the needs, looking through the equity lens. Thrive addresses climate change but there needs to be stronger language in this area.

Commissioner Ochs said asked whether the departments that have submitted these different comments stand ready to be a resource for Met Council on implementing these ideas.

Ms. Drummond said that there are specific ideas that staff from different departments have, and this is a chance to highlight that these are important issues that need more discussion.

Commissioner Ward commented that on page 8 there is a short paragraph dealing with water resources and the little sentence above talks about coming up with more effective ways for controlling stormwater runoff. How much of this plan talks about or refers to best practices from around the country that we already know of? And how does it tie in new products that are out on the market already as far as research and development of how to implement these into city planning and water quality and water standards. How much of that is being done?

Ms. Drummond replied that this water resource section was written by the City's Water Resources Coordinator, Wes Saunders-Pearce. He is definitely very knowledgeable about best practices related to green infrastructure and stormwater management. He felt that the policy document could be stronger in that regard, that it did not really talk a lot about stormwater management for example. These comments are just highlighting that this is an important issue. Throughout the Thrive document the Met Council makes it clear that it wants to offer technical assistance to communities that need it in these different areas.

Commissioner Reveal added that they did have a fair amount of discussion on this at the committee meeting. The Met Council will do a water resources plan and what Wes was saying to them is that this is a significant issue. The water resources plan will get down to more detail with more guidance on green infrastructure. Commissioner Reveal thinks that he is on the right track and the Thrive document is not the place to do the detail but the water resources plan is really important and there are committees that have been established that are now starting that work.

Commissioner Edgerton asked about the Met Council's role in stormwater management. We do not need another regulatory entity stepping in as we already have a lot of them between watersheds, the MPCA, EPA, etc. So what's the role that Met Council wants to take on this? Also on pages 6, under Parks and Open Space, it mentions that equity of access is important, which he agrees with. He thinks the argument should be made that most of the state's population is here, with greater diversity, and that more resources for the metro area could be viewed as more equitable for that reason.

Ms. Drummond said that that would be a good thing to add and she can certainly do that.

MOTION: *Commissioner Reveal moved the Comprehensive Planning Committee's recommendation to approve the resolution to consider and recommend to the Mayor the draft City of Saint Paul comments. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

VI. Neighborhood Planning Committee

Gateway Station Area Planning – Initiate planning process, establish task force and initiate zoning study. (Bill Dermody, 651/266-6617)

Chair Wencl said that this resolution initiates the planning process and establishes a task force and zoning study for the Gateway Corridor which is from the eastern end of Woodbury on to the I-94 corridor into Saint Paul.

Bill Dermody, PED staff, said that Washington County is undertaking a draft environmental impact statement for the Gateway Corridor and it would be major investment whether BRT or LRT. There are six stations potentially in the city, though one is the Union Depot which has already been studied, so up to five new station area plans will be created.

MOTION: *Commissioner Oliver moved the Neighborhood Planning Committee's recommendation to approve the resolution initiating a plan and zoning study. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

Commissioner Oliver announced that the next Neighborhood Planning Committee meeting on April 23, 2014 has been cancelled.

VII. City of Saint Paul's 2014 Legislative Agenda and Session Update – Presentation by Katie Knutson, Government Relations, Mayor's Office.

The Planning Commission received a copy of the City of Saint Paul 2014 Legislative Agenda in their packets before the meeting.

Katie Knutson, Mayor's Office, reviewed the legislative agenda and gave an update of where they are at the session and what they're expecting the last four weeks. There are three priority items this year, local government aid, capital investment bonding and transportation. There are eight bonding priorities, the first three are the Children's Museum, Como Park Transportation Access & Circulation Improvements, and the Historic Palace Theater, which were all included in the Governor's budget. Everything at some level, except for the Regional Public Safety Facility in Saint Paul and the Dorothy Day ReVision, was included in the House Bill.

Regarding transportation Financing, the City joined Move Minnesota, which is making a big push for an increase in overall transportation funding.

They have been busy at the Capitol this year, with a lot of City of Saint Paul employees testifying, including Sara Grewing, City Attorney's Office, who testified about the domestic violence gun forfeiture bill; Rick Larkin worked on and testified about the railroad safety bill and the disaster aid relief bill; Ken Reid, Police Department, has been active in the data privacy legislation, which has been a hot topic. He's testified on both the automated license plate reader legislation and the location search warrant legislation. The Mayor testified on the Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood Bill, a bill that would give Saint Paul's Promise Neighborhood \$1.1 million of ongoing funding.

What's been done this session includes tax bill #1, many of the unsession bills that are a priority for the Governor have been done, minimum wage was just passed and the bullying bill was passed. Still to do is a second tax bill where LGA inflation would be addressed. The supplemental budget needs to be negotiated and the Senate has not yet introduced their bonding bill this year. They will not be introducing it next week, which gives them three weeks until the end of session to negotiate the bonding bill. The Senate still needs to take up the Women's Economic Security Act, which did pass the House. In the supplemental budget they are tracking things in education, recycling, transportation and public safety. There will be extra money for state roads, county roads and municipal roads to help with the massive amounts of pot holes as a result of the tough winter and some would say the lack of transportation funding previously. There is transit funding in both bills; in the Senate bill it's more funding but it's more general allocation and in the House bill it is less funding but it is specifically for arterial BRT. They like that because the two priority projects for Met Council for arterial BRT are the Snelling Avenue line and the West 7th line. Finally there is an increase in funding for just overall road construction. Also, the Senate Office building passed. So when they go back on Tuesday there will be four weeks left in the session with still a lot to do.

Commissioner Ward asked whether funding allocated for a specific purpose must be spent on that purpose or is it allocated as general funding which might be used to plug budget holes in other areas.

Ms. Knutson said some of it depends on the way the legislation is written. The arterial BRT language specifically says it's for arterial BRT, whereas in the Senate Bill that funding is transit way development which says that it could be used basically for anything that the Met Council wants to use it for. So it depends on how that final language is agreed to and written. The Governor still has his line item veto authority once the bills get passed to him to see where he does or doesn't want that money to go.

Commissioner Padilla said that once funding is passed for a particular project, whether it's transit way generally or specifically BRT, that is what that money is dedicated for. Unless there's a specific call back provision or something that reflects that money will go back into the general fund if it's not spent, that money is dedicated for that purpose and it can't be brought back.

Commissioner Ward said so it stays allocated for those particular projects that have been voted on an approved. Commissioner Padilla replied yes.

Commissioner Nelson said on page 11 there is a line item that talks about "Items to Monitor" and they all say monitor except the last line says "oppose." Is "monitor" things we're concerned about that we could potentially oppose and why does it talk about opposing forfeiture laws?

Ms. Knutson said that in general "monitor" is used for issues that they are concerned about and have a stake in. The opposed language related to state forfeiture laws relates to what they heard would possibly be proposed, and that the City would oppose. But none of that has come so they are still just monitoring it.

Commissioner Nelson wanted to know if it was related to past problems with the gang task force and things of that sort.

Ms. Knutson said from what she knows it's not related to that but this was actually done before she came. She will follow up on that and get back to him.

VIII. Transportation Committee

Commissioner Ochs reported that at their last meeting they had four items from Public Works, including the Maryland Avenue Widening Project, the Ames, Case and White Bear intersection redesign, the Cayuga, Arkwright Widening and Traffic Signal Project, and the Margaret Bikeway Project, establishing a bikeway route along Margaret Avenue. The next Transportation Committee meeting will be on Monday, April 21st at which the committee will meet at the Bandshell in Mears Park on Sixth Street between Sibley and Wacouta at 4:00 p.m.

IX. Communications Committee

Commissioner Thao had no report.

X. Task Force/Liaison Reports

Commissioner Reveal announced that the previous night the West Side Flats Master Plan Community Task Force met and they will be meeting again on April 30th. The sticking point is height so they are going to look again at the zoning recommendations in the draft plan. She thinks that the task force (10 out of 13) feel if they can reach a compromise, they prefer to do that and so they are making one more effort to try and find a way that they can have the task force be unanimous in supporting a strategy as well as a specific zoning recommendation. They are down to seven parcels that are at issue in the entire study area.

Commissioner Nelson announced that the Shepard Davern Task Force had their final meeting to review the draft for the plan. The next stage will be the public zoning presentation and study portion. Towards the end of the meeting a couple of land owners in the area came forward and stated that they had some concerns about the direction some of the zoning might be headed. One does not want to have a TN zone based upon his existing operation having to do with parking in front versus parking behind, and the other owner is interested in TN zoning for the density uses because he is more interested in a housing project. So the next step is to get a public hearing scheduled for the zoning study and go through that process.

XI. Old Business

None.

XII. New Business

None.

XIII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:33 a.m.

Recorded and prepared by
Sonja Butler, Planning Commission Secretary
Planning and Economic Development Department,
City of Saint Paul

Respectfully submitted,



Donna Drummond
Planning Director

Approved May 2, 2014
(Date)



Daniel Ward II
Secretary of the Planning Commission