

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

Minutes June 5, 2015

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, June 5, 2015, at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

Commissioners Present: Mmes. DeJoy, McMahon, Merrigan, Noecker, Reveal, Shively, Thao, Underwood Wencil; and Messrs. Edgerton, Gelgelu, Lindeke, Makarios, Nelson, and Oliver.

Commissioners Absent: Mmes. *Padilla, *Wang, and Messrs. Connolly, *Ochs, *Ward, and Wickiser.
*Excused

Also Present: Donna Drummond, Planning Director; Allan Torstenson, Mike Richardson, and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

I. Approval of minutes May 8, 2015.

MOTION: *Commissioner Reveal moved approval of the minutes of May 8, 2015. Commissioner Noecker seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

II. Chair's Announcements

Chair Wencil had no announcements.

III. Planning Director's Announcements

Donna Drummond announced that the Parks Commission is hosting an event called Summer '15 networking on Wed., June 17th at the Como Park Zoo & Conservatory Visitors Center. RSVPs are required. At City Council on Wednesday the Shepard Davern appeal of the Planning Commission's approval of a height variance for the Johnson Brothers project at Shepard Davern was denied but the height was reduced to 60 feet from 73.5 feet. The West Side Flats Master Plan was also on the agenda. Councilmember Thune put forward several amendments to the plan to essentially maintain the status quo in the industrial area east of Robert Street.

IV. Zoning Committee

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

One item to come before the Site Plan Review Committee on Tuesday, June 9, 2015:

- Stewart Avenue parking lot – New 50 space parking lot being built in conjunction with an extension of Stewart Avenue south of Otto. Parking would be for a proposed park.

Ms. Drummond said that the city attorney is comfortable with this and that special zoning requirements for different areas of the city depending on conditions is not unusual.

Commissioner Reveal asked if we normally do that with overlay districts.

Ms. Drummond said it is not always done with an overlay district. The West Grand zoning amendments were done with a footnote to the residential dimensional standards table.

Allan Torstenson noted that the draft amendments specific to Planning Districts 14 and 15 would be in footnote 66.231(l) of the residential dimensional standards table. Footnote 66.231(k) is the footnote specific to Grand Avenue between Fairview and Cretin. The idea was that having all of the residential standards together in one place makes them easier to find and more clear than to have some of the standards in an overlay district in a separate chapter of the zoning code.

Commissioner Noecker would like to have consistent standards citywide. Ward 3 has come forward with urgency to address issues in Districts 14 and 15, and she doesn't want to hold that up. Other district councils want more time to consider the amendments, so is this the best way to balance wanting citywide consistency and also moving things forward in Ward 3.

Commissioner Merrigan would like a time frame for coming back to this and looking at citywide amendments.

Commissioner Lindeke would also like to come back to review data about how the new regulations worked, and see if there are unintended consequences. He recalled a North End neighborhood with small lots where the house he had lived in occupies a lot of the lot, and asked about the need for the new lot coverage restriction.

Mr. Richardson said the existing separate lot coverage calculations for principle and accessory buildings might allow total lot coverage inconsistent with surrounding character.

Commissioner Lindeke said he would like to see analysis of the new regulations related to the different character of existing neighborhoods and the problem people have with some new buildings.

Commissioner Edgerton said he is on the Neighborhood Planning Committee and they spent a lot of time in a number of meetings working through these draft amendments. He thanked Mike Richardson, who put together a lot of data specific to Ward 3 and Districts 14 and 15 that was useful for understanding the impact of the draft regulations. For example, on the lot coverage limit they looked at 40% but the data indicated that would probably create too many nonconforming buildings, so they recommended 45%, which is consistent with Minneapolis. It would take a lot of work to similarly analyze the impact of the new regulations for the rest of the city, but he would not be comfortable recommending some of them citywide without additional citywide analysis. He would worry that they might create thousands of nonconforming properties. In terms of a trial period, Mr. Edgerton would like to see how the new regulations work in Ward 3 before considering them elsewhere in the city. We are not hearing about similar issues elsewhere in the city. We are trying to encourage investment in property, so we should be careful not to discourage it with unnecessary constraints.

Commissioner Edgerton said he is not convinced that house additions and new homes are seen as a problem in other parts of the city. Rather, such investment in homes is seen as a good thing. Without complaints about the types of homes being built, then in general we should not overly restrict them. If anything we should encourage redevelopment and reinvestment in the city.

Commissioner Merrigan agreed that reinvestment is good. The issue is what kinds of homes are being built and how they respect their neighbors. Saint Paul is made up of diverse neighborhoods and housing stock built over a period of time, and different neighborhoods have different character.

Commissioner Oliver said he is not comfortable with different zoning standards for different parts of the city and therefore will not vote for this.

Commissioner Lindeke asked about having staff to come back in a year or some period of time to report on how these new regulations are working.

Mr. Richardson said that's possible.

Commissioner Underwood said that she would be interested to know how many people choose not to do a house addition or go somewhere else because of these modifications.

Commissioner Lindeke added that it will be interesting to see how developers respond, which may be in unanticipated ways.

Commissioner DeJoy said that the neighborhood that she works and lives in has a lot of large families. She has been thinking about the impact the new restrictions would have on them, and the ability of adding on to a house if they have another child or a grandparent living with them, so she does not think they would work citywide.

Commissioner McMahon said as a matter of policy she understands and generally agrees with uniform citywide standards, but she supports this well thought out compromise that the committee has recommended. Releasing the citywide public hearing draft has put this on the agenda citywide. There weren't any developers who came forward to say this is too restrictive or would not work.

Commissioner Reveal moved to call the question. There being only 1 (Edgerton) objection, the Commission proceeded to the vote on the main motion.

MAIN MOTION: *Motion to approve the resolution recommending that the zoning code amendments be adopted by the Mayor and City Council. The motion carried 13-2 (Noecker, Oliver) on a voice vote.*

Commissioner Oliver announced the items on the agenda at the next Neighborhood Planning Committee meeting on Wednesday, June 10th 2015.

VI. Comprehensive Planning Committee

Commissioner Merrigan reported that their last meeting on Tuesday, June 2nd was cancelled and

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

Respectfully submitted,

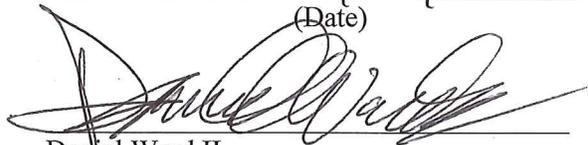


Donna Drummond
Planning Director

Approved

July 10, 2015

(Date)



Daniel Ward II
Secretary of the Planning Commission

PlanningTeamFiles\planning commission\minutes\June 5, 2015