

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

Minutes September 4, 2015

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, September 4, 2015, at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

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

Commissioners Absent: Mmes. *Padilla, and *Underwood, and Mr. *Connolly.
*Excused

Also Present: Donna Drummond, Planning Director; Allan Torstenson, Lucy Thompson, Michelle Beaulieu, Anton Jerve, and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

I. Approval of minutes August 7, 2015.

MOTION: *Commissioner Thao moved approval of the minutes of August 7, 2015. Commissioner McMahon 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 last Wednesday the City Council adopted the Parkland Dedication Ordinance as recommended by the Planning Commission with one minor change.

An email invitation was sent out to the Planning Commission for a presentation by Gil Penalosa, who advocates for design of cities that are safe for ages 8-80, on Thursday, September 17, 2015 from 3:00 – 4:00 p.m., Room 40, City Hall.

Michelle Beaulieu has resigned to take a job as a Transportation Planner with the San Francisco County Transportation Authority. Her excellent work has been appreciated for the past 3 years and we wish her all the best in her new job.

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, September 15, 2015:

- Lonnie Adkins Court – New free-standing, 800 square foot leasing office and clubhouse building for existing apartment complex at 389 St. Anthony Avenue. (*Larry Zangs*)

NEW BUSINESS

#15-138-295 Joan Bassing – Reestablishment of nonconforming use as a triplex. 900 Jenks Avenue between Forest and Mendota. (*Bill Dermody, 651/266-6617*)

MOTION: Commissioner Nelson moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to deny the reestablishment of legal nonconforming use. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

#15-143-784 Stone House Tap Room – Historic use variance for a tap house/microbrewery with food service. 445 Smith Avenue N. between Goodrich and McBoal. (*Bill Dermody, 651/266-6617*)

Commissioner Noecker expressed support for the project and the historic use variance.

Commissioner Thao asked about the condition for no off-street parking on the site.

Commissioner Nelson said that parking for the use would be on a separate lot to minimize impact on the historic character of the site.

MOTION: Commissioner Nelson moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the historic use variance subject to additional conditions. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

#15-143-968 Stone House Tap Room – Side and rear setback variances. 445 Smith Avenue N. between Goodrich and McBoal. (*Bill Dermody, 651/266-6617*)

MOTION: Commissioner Nelson moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the variance subject to additional conditions. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

#15-146-534 Stone Saloon Parking – Variance to allow the corner of a parking space to be set back 4 inches from a public sidewalk. 444 7th Street West, SE corner at Douglas. (*Bill Dermody, 651/266-6617*)

Commissioner Merrigan asked about the lease agreement between the applicant and the owners of the parking lot, and what happens if the lease can't be negotiated.

Commissioner Nelson said parking for the use must be in place for the use to be established, but asked what would happen if the lease were not renegotiated when it expires.

Donna Drummond, Planning Director, said that lease agreements for required parking are not unusual in the city. If at some future point parking is not available or not provided it would be out of compliance with the code requirement and there would be enforcement action taken to ensure compliance.

Commissioner Nelson said that this use will also have licensing requirements.

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Commissioner Lindeke discussed the proposed provision of bicycle parking, noting that a lot of bicyclists will go as close as they can get to the front door and park. Therefore, he encouraged the applicant to try get the bicycle parking as close to the saloon as possible.

Commissioner Ward made a motion to add a condition to have signage that designates the parking spaces for the Stone Saloon only. The motion failed for lack of a second.

Commissioner DeJoy said that things like signage and lease agreements for required parking are commonly addressed in conditions placed on licenses.

Commissioner Ward agreed and said they can also be addressed as part of a variance.

Commissioner Oliver moved to reconsider the matter of the historic use variance to make the required off-street parking a condition of the use variance. The motion failed for lack of a second.

MOTION: Commissioner Nelson moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the variance subject to additional conditions. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

#15-136-832 IAF 2400 University LLC – Conditional use permit for maximum building height of 75 feet. 2400 University Avenue W. / 735 Raymond. (Anton Jerve, 651/266-6567)

MOTION: Commissioner Nelson moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the conditional use permit subject to an additional condition. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

#15-145-496 Timothy Niver – Reestablishment of nonconforming use for a restaurant. 786 Randolph Avenue, SW corner at View. (Michelle Beaulieu, 651/266-6620)

MOTION: Commissioner Nelson moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the reestablishment of legal nonconforming use subject to an additional condition. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

#15-144-494 Integrity Auto Sales – Conditional use permit for outdoor auto sales and minor repair of vehicles for sale. 501 Maryland Avenue W., NW corner at Mackubin. (Jamie Radel, 651/266-6614)

Commissioner Edgerton asked about the basis for the number of cars for sale and parking spaces stated in conditions 2 and 3.

Commissioner Nelson said that it has to do with site constraints and what the applicant is requesting. They are not looking for a large display area to store vehicles.

Commissioner Merrigan asked about the need for screening fencing in this location.

Commissioner Nelson said that would be covered in site plan review.

MOTION: Commissioner Nelson moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the conditional use permit subject to additional conditions. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

Commissioner Nelson announced the items on the agenda for the next Zoning Committee meeting on September 10, 2015.

V. Saint Paul Downtown Alliance – Informational presentation by Joe Spartz, President, Saint Paul Building Owners and Managers Association.

Joe Spartz, President, Saint Paul Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA), gave a power point presentation which can be viewed on the web page at:
<http://www.stpaul.gov/planningcommission>.

Commissioner Thao asked how the Downtown Alliance organization is structured and whether it is a legal entity.

Mr. Spartz said that right now it is totally volunteer. If there is enough interest, support and energy around this they may consider formally becoming a registered non-profit organization.

Commissioner Noecker asked about the Downtown Alliance's implementation capacity. If they have an idea for a year round night market in Rice Park, Alive after Five, or Friday night concerts, for example, how would they make it happen?

Mr. Spartz said it's a matter of identifying partners, having conversations about what interest or resources there might be to put toward different initiatives.

Commissioner Gelgelu asked who is the target for the Alliance, is it businesses or the building owners? And where is the territory of people or organizations you've engaged so far? .

Mr. Spartz said that their target is anybody who cares about the long term vitality of downtown Saint Paul. In other words, they are very open as far as who can engage with the Downtown Alliance. They want to make sure that the public sector is a part of it so it truly is a private/public partnership. From a territory stand point they define downtown as being a little broader than the traditional view of downtown but it is consistent with what BOMA reports on in terms of market data. It includes across the river, the West Side Flats area, over to Highway 52, up to University Ave., over to Marion, down along Kellogg to I-35E, and a little of West 7th St.

Commissioner DeJoy recounted the history of the Downtown Council and Capital City Partnership. The Downtown Council was more focused on activities to bring customers downtown after five. The Capital City Partnership was all about the CEOs making a commitment to stay in Saint Paul and coming up with ways to attract more corporations to come to Saint Paul. Those CEOs have since retired and those organizations have gone away. So with this new entity, are you going to do both - trying to get more customers in the core city and also attract businesses? What is the vacancy rate, is there a plan to fill those vacancies, and what is your role in that?

Mr. Spartz said that BOMA does market research and not the Downtown Alliance. In fact BOMA will be issuing its newest market report for 2015 and that is going to be on October 5th.

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Commissioner Merrigan asked about the need for screening fencing in this location.

Commissioner Nelson said that would be covered in site plan review.

The last report showed vacancy in the low 20's for the competitive office market. The Downtown Alliance wants to be more focused on longer term planning and they have not been as focused with specific events but looking at what needs to be done to drive long term growth from a policy stand point, including supporting the public sector in terms of what they're trying to do and get behind them on various kinds of projects.

Commissioner Lindeke thinks that the initial priorities for the Downtown Alliance are terrific and it usually takes downtown and public/private partnerships years to figure out the focus on spaces between the buildings. This represents a shift for BOMA to think about what we are miss beyond just talking about individual properties. The Fourth Street initiative, the downtown parking study and the public realm committee are all great, so keep up the good work.

Commissioner Ochs discussed private interests sometimes conflicting with public interests, and different views on how to build a city. He asked about their methods of representing and reconciling different interests and views.

Mr. Spartz said that the private sector and the public sector will not always be in agreement, but it is absolutely essential that almost all the time they are. So if the two are going in diverse directions it is not productive for the city. We want to work together with the City to figure this out because in the long run that is going to be beneficial for the downtown area.

Commissioner Edgerton asked about the meaning of the circus tent image on the slide presentation.

Mr. Spartz said that anybody can be part of the Downtown Alliance who cares about the long term vitality of downtown Saint Paul, so it's a big tent. You don't have to be a resident or employee in downtown Saint Paul to care about the downtown.

Lucy Thompson, PED staff, commented that she has been a downtown planner for many years and from the City's perspective we really appreciate the informal organizations getting together, recognizing there is a need to do something in downtown, and not waiting for the City to initiate things. The Wabasha Action Group is another example where people saw an issue (business owners, property owners) and they organized and brought the City to the table, but we did not have to be in charge. The public realm task force is also an example of people showing up because they care about the public realm. The players out there who really have something at stake have recognized it and then organized to do something about it.

Mr. Spartz thanked Ms. Thompson and said from his perspective the City has done tremendous work in terms of driving growth in downtown Saint Paul, but it doesn't have an unlimited budget unfortunately. So whenever the private sector can jump in and help move the ball along everybody benefits from that.

VI. Comprehensive Planning Committee

Commissioner Merrigan reported that their meeting last week was cancelled.

VII. Neighborhood Planning Committee

Chair Wencil reported that at the last meeting they reviewed the public hearing comments from

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Chair Wencil reported that at the last meeting they reviewed the public hearing comments from

the Campus Boundaries Zoning Study. Most of the comments were asking for further study. The committee asked staff to contact the affected parties and discuss the possibilities for different approaches. The next meeting scheduled on Wednesday, September 9th has been cancelled.

VIII. Transportation Committee

Commissioner Lindeke reported that the committee had a special meeting on Monday, August 31st to discuss a recommendation on the bike lanes that are being proposed as part of City's mill and overlay projects. These projects were acted on by the City Council last Wednesday. The Transportation Committee's next meeting will be on Monday, September 21, 2015.

IX. Communications Committee

Commissioner Thao had no report.

X. Task Force/Liaison Reports

Commissioner Thao announced that the Grand Round Advisory Committee will be meeting on Tuesday, September 15, 2015 at the Arlington Hills Community Center at 6:00 p.m.

Commissioner Makarios announced that the Ford Site Task Force does not have a date yet for their Fall meetings, but they are getting closer to a comprehensive environmental report on the site from the MPCA so they are just waiting for that report.

XI. Old Business

None.

XII. New Business

None.

XIII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:58 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 October 2, 2015

(Date)



for Daniel Ward II
Secretary of the Planning Commission