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

Minutes February 22, 2013

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, February 22, 2013, at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

Commissioners Present:	Mmes. Noecker, Perrus, Porter, Reveal, Shively, Wang; and Messrs. Edgerton, Gelgelu, Lindeke, Makarios, Nelson, Ochs, Oliver, Schertler, and Spaulding.
Commissioners Absent:	Mmes. *Merrigan, *Thao, *Wencl, and Messrs. *Connolly, *Ward, and *Wickiser. *Excused
Also Present:	Donna Drummond, Planning Director; Patricia James, Kate Reilly, and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

I. Approval of minutes February 8, 2013.

MOTION: ***Commissioner Nelson moved approval of the minutes of February 8, 2013. Commissioner Gelgelu seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.***

II. Chair's Announcements

Commissioner Reveal, the Commission's First Vice Chair, chaired the meeting and she had no announcements.

III. Planning Director's Announcements

Donna Drummond reported the City Council approved a resolution asking the Planning Commission to do a study of commercial breweries. As part of that the City Council forwarded a change to the zoning code that they would like to potentially implement now. Under state law the Council can refer a recommended amendment to the Planning Commission and the Planning Commission has 60 days to provide a recommendation. The Council wants to allow small breweries to have tap rooms, so that amendment will be going to the Neighborhood Committee at its next meeting. There will then be a larger zoning study to look at the regulations of breweries overall and whether or not changes need to be made.

Commissioner Lindeke asked if the brewery zoning change is different or the same as the Minneapolis one.

Patricia James, PED staff, said that the amendment would bring Saint Paul closer to what Minneapolis does. Our code is now more restrictive; the main difference is that tap rooms cannot

now be located in a business or traditional neighborhood district, and there are a number of people interested in opening up small breweries in these districts and being able to have a tap room. This amendment would remove that restriction. Minneapolis has set up their regulations differently, and one reason for the bigger study is to look at other communities' regulations to see how Saint Paul compares.

IV. Zoning Committee

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

Three items to come before the Site Plan Review Committee on Tuesday, February 26, 2013.

- Twin City Refuse, pave existing gravel storage yard with asphalt at 318 Water Street West.
- Gerdau Caster Building Addition, building addition for new equipment at 1678 Red Rock Road.
- BNSF Dayton's Bluff Car Storage Lot, seven acre expansion of existing storage lot for new cars at 90 Fish Hatchery Road.

NEW BUSINESS

#13-144-945 Raymond Condos/Lakes & Plains LLC – Rezoning from RM2 Medium-Density Multiple-Family Residential and VP Vehicular Parking to T2 Traditional Neighborhood. 842-858 Raymond Avenue & 2330 Long, NW corner at Bradford & Raymond.
(Patricia James, 651/266-6639)

MOTION: ***Commissioner Nelson moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the rezoning. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.***

Commissioner Nelson announced the items on the agenda for the next Zoning Committee meeting on Thursday, February 28, 2013.

V. Neighborhood Planning Committee

Highland Village Special District Sign Plan – Approve resolution recommending adoption of Highland Village Special District Sign Plan by the Mayor and City Council.
(Kate Reilly, 651/266-6618)

Kate Reilly, PED staff, said that amendments were made to the Highland Village Special District Sign Plan through a task force process. The task force consisted of Highland Business Association and Highland District Council representatives. The principal changes to the code are related to organization of the code, to make it more like the zoning code as a whole. There is also a reduction in allowable sign sizes on buildings in Highland Village. The task force also chose to ban dynamic display signs, except the portion of gas price display signs that are dynamic. A new map was distributed which shows the Highland Village Special District Sign Plan area on a typical zoning panel, which is more in line with how overlay districts are depicted.

Commissioner Perrus asked how many non-conforming signs this creates in this district.

Ms. Reilly replied that she does not have an exact number and that it is very complicated to measure signs, but she believes that it creates about half dozen non-conforming signs.

Commissioner Lindeke asked why is it so complicated to measure signs?

Ms. Reilly said because they are high up and not everyone still has the sign plans from when they were installed. But she can go back through the sign permits and get that information before it goes to City Council as it still has to go through a City Council approval process.

MOTION: ***Commissioner Oliver moved on behalf of the Neighborhood Planning Committee to recommend approval of the resolution and forward to the Mayor and City Council for adoption of the Highland Village Special District Sign Plan. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.***

Commissioner Oliver announced the items on the agenda for the next Neighborhood Committee meeting on Wednesday, February 27, 2013.

VI. Central Corridor Design Center Update – Informational presentation by Tim Griffin, Director of Urban Design, Saint Paul Riverfront Corporation.

Tim Griffin, Director of Urban Design gave an informational presentation about the work of the Saint Paul Design Center. He provided information about the Design Center and how it came to be established. The Design Center includes staff from the Saint Paul Riverfront Corp. and various City departments. A two-sided sheet and a pamphlet were distributed, with information about the 2012 work plan. About 60-70% of the Design Center's work is occurring now on Central Corridor. Mr. Griffin also talked about Saint Paul's 2013 urban design priorities which include the West Side Flats Master Plan, Great River Passage Plan, Complete Streets, Shepard Road, and private project design review. One of the Design Center's major jobs is to connect the dots on the various projects that are happening.

Commissioner Porter asked what was involved in construction monitoring and post occupancy evaluation?

Mr. Griffin referred her to a description of these activities in the pamphlet/brochure "Saint Paul Private Project Design Review Process" which was handed out.

Commissioner Lindeke asked about the differences between design and planning?

Mr. Griffin thinks they're similar but design looks more at the spatial, three-dimensional aspects of projects.

Commissioner Schertler talked about the proposed development at the Sears site, which isn't receiving any public financing. They engage an architect and apply for site plan review. The City must review and respond to the application within 60 days. Where in that timeline is the Design Center engaged and who is the client?

Mr. Griffin said that their client is the Mayor and the City. They offer this as a service to developers. He then spoke more about the Sears project and process.

Donna Drummond, Planning Director, added that the Design Center invites developers to come in early before they are ready for formal site plan review. There are probably over one hundred different ways that a project can meet the City's zoning code requirements. So the Design Center provides advice on how developers can design projects to meet the code requirements but also to meet the City's vision as expressed in its adopted plans and some of the community's aspirations as well. The Design Center is advertised as a service to help projects be more successful in the end and identify issues early on before they get to sit plan review. It's been seen as a service to developers who are interested in doing a project that has a lot of community support in the end.

Commissioner Porter commented that the piece Mr. Griffin did not mention but which is very unique and sets the Design Center apart is its community engagement. Commissioner Porter has worked with the Design Center as it has engaged non-profit organizations like Model Cities and Aurora St. Anthony. They bring a level of sophistication to people who may not be as well versed in design, and they help them realize their visions.

Commissioner Perrus asked if the intent was to eventually codify the design review process or design requirements. There are a lot of requirements that developers must meet now. This service is great but she would be concerned if it resulted in more zoning requirements for new development.

Mr. Griffin said there is no plan for that, however, if public financing is involved the projects are required to go through the Design Center process. He cited the Sears project as an example of sophisticated developers who expect to have these types of conversations early on so they don't make initial mistakes that cost money to change later on.

Commissioner Reveal said that she has been involved in a huge number of public projects where this did not happen and for the developer and the public entity it's a disaster. This is very much what you want to do and you don't want to codify it and get it so restrictive and so narrow that there is not an incentive for the brainstorming at the front end.

Commissioner Lindeke asked what the difference would be in the types of things the Design Center would discuss versus what the Planning Commission would discuss in a site plan review, as City staff is involved in both processes.

Mr. Griffin said it's really a point of timing, having early discussions when there is more flexibility in major changes to the project.

Commissioner Reveal thinks its both timing and content because there is a certain kind of discussion that would be inappropriate for the City to have with a developer during the planning stages. Since the City is a regulatory body it can't engage in the kinds of discussions that the Design Center can.

Commissioner Noecker asked if all projects no matter what size get an invitation to work with the design center.

Mr. Griffin said one thing they have gotten better at in the last few years is identifying projects

earlier on. Donna Drummond, as planning director, works with PED project managers and Tom Beach, Department of Safety and Inspections to identify projects early when conversations and inquiries are first being made.

Commissioner Noecker asked about the number of projects that come in for voluntary review.

Mr. Griffin said that on Central Corridor and downtown they are close to 100% in terms of projects that have come forward.

Commissioner Schertler noted that this activity goes beyond what is required to administer the Code and requires significant City staff time and should be based on priorities as established in the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Griffin said it's an organic process and each City department has to decide to add it to their priority list.

Ms. Drummond added that the Riverfront Corporation Design Center started out focusing on downtown and the riverfront. As Central Corridor started to heat up the City asked the Design Center to be more involved in the design of public infrastructure and private development. Recently the Design Center activity has broadened to include projects citywide that may have some significance. But this activity is limited by staff capacity and the Design Center's capacity and resources. So the City cannot offer this to every site plan that goes through the City approval process because there aren't the resources to do that. Most site plans do not need that level of attention but for the bigger projects it's beneficial.

Commissioner Porter said that planning commissioners can also advocate for the Design Center's work. A good example is the Old Home project where the Aurora St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corp. wasn't aware of this resource and she suggested to NDC staff that they work with the Design Center. It has been a good working relationship.

VII. Comprehensive Planning Committee

Commissioner Reveal announced that at their last meeting they looked at a resolution to study auto body shops, which will be at the next Planning Commission meeting.

VIII. Transportation Committee

Commissioner Spaulding announced that there were two items on the agenda as the last meeting, which were the Wheelock Parkway Bridge replacement and Saint Paul Street Car Feasibility Study. The initial phase of the study is complete, which narrowed the list of potential corridors that will go on for more detailed analysis.

Commissioner Spaulding also announced the items on the agenda for the next Transportation Committee meeting on Monday, February 25, 2013.

IX. Communications Committee

None.

X. Task Force/Liaison Reports

Commissioner Reveal said that the first meeting of the West Side Side Flats Master Plan task force was the previous night. They had a big turn out. Information and materials from their meetings along with the meeting schedule will be on the website soon.

XI. Old Business

None.

XII. New Business

None.

XIII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:43 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 March 22, 2013
(Date)

Daniel Ward II
Secretary of the Planning Commission

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