

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

Minutes July 25, 2014

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, July 25, 2014, at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

Commissioners Present: Mmes. DeJoy, McMahon, Noecker, Padilla, Reveal, Shively, Underwood, Wang, Wencl; and Messrs. Connolly, Edgerton, Gelgelu, Lindeke, Makarios, Nelson, and Wickiser.

Commissioners Absent: Mmes. *Merrigan, *Thao, and Messrs. *Ochs, Oliver, and *Ward.
*Excused

Also Present: Lucy Thompson, Jake Reilly, Hilary Holmes, Jamie Radel, and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

I. Approval of minutes July 11, 2014.

Chair Wencl announced that the minutes are not available at this time. However, they will be ready for approval at the next Planning Commission meeting.

II. Chair's Announcements

Chair Wencl asked that each of the Planning Commissioners introduce themselves to the newly-appointed Commissioner Melanie McMahon.

III. Planning Director's Announcements

The Acting Planning Director, Lucy Thompson, gave the report. Ms. Thompson announced that the City/HRA has issued an RFP for the Seven Corners Gateway site, which is a surface parking lot across from the Xcel Arena. Proposals are due August 29th. She is working with the Sensible Land Use Coalition on the Great Places Initiative, including the second year of the Great Places Awards. Nominations are due August 8, 2014. Two sites in Saint Paul were awarded last year: Rice Park and Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary. There was a press conference with the Mayor on the Ford site. A new PED Director has been appointed - Jonathan Sage-Martinson. He will start on August 4th. Mike Richardson is coming back to work full time as a City Planner; he will start on Monday, July 28th.

IV. Zoning Committee

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

Two items came before the Site Plan Review Committee on Tuesday, July 22, 2014:

- Oxygen Service Company, office and warehouse addition to existing industrial building at 1111 Pierce Butler Route.
- St. Agnes School, gym and auditorium addition to existing school at 530 Lafond Avenue.

Three items will come before the Site Plan Review Committee on Tuesday, July 29, 2014:

- Children’s Hospital, entrance addition and skyway (Skyway is over hospital property and not over a public street) at 345 Smith Avenue.
- Mississippi Market, new grocery store and parking lot at 750 East 7th Street (east portion of Hospital Linen site)
- Seven Corners Redevelopment, Opus plans for mixed use development on West 7th between Eagle and Chestnut (Preliminary review) at 216 West 7th Street.

NEW BUSINESS

#14-303-103 Voice of East African Women – Conditional use permit for shelter for battered persons, with variance of the parking requirement. 1041 Selby Avenue, NW corner of Oxford. (Hilary Holmes, 651/266-6612)

Commissioner Padilla reported that originally, there was a variance application submitted for additional parking, since the State would provide licensing for up to 16 adult persons in the facility. The applicant has stated that the facility will accommodate only 10 residents; for that number, the parking requirement was met and the variance application was withdrawn. Therefore, the only item before the Commission for this application is the conditional use permit.

MOTION: *Commissioner Padilla 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 that agenda at the next Zoning Committee meeting on Thursday, July 31, 2014.

V. Comprehensive Planning Committee

Minor Text Amendments to Zoning Districts, B, I & T – Approve resolution initiating a zoning study of minor B & T District amendments. (Jamie Radel, 651/266-6614)

Commissioner Underwood asked if there was a sense of general direction regarding draft comments on the proposed Critical Area rules.

Commissioner Reveal said the general theme is that the draft rules are overly prescriptive and attempt to regulate very specific things in ways that don’t make sense. Existing development downtown and in fully-built urban core areas is not reflected adequately in the draft rules, something the comments will address. Another issue is protection of very steep slopes, defined as 18% (8 degrees) or higher. There is also a definition for bluff. The draft rules prohibit

development on 18% slopes and in a larger perimeter around them without a clear rationale.

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

Commissioner Reveal announced the items on the agenda at the next Comprehensive Planning Committee meeting on Tuesday, August 5, 2014.

VI. Saint Paul Market Watch Report Update – Informational presentation by Jake Reilly, PED. (*Jake Reilly, 651/266-6618*)

Jake Reilly, PED staff, said that this Market Watch is modeled after a similar report, called "Minneapolis Trends Report," that Minneapolis has been putting out quarterly for several years. The contents of the Market Watch report revolve around building and development, employment and wages, and demographics. The building and development is the most robust part and the most relevant to the Planning Commission's work. Building and development represents work that we've accomplished and identifies the things that we are actually doing, where you can see something that we did, rather than a plan on the shelf. He stated that there were 79 permits for new buildings issued in 2013, including 43 new single family homes. Major residential construction projects were the Wall Street building, Lewis Park Apartments, and the remodel of the Governor's residence, Victoria Park apartments and Roosevelt Public Housing. Mr. Reilly noted that about half of the commercial/industrial/mixed-use/institutional construction projects that they identified ranged from the State Capitol grounds, Episcopal Homes, Regions Hospital, and the new Johnson Brothers Liquor facility. Some school projects, the new Arlington Hills Center and Library that Parks completed, and the Lowertown Ballpark are underway, the Lund's at the Penfield has opened, and there are many, many more.

Regarding demolitions, foreclosures and vacant buildings, there were 33 demolition permits pulled, which is fewer than any of the previous six years. There were 733 foreclosures in 2013, a 31% reduction since 2012. In addition, registered vacant buildings are down almost 50% since 2008 when the housing crisis started. Home sales are doing well in Saint Paul. Non-distressed sales are better than they were in 2007; the distressed sales rate for 2013 was 31% which is a new low, as it had been higher than 50% between 2009 and 2011. The median home sale price in 2013 was \$144,000, which is comparable to the median sale price in 2008 before the market changed. The "fastest selling areas" are Mac-Groveland, Highland Park, and the Greater East Side, followed closely by Payne-Phalen.

The Saint Paul labor force was about 150,000 in fourth quarter of 2013; of those, just over 140,000 were employed, which is an unemployment rate of 5.3%, which is lower than during the same period in 2012, when it was 6.2%. More jobs are being created in Saint Paul. The fastest growing sectors are Health Care and Educational Services. The industries shedding jobs include Administrative support and Management. A low unemployment rate of Saint Paul residents indicates that people in Saint Paul are getting jobs. One of the goals for policy makers in Saint Paul is to ensure that not only are Saint Paul residents employed, but that they have jobs available to them within the city.

Finally, Mr. Reilly covered demographic data. Of note are the fastest growing age cohort is 55-64, and the greatest loss is among those aged 35-44 and those older than 75. Saint Paul is quickly

becoming a “minority majority” city, as is the metro area in general. There is a general reduction in the number of white, non-Hispanic residents; studies have suggested that by 2040 we will be mostly non-white. Almost half of all residents were born outside of Minnesota (either in the US or foreign-born). The poverty rate is nearly at 24%, which is more than double the state’s rate, which is concerning. Another key point to note is that we have a highly educated population overall.

In response to a question from Commissioner Makarios regarding the “minority majority” data, Mr. Reilly said that Caucasians are a smaller percentage of the population: by 2040 it’s going to be 60% non-white in the Metro area in general.

Commissioner Makarios said the term used was loss of white non-Hispanic and asked if that meant that people are moving out of the city. Mr. Reilly replied yes they are either dying or leaving.

Commissioner Underwood clarified whether it is more non-whites moving in.

Mr. Reilly said that it’s a combination. Population change is births, deaths, and migrations; there definitely more people coming in. Looking at Met Council’s projections, our population is expected to grow significantly. Of those people moving in, more of them are people of color.

Commissioner DeJoy asked what the population in Saint Paul is. Mr. Reilly said that they have an estimate of around 290,000, which is an increase from 2010.

Commissioner Lindeke asked about Saint Paul residents’ jobs versus the total jobs in Saint Paul: “Is there more data about exactly what wage rates are with the jobs we’re creating and how you might know whether or not that affects the poverty rate and unemployment rate for the city?”

Mr. Reilly said that the information is detailed further in the report where it goes into average wages and how those have shifted over time. The labor force includes people who are eligible to be employed, which works out to be about 148,000 of the 290,000 residents. Of those, 140,000 have jobs. Those jobs may not be located in Saint Paul. Mr. Reilly said he is able to do a little analysis to figure out whether a person in Saint Paul has a job in Saint Paul by looking at drive-to-work data available through the Local Employment and Household Data (LEHD).

Commissioner Noecker said that Councilmember Brendmoen said that they received a presentation that did talk about the direction of flow in terms of jobs, like where most Saint Paul residents do go to work and suggested that maybe that’s something staff has access to.

Mr. Reilly noted that Minneapolis CPED puts out their Minneapolis Trends report quarterly. He said that once upon a time they had four full-time staff and now they’re down to one person. He suggested “Google-ing” on the Minneapolis.gov page and look up Minneapolis Trends which will pull up years of this quarterly report.

In response to Commissioner Padilla’s inquiry about Minneapolis’s poverty rate, Mr. Reilly said that the two cities are not vastly different.

Commissioner Edgerton said that this is really good information, but he wondered how we want to use this and how will it affect our decisions. We have a lot of data and a lot of information, but

how do we turn that into knowledge and understanding that helps us make decisions? Specifically related to the connection between housing, demographics and jobs, what drives what? He suggested that as this information is gathered, we should be challenged to start thinking about how we want to use it, and what will we use it for.

Regarding how we use the data, Mr. Reilly responded that for two years (every six months), we have produced this report as information. There doesn't appear to be any initiative to go beyond producing the report to do something with the information. Mr. Reilly suggested to the Commission that it could make a recommendation that the Mayor and City Council could make a recommendation that they use this information to inform policy. The County is taking a step in that direction, and has met with the HRA and City Council. There appears to be a desire to gather data and use it and learn from it.

Commissioner Lindeke asked about family size are we talking about and needs of different demographic groups. He wondered if non-United States-born families need different things and what are the new housing types being constructed in the city.

Mr. Reilly responded that the initiative that Sarah and Jamie are working on regarding accessory dwelling units and a recent conversation convened by LISC around density bonuses is in a direct response to information that we have gathered and analyzed.

Commissioner Noecker recommended making a laminated card with "talking points" of the most important information and trends, and providing it to the Commission and City Council. Mr. Reilly asked if they would benefit from an infographic that could be shared with their networks, through social media, or email, or any other mode of communication. Commissioner Noecker said that would be helpful; both an electronic document and a hard copy.

Commissioner Gelgelu was curious about the source of the data. He said his organization is having a hard time finding demographic data by race. Most of the communities in the metro have a hard time collecting their own data so they use estimates. For example, he said there is a Oromo community here, but the Census Bureau doesn't measure them; however, the community claims they have 40,000 individuals in Minnesota.

Mr. Reilly said that the Census Bureau is pretty specific about the questions it asks. In the annual American Community Survey, which is sample data, they have identified cultural groups or ethnic groups that they are keeping track of. It doesn't necessarily match up with the cultural and ethnic groups that people self-identify. For example, Asian Pacific Islanders are made up of many different cultures and different ethnic groups, but the Census describes the whole group as one. This gets more complicated when we try to look at data from a district council level or anything smaller than the census tract, because there are data suppression issues and margin of error issues. We can get a general big picture idea from the American Community Survey, which tracks foreign-born population and will identify where in the world people are born, but it's a little more general about where. There is an organization that is keeping track of foreign born people in the United States as a whole. This group identifies people specifically by

ethnic group and country of origin. Mr. Reilly said he will send the data source to the Commissioners.

Commissioner DeJoy asked if there a breakdown of the age groups, because if the population has grown, she wondered if it is mostly children and how that might impact our schools.

Mr. Reilly said Census data allow you to understand age, race and language spoken at home. He said that he and some others just met with the school district, and they are very interested in figuring out exactly what's happening in Saint Paul because of this trend of people moving from country to country and what that means for the services that they provide. He said that we intend to start sharing data with the school district.

VI. Neighborhood Planning Committee

Chair Wencil announced that their next meeting is on Wednesday, July 30th to discuss the West Side Flats Master Plan (draft). The Comprehensive Planning Committee is invited to attend, as well and any other interested Commissioners.

VII. Transportation Committee

Commissioner Lindeke reported that at their last meeting, they had the first look at the Complete Streets Design Manual, which will help neighborhood groups, interested people and City staff think about what streets should look like in the city. The Committee will see it again at the end of August. The next Transportation Committee meeting, scheduled for Monday, July 28, 2014, has been cancelled.

VIII. Communications Committee

No report.

IX. Task Force/Liaison Reports

Commissioner Shively mentioned that the Parks Commission is having an upcoming network event in August at the Arlington Hills Community Center. The Planning Commission is invited.

Chair Wencil announce that the Gateway Station Area Planning Task Force made a decision to recommend a busway instead of light rail. There are five stations. The date of the next meeting has not been set yet.

X. Old Business

None.

XI. New Business

None.

XII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:33 a.m.

Recorded and prepared by
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Respectfully submitted,



Lucy Thompson
Acting Planning Director

Approved August 8, 2014

(Date)



Daniel Ward II
Secretary of the Planning Commission