

MINUTES OF THE ZONING COMMITTEE
Thursday, June 18, 2020 - 3:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Baker, Edgerton, Grill, Hood, Lindeke, and Rangel Morales
EXCUSED: DeJoy and Ochs
STAFF: Mike Richardson, Samantha Langer, Bill Dermody, and Peter Warner

The meeting was chaired by Commissioner Edgerton. He stated that the chair of the Planning Commission had determined that due to the COVID-19 pandemic it is neither practical nor prudent for the Zoning Committee to meet in person, and therefore the meeting was being conducted remotely, with all members of the Zoning Committee attending the meeting remotely and the public able to submit comments by noon on the day before the meeting and monitor the meeting remotely.

Chet Funk et al - 20-038-244 - Rezone from R4 one-family residential to RM2 multiple-family residential, 1074 - 1096 James Avenue, between Lexington and 35 E

Mike Richardson presented the staff report with a recommendation of approval for the rezoning. He said District 14 has not made a recommendation at this point, though they did hold a meeting with residents and the developer on June 10 and anticipated meeting again on June 24. There were no letters in support, and four letters in opposition submitted.

In response to Commissioner Lindeke, Mr. Richardson said that the Committee is only considering the rezoning, not the site plan or project itself and that the project information was provided for context only. Site plan development is on-going, and this project is what is currently being considered by the applicant. Amendments related to the RM zoning study have not been adopted. The anticipated adoption date is around the end of August.

Bill Dermody confirmed that the end of August is when the amendments related to the RM zoning study could be adopted by the City Council. He said that whether the old or new requirements would apply depends on when the site plan is applied for relative to when any RM amendments are adopted.

In response to Commissioner Edgerton, Mr. Richardson said that a travel demand management plan may be needed if the actual project that comes through surpasses a certain size, but that is unlikely that one would be needed for the proposal that is currently being considered. He said that during site plan review public works staff looks at potential negative impacts on streets and circulation that could impact safety in the area.

Mr. Dermody added that in addition to traffic management studies sometimes a traffic memo can be requested as well. It is another level of analysis and it is subjective on when it is requested depending on the situation.

In response to Commissioner Edgerton, Mr. Richardson said that height issues would be looked at during site plan review that is conducted by the Department of Safety and Inspection (DSI). Once a proposal is submitted DSI would review and confirm the dimensions and measurements given by the applicant to determine whether or not it meets the height requirements for the zoning district. Sometimes an applicant will conduct a shadow study, but it is usually at the

request of DSI staff. He would need to check the Zoning Code to see if anything officially triggers a shadow study, but he believes it is voluntary.

In regard to the concern for property values on adjacent properties, Mr. Richardson said that is beyond the scope of staff's review for a rezoning application. It is not part of the findings that the Planning Commission has to make, and he does not have that information available.

The applicant, Chet Funk, 1103 Lincoln Avenue, Saint Paul, MN, said that he has purchased some properties from the gentleman who owns several of the parcels on Randolph and Lexington and they have always discussed what the future could hold for this particular corner. It has been his intention to redevelop the Randolph side and about two years ago they decided to start looking at development together. Over the last two years they have purchased the single-family homes on the northern side of the alley, and they have now been approached by several developers regarding opportunities for multifamily residential projects at this location. It is the primary interest that people have expressed at this corner. Currently they are gathering feedback from the neighborhood to see what they would like to see developed. They had a very good public hearing on June 10 with the District Council. They received positive feedback and some concerns from the neighbors. The particular traffic patterns they see coming through this particular location have been one of their biggest concerns given the history with Trader Joe's. It does appear that with some of the recent restriping, that the traffic pattern has helped on the corner of Lexington and Randolph. They have done their homework on the 2030 and 2040 Comprehensive Plan and this feels like a well-suited site for multi-family residential use.

In response to Commissioner Baker, Mr. Funk said one of the primary requests they have received from the neighborhood is to include an affordable housing component to the project. The units they are planning on building regardless of if they are market rate would have affordable components to them. In this current proposal for a 60 unit site by an outside developer affordability wasn't necessarily a part of it, but if there was an increase in density there would likely be a need to explore the direction of including more of an affordability component to this project. He added that if these parcels are zoned RM2 the entire site would be contiguous, and it would open up a potential opportunity to do a larger development which would increase the opportunity for more affordability.

In response to Commissioner Edgerton, Mr. Dermody explained that this is a request to rezone to RM2. The Committee should only be considering factors of the rezoning and not the proposed project. Mr. Warner added that Commissioner's cannot condition a rezoning.

Chair Edgerton stated that questions on items like affordability might be of interest to the Committee but are not pertinent to this decision. That would be a future discussion as part of site plan submittal.

Commissioner Baker expressed interest in the multi-family residential project and questioned how the Committee can be more involved in the site plan review process. There was discussion on if the Committee can follow up on the final project that will be submitted to site plan review if the rezoning is approved. City Attorney, Peter Warner, said that the Planning Commission retains the authority to specify if they want to review a site plan submitted at DSI.

Commissioner Edgerton said that the Planning Commission could make a request to staff that when a site plan application is submitted it be brought before the Zoning Committee and Planning Commission for review.

In response to Commissioner Grill, Mr. Warner said it will be required that a site plan be submitted. If the rezoning is approved and they propose a building and a use that is permissible under the RM2 standards the ability to take an in depth look at the proposal would be relatively limited to things like traffic, lot coverage and access.

In response to Commissioners, Mr. Funk said he has a small interest on the properties on Randolph. There is also another owner with a larger interest on Randolph and between both of them they have control of the site at Randolph. It is likely that they may start the redevelopment in stages starting with the James Avenue side and moving towards Randolph. Part of the reason for getting contiguous zoning would be the feasibility of doing it in one phase and working together to do a larger project. Mr. Funk said the timeline on when the site plan may be submitted is variable since they are early in the process. It is also pending the City's adoption of the new RM2 zoning requirements. It is realistic that this will be a 2021 project. If everything went smoothly it could possibly begin in 2020.

The public hearing was closed.

After discussion, Chair Edgerton requested that staff prepare a resolution for the Planning Commission meeting stating that they would like to exercise their ability to review and approve the site plan once it is submitted by the applicant.

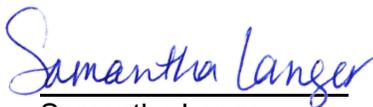
Commissioner Lindeke moved approval of the rezoning. Commissioner Grill seconded the motion.

There was discussion pertaining to the Committee's desire to see more housing affordability and multifamily housing opportunities in Saint Paul.

The motion passed by a vote of 6-0-0.

Adopted Yeas - 6 Nays - 0 Abstained - 0

Drafted by:



Samantha Langer
Recording Secretary

Submitted by:


Mike Richardson (Jul 17, 2020 09:52 CDT)

Mike Richardson
City Planner

Approved by:


Dan Edgerton (Jul 17, 2020 12:00 CDT)

Dan Edgerton
Chair

20-038-244 Chet Funk et al zc minutes

Final Audit Report

2020-07-17

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By:	samantha langer (samantha.langer@ci.stpaul.mn.us)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAA0FQaekS3Jf4wsfYlcaZ8XDg0yRG3Jiod

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