

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

Minutes February 19, 2016

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, February 19, 2016, at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

Commissioners Present: Mmes. DeJoy, McMahon, Padilla, Reveal, Shively, Thao, Underwood, Wang; and Messrs. Edgerton, Gelgelu, Makarios, Nelson, Ochs, Oliver, and Wicksiser.

Commissioners Absent: Mmes. *Merrigan, *Wencl, and Messrs. Lindeke, and *Ward.

*Excused

Also Present: Jonathan Sage-Martinson, Department Director; Donna Drummond, Planning Director, Jenny Wolfe, Lucy Thompson, Merritt Clapp-Smith, Jake Reilly, Bill Dermody, and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

I. Approval of minutes January 22, 2016.

MOTION: *Commissioner Padilla moved approval of the minutes of January 22, 2016. Commissioner Thao 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 announced that at City Council on Wednesday the CVS drive-through on Grand and Fairview was denied by City Council, upholding the Planning Commission's decision. Also, the preliminary assessments for the Grand Round and Capital City Bikeway projects were on the agenda for public hearing. A lot of people testified on Wheelock but both projects were approved. Last night at the Snelling Midway Advisory Committee meeting the concept plan for the Snelling Midway redevelopment was unveiled and there were some exciting stories in the Star Tribune and Pioneer Press newspapers this morning.

IV. Zoning Committee

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

Four items to come before the Site Plan Review Committee on Tuesday, March 1, 2016:

- Slumberland Furniture Storm Water Improvement Project (#16-011527) – Replace approximately 54 car parking lot with native restoration area at 1925 Suburban Avenue. (Larry Zangs, 651/266-9082)
- Little Mekong Plaza (#16-011132) – Demo of existing building and development of a privately owned public plaza at 402 University Avenue. (Larry Zangs, 651/266-9082)
- Humboldt High School Tennis Courts (#16-011144) – Tennis court rehabilitation at 640 Humboldt Avenue. (Larry Zangs, 651/266-9082)
- Jardin Day Care Facility (#16-011502) – Demo existing church and construction of a new daycare facility at 860 Hague Avenue. (Larry Zangs, 651/266-9082)

NEW BUSINESS

#16-005-448 Habitat for Humanity – Rezone from B2 Community Businesses to T1 Traditional Neighborhood. 1059 Maryland Avenue East, NW corner at Earl Street. (Jake Reilly, 651/266-6618)

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

#16-005-089 Stone House Tap Room (parking) – Historic use variance in order to remove a condition prohibiting off-street parking so as to allow for the provision of an ADA parking space on the site of a proposed tap house/microbrewery with food service. 445 Smith Avenue North, between McBoal and Goodrich. (Bill Dermody, 651/266-6617)

Commissioner Edgerton saw that Commissioner Nelson voted against the variance and wanted to know what his thoughts were.

Commissioner Nelson said in order to accommodate this parking space the brew house portion of the building was shifted to the south approximately 22 feet. When they first saw this application there was a variance in that area and he felt that the shifting of the building 22 feet closer to the neighboring house may have had some bearing on that original approval, yet that was not brought up as a part of this. He felt that things may have been looked at slightly differently if the entire picture was understood at the time of the original approval.

MOTION: Commissioner Nelson moved the Zoning Committee’s recommendation to approve the variance subject to additional conditions. The motion carried 13-1 (Nelson) on a voice vote.

Commissioner Nelson announced the items on the agenda for the next Zoning Committee meeting on Thursday, February 25, 2016.

V. Neighborhood Planning Committee

District 1 Community Plan – Release draft for public review and set public hearing on April 1, 2016. (Bill Dermody, 651/266-6617)

Bill Dermody PED staff, gave a brief power point presentation which can be seen on the web page at: <http://www.stpaul.gov/planningcommission>

MOTION: Commissioner Oliver moved on behalf of the Neighborhood Planning Committee to release the draft for public review and set a public hearing on April 1, 2016. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

Ford Site Update – Informational presentation by Merritt Clapp-Smith.
(Merritt Clapp-Smith, 651/266-6547)

Merritt Clapp-Smith PED staff, gave a power point presentation which can be seen on the web page at: <http://www.stpaul.gov/planningcommission>

Commissioner Edgerton said relative to remediation do we know to what level they are going to remediate?

Ms. Clapp-Smith said that Ford is indicating it will manage all of the remediation for the site and sell it as fully remediated for the reuses that will occur at the site. Ford will be cleaning up as much of the site up as possible to a residential standard, but if there are areas that are too impacted for risk-free residential reuse, then they will clean those areas up to a level appropriate for office or retail use.

Commissioner Edgerton asked if the level of the anticipated reuses is still to be determined.

Ms. Clapp-Smith replied yes. The City is in conversation with Ford about the City's desired mix of uses for the site and what a recent market study indicated was the site's strongest reuse potential. Ford is talking to developers and real estate people about what they think would work at the site, so all of that will be influencing their motivations and plans for remediation.

First Vice Chair Reveal asked if Ford would have the liability in perpetuity or can they sell the site as is, disclosing what they do and don't know to a buyer who would then assume the liability for any remaining contamination.

Ms. Clapp-Smith said that in accordance with state environmental rules, Ford is the "responsible party" for past contamination at the site and as such will remain liable for anything found there in the future. Under the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) investigation and clean-up programs, which Ford is enrolled in, if Ford remediates the site per MPCA standards for the planned reuse, it can receive a "Certificate of Completion". The Certificate of Completion indicates to buyers that the site meets a clean-up stamp of approval from MPCA, which in turn indemnifies future buyers from clean-up responsibilities for anything found there in the future; Ford would remain the responsible party.

Commissioner Edgerton asked if we will know prior to the zoning, do we have an idea of where those hard to clean up spots would be? So we could zone accordingly?

Ms. Clapp-Smith replied yes, we're in communication with Ford to ensure that our zoning for future reuses does not conflict with environmental conditions that may limit certain reuses on portions of the site.

Commissioner DeJoy asked if the maps presented here today are available on the city web page.

Ms. Clapp-Smith said not yet, she has to have a conversation with the web site people in order to post documents of this large size, but she intends on doing it. Also, she thinks that there is a little concern from MPCA and Ford that sharing raw data without information on how to interpret it or what it means might be a little risky. She thinks that when the report is revised to make the data a bit easier to navigate, which MPCA has requested, that then the MPCA will create a fact sheet to go with the report that helps explain what the data and report mean.

Commissioner Edgerton said one of the big challenges for the site is limited road access to get to and from there. Are transportation limitations factored into plans for reuse, such as considering an industrial use which could be transportation heavy?

Ms. Clapp-Smith said yes and that such considerations are being evaluated in a traffic study being done for the site currently. In terms of traffic management, the study indicates that having a strong employment base on the site provides a strong market for transit, which brings the vehicular trips down. Likewise, in the Riverview Corridor study, when thinking about the Ford site, there is a better case for the transit if there is more employment at the site. What the city is trying to do at Ford is create a site that has enough mix of activities that people can become less auto dependent.

Commissioner Edgerton said that it seems hard to get there by transit.

Ms. Clapp-Smith said Ford Parkway has a high level of transit service already with the existing bus routes, the soon to open A-Line, and connections to/from the south.

Commissioner Edgerton asked if the market study numbers for square feet of different uses, like office, could be translated in expected numbers of jobs.

Ms. Clapp-Smith said yes, staff have estimated numbers for jobs based on anticipated square feet of different uses. The estimated job numbers are being used in the traffic modeling. For instance you get more jobs per square foot from retail and office and fewer from an industrial use.

Commissioner Nelson said their purpose here is to approve whether the TIF Redevelopment Plan is in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan. However, he wanted to know how the 'if needed' test for TIF funding was going to be determined since the site seems desirable for a lot of developers. Developers are not shy about asking for money from government entities to try and do their projects.

Ms. Clapp-Smith suggested that they transition to the next item, which is the Ford Site Project Area Redevelopment Plan, to answer that question.

Ford Site Project Area Redevelopment Plan – Approve resolution finding the plan consistent with the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan. (*Merritt Clapp-Smith, 651/266-6547*)

Jenny Wolfe PED staff, said that the motivation to propose a TIF district at this time is due to the 3-year time constraint for establishing a district per State TIF law, as outlined in the staff report. The City has a deadline in March to establish a district or forego it as a potential funding tool for

this site. In the future when a developer is identified, the developer can negotiate with the City to determine if TIF funding is necessary to advance proposed development.

Commissioner Nelson said that it seems that in picking a developer, their desire for needing or not needing TIF could be one of the factors for the city to consider in selecting the developer for the site.

Ms. Clapp-Smith said that Ford will pick the developer. The city can indicate to Ford if it's concerned about somebody who is asking for a lot of money if the city thinks that the private market can handle more of the financing on its own.

Ms. Wolfe added that the city expects that before a developer signs on the dotted line to buy the site, they will do their due diligence which includes negotiating TIF with the city.

Commissioner Padilla said that from a land use attorney perspective TIF is a tool, especially in a circumstance like this where there is raw land requiring a lot of infrastructure. There are going to be expectations by the developer that infrastructure is a shared commitment between the city and the developer. You can say no to TIF, but you'll get much less of what you want for your vision on the site. It's a balancing act and TIF is one of those tools that is not really city money -- yes it is, but it's not really city money and so she thinks that the 'as needed' language is fine and it's great that it is in there because it's going to make the site better.

Commissioner Thao asked if all of the TIF has to go to one particular developer, or is there criteria that the city has for how the TIF is used and by whom.

Ms. Wolfe said that the city would negotiate a development agreement for use of TIF and outline the criteria and things the city controls as part of the deal.

Ms. Clapp-Smith added that there may be infrastructure projects adjacent to the Ford site to be considered for TIF, if those investments are needed to support successful redevelopment of the Ford site.

Commissioner Thao said that the priority for funding assistance should be affordable housing, and responding to community needs for the site.

Ms. Clapp-Smith said that any consideration of financing assistance is going to be contingent on a developer being willing to advance the priorities that the city has for the site. And those priorities are very much influenced by what the city has heard from the public over the past 9 years.

Commissioner McMahon said Neighborhood Planning Committee felt that preserving the option to use TIF is important, and that the proposed TIF Redevelopment Plan is in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Nelson commented that he does not have real issues with TIF. He was just recalling that when the University of St. Catherine built the Carondelet senior community with TIF assistance, it did not build sidewalks even though the Comprehensive Plan requires sidewalks along streets. The Ford plant is a different situation, but he wants to make sure that the city gets some public good in return for any financing it may put into the Ford site redevelopment.

MOTION: *Commissioner Oliver moved the Neighborhood Planning Committee's recommendation to approve the resolution finding the plan is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan forwarding to the Mayor and City Council for adoption. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

Commissioner Oliver announced that the next Neighborhood Planning Committee meeting scheduled for Wednesday, February 24, 2016 has been canceled.

VI. Comprehensive Planning Committee

Commissioner Thao announced that their last meeting on February 16th was rescheduled to February 23rd. There are two items on the agenda - one is to review the comments from the public hearing on Congregate Living Zoning Study and the other is to receive a Comprehensive Plan update which Lucy Thompson will provide.

VII. Transportation Committee

Commissioner Wang reported that at their last meeting they had several updates on upcoming resurfacing and reconstruction projects. Reconstruction of the Grand Round on Wheelock Parkway will start in 2016 and stretch into 2019. Jackson Street downtown between Shepard and 11th will be part of the Capital City bikeway loop and that starts this spring. There are a lot of regular resurfacing projects and for those that align with the bike plan, they're looking at what bike facilities will go on those. There are about six stretches that are city or city and county projects that are going to be happening in 2016. And the next meeting scheduled for Monday, February 22, 2016 has been canceled.

VIII. Communications Committee

Commissioner Thao has no report.

IX. Task Force/Liaison Reports

Commissioner Padilla announced that last night at the Snelling Midway Community Advisory Committee there was the big reveal of the site plan. Dr. McGuire gave a really good presentation, and it will be up on the web site. There are a couple of articles in the Star Tribune and Pioneer Press on this in the newspaper. Commissioner Padilla showed a picture of the master site plan. She said that RK Midway was not at the meeting last night, so Dr. McGuire presented on behalf of the entire super block. This is the first image that anyone has seen about what the intentions for the super block are. The soccer stadium goes into the existing Rainbow site, so there will be some issues as they get to development about what's going to happen on the site. Dr. McGuire mentioned they are in talks with Rainbow, there are some decisions being made and he is confident that they can move forward with plans similar to this. They did not see further stadium images but are hoping to see those at their next meeting. The Pascal Green in the southeast corner at the bottom is intended to be most likely parking heightened by some kind of screening so it looks more attractive. When the soccer stadium opens there will be almost six acres of public park to the north, and another 1.½ acres in the southwest corner. The goal is to do storm water management on the site. Most people were encouraged that is a very functional, integrated site. New streets would be established and moving the traffic signal from Spruce Tree back down

to Shields, along with a bike facility. However none of this is final. It is proposed to have almost exclusively retail on the first floor of all of these buildings and retail facing the outside of each side of the buildings, with no dark, blank areas. There will be active store fronts and active vibrancy everywhere you go around the site. There will also be smaller scale shops along the park way. This will be a private park but publically accessible. Dr. McGuire talked about the model of Gold Medal Park and that it is private but it's not rented out. He also talked about the possibility of a skating rink on this park so it is open and usable year round. There is still some concerns about traffic and how to cue people up for the new BRT and LRT, and how to move people in and out of the site access points. We hope this actually happens so that we end up with a vibrant site.

First Vice Chair Reveal asked if there was any underground or surface parking.

Commissioner Padilla replied no underground structured parking at this time. The intention is that each of these is to have parking internally on the site.

First Vice Chair Reveal asked how large the stadium is.

Commissioner Padilla said about twenty thousand at this point.

Commissioner Nelson asked if they showed the existing building footprints over this plan at all.

Commissioner Padilla said they did talk about how this clearly infringes on the existing shopping center. So this will have to be part of whatever the overall negotiation is because the current rendering reflects the soccer stadium in that space. The McDonalds and the bank building would also be affected.

First Vice Chair Reveal said based on her experience with West Side Flats, she urges them to make it clear what existing buildings would be affected.

Commissioner Padilla said they have heard concerns from people and the Midway Chamber to make sure that all of this happens in a positive way. What should be emphasized is to continue to support the existing businesses as long as they are there.

Commissioner DeJoy asked how many existing buildings and businesses have to be acquired and is the intention to retain them in the new space?

Commissioner Padilla cannot speak to the business negotiations of RK Midway however they have communicated and are discussing with all of their tenants and the goal is to have as many relocate on the new site as possible. Those decisions will be business decisions made by the people currently on the site. There will be plenty of retail if this site is realized the way that it's proposed.

Donna Drummond, Planning Director, clarified that RK Midway owns all of the property outside of the 10 acre property owned by the Met Council. RK Midway has leases with all these businesses and they have said that they would like to retain as many as they can and do a phased approach to the redevelopment. The City did establish a jobs working group which is a parallel group to the community advisory committee that's looking at the site plan and master plan. That is assembling resources to help existing businesses and existing employees with transitions if

needed. There is a lot of support for the existing businesses in trying to figure out how to make this work and keep as many in the neighborhood as possible.

Commissioner Wang, referring to the ground floor plan map, asked what the orange colored sections are.

Commissioner Padilla said that this was intended to show the vision for the first floor of all of these buildings. The first floor plan is retail; the orange is intended to be retail. What she is not sure of is how that will work with the parking shown on the flip side, but the intention is to have parking internally. The take away is that the retail will be facing out onto these newly created streets with spaces of all different sizes. They also intentionally did a nice job on addressing some of the pedestrian concerns, so a bikeway and 70-90 foot rights of way along the streets and potentially curb less streets so that people with disabilities or others who have a hard time managing curbs would be able to move through the site in a nice way.

Commissioner Wang said there is some confusion about what is green space and what are parking spaces.

Commissioner Padilla said there may be roof top greenspace with parking underneath although that is not clear. The goal for parking is that it's intended to be captured within the center of these buildings rather than all along the outside. What we'll end up with will depend on how its phased and what it looks like. The committee appreciated containing the parking as much as possible so that it doesn't look like a big parking lot. It is a little confusing but we'll get more clarity as we go along.

Commissioner Edgerton asked what was being planned for connections to areas around the site, particularly to the south of I-94. There is redevelopment in that area on Selby so how are those people going to get over to the Snelling Midway area? Also have you thought about Ayd Mill Road and is there a way to connect it?

Ms. Drummond said that as part of this project environmental review is required and they have started on an AUAR (Alternative Urban Area Wide Review). As part of that there is a transportation and parking study that will be looking at all the ways people are getting to the site and exiting the site, especially during game days. Looking at walking, biking, transit use and vehicle use the intent is to beef up those alternative modes as much as possible and what are things that need to happen to accomplish that. And those pedestrian connections from the south are important. The full presentation that was given last night is on the project web page at: www.stpaul.gov/midway.

Commissioner Thao said that now it is mostly big box retailers. There are not a lot of small businesses and they are going to stay because the markets there and that's where people are at. She has no doubt that they're going to be able to renegotiate some of the leases with the owner. If McDonalds doesn't want to stay there is this empty building two blocks over on Fry that they could potentially relocate to so there is plenty of opportunity for businesses to be relocated. But people are going to stay.

Commissioner DeJoy is concerned about all the money that would be spent to get rid of a building and then trying to recreate that business. But if it's the private sector that's paying for that then that's fine.

Commissioner Ochs said that the stadium will seat approximately 20,000 people and what fraction of that would we realistically expect to be driving.

Commissioner Padilla thinks that is part of what the traffic study is going to look at. The goal is to figure out ways to park people off site and get them there by other means. There are shuttle buses and other ways to transport people from the State Fair grounds to events. The new BRT will go down Snelling and there is a lot of parking along University Ave. The goal is to get as many people coming from transit corridors as possible but that will be part of what the overall traffic portion of what the AUAR looks at.

Commissioner Ochs said by University parking you don't mean on University Avenue with the on and off again traffic lanes but available off-street parking at educational institutions?

Commissioner Padilla replied educational and private, there are a lot of surface parking lots along University Avenue that could either be utilized for pay for game day parking or other things. She doesn't think there is a plan yet, but there will be one soon.

Commissioner Nelson was looking at the site plan and parking isn't really shown for any of the retail and thinks it will be interesting to see how the private market views the need for providing their own parking for retail establishments and housing like this given the lenient parking requirements along the Green Line. It will be an interesting test case to see what the private market thinks is required in terms of parking in order to be able to market their products.

Commissioner Padilla concluded by saying the community advisory committee just has a few more meetings but has expressed some desire to continue to meet as long as they can provide some relevancy to the discussion. People are excited about what they saw last night and want to participate especially because the AUAR is happening concurrently but they won't see the results of that as a committee necessarily. The committee hopes to comment on pieces of it as it goes along. It brings a lot of fabulous voices to the table and as long as they can get those people together and utilize those skills and talents they will continue to do that.

X. Old Business

None.

XI. New Business

None.

XII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 10:01 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 April 1, 2016
(Date)



Daniel Ward II
Secretary of the Planning Commission

Planning Team Files\planning commission\minutes\February 19, 2016