

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

Minutes March 23, 2018

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, March 23, 2018 at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

Commissioners Present: Mmes. DeJoy, Eckman, Reveal, Thao, Underwood; and Messrs. Baker, Edgerton, Fredson, Lindeke, Ochs, Oliver, Perryman, Rangel Morales, Reich, Risberg, and Vang.

Commissioners Absent: Mmes. *Anderson, *Lee, *Mouacheupao, and Messrs. Khaled, and *Wojchik.
*Excused

Also Present: Donna Drummond, Planning Director; Yaya Diatta, Department of Safety and Inspections; Lucy Thompson, Bill Dermody, Josh Williams, Kady Dadlez, Mike Richardson, Jamie Radel, and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

I. Approval of minutes February 23, 2018.

MOTION: *Commissioner Baker moved approval of the minutes of February 23, 2018. Commissioner Thao seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

II. Chair's Announcements

Chair Reveal had no announcements.

III. Planning Director's Announcements

Donna Drummond, Planning Director, announced that the Urban Land Institute had a technical advisory panel working this week on the concept of the Rondo Land Bridge. It has been a very intensive week of interviews and research and the panel, which has been working the last couple of days, is announcing their initial recommendations this morning. Tony Johnson, PED staff, has been participating in this process and received a preview. They will recommend moving forward with the land bridge and believe it can be a national model for this type of development. They will recommend a 24 acre bridge design, focusing on African American leadership and ownership for new uses constructed on the bridge. They're recommending that MnDOT construct and maintain the bridge, and a budget of five to ten million dollars be developed for catalyst funds. Anti-displacement and anti-gentrification strategies will be imbedded in the recommendations. These are preliminary they may change a little with the final recommendations.

Commissioner Baker said that he was a part of one of the interview sessions for Reconnect Rondo. One of the questions that came up was how committed and how high on the priority list

is this project with the City and what steps have been taken.

Ms. Drummond said the extent to which this is a priority for the City is to be determined. The previous administration under Mayor Coleman had directed Planning and Economic Development to contribute \$35,000 toward the \$200,000 they're trying to assemble for a feasibility study and MnDOT has already committed to \$50,000. They're also trying to get Ramsey County and some other partner to contribute toward that. Hopefully that will happen, but it seems to be picking up steam and there is a lot of interest in it. She thinks with the new Mayor's administration they're still defining their priorities and we'll see how this moves forward.

Chair Reveal added that there has not been any Planning Commission business related to this; it was just an informational presentation a couple of years ago.

Ms. Drummond noted that there is a recommendation in the staff's draft of the Land Use Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan that supports this. The Planning Commission's role would be to establish a policy in support of this.

Ms. Drummond also noted that both Saint Paul and Minneapolis have been selected as one of ten metro areas in country to participate in what's called the All In Cities Anti-Displacement Policy Network, a group that's being organized by Policy Link with support from various foundations. It will be a one year to two year effort where local elected officials, city staff and community leaders will be networking to share best practices to fight displacement and build inclusiveness for cities. The other cities are Austin, Boston, Buffalo, Denver, Nashville, Philadelphia, Portland, San Jose, Santa Fe and the Twin Cities.

Also, there is a lot of interest in the Accessory Dwelling Units conversation and Jamie Radel is the staff person leading that. The City Council had passed a resolution asking the Planning Commission to study extending accessory dwelling units to other neighborhoods in the city, and Jamie has contacted all the district councils to see if they are interested in hearing more about it. Jamie is meeting with 10 or 12 of the district councils out of 17. There should be an interesting public hearing set for April 20th on that item.

IV. Commissioner Appreciation

Honoring Commissioner Thao for her service on the Planning Commission.

Chair Reveal read a resolution thanking Commissioner Thao for her service on the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Thao said that it has been a pleasure and honor to serve and she has had a great time. Growing up in Saint Paul she would have never imaged a train would come down University Avenue. This is a great city. She loves this city and will never move because it's the best city in the world, and she is happy to be raising her family here. Commissioner Thao thanked the commissioners for their work on the commission and said they will do a great job.

MOTION: Commissioner Reveal moved approval of the resolution honoring Commissioner Makarios. Commissioner DeJoy seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

V. Zoning Committee

STAFF SITE PLAN REVIEW – List of current applications. *(Tia Anderson, 651/266-9086)*

Three items came before the Site Plan Review Committee on Tuesday, March 20, 2018:

- CHS Field Event Parking Lot – Parking lot development at 396 4th Street East. Tom Whaley-St Paul Saints SPR #18-035273
- Exchange Building Hotel – Building remodel at 26 Exchange Street East. Scott Koester-Rebound Exchange LLC SPR #18-034245
- Science Museum of Minnesota – Construction staging area at 120 Kellogg Blvd. West. Tom Carlson-Science Museum SPR #18-033515

Two items to come before the Site Plan Review Committee on Tuesday, March 27, 2018:

- Ain Dah Yung Center – New mixed use development at 769 University Avenue West. Db Foster-Ain Dah Yung SPR #18-035085
- BP Gas & Convenience Store – Commercial redevelopment at 1347 University Avenue West. Khal Aloul-Midway University and Hamline Properties LLC SPR #18-033976

OLD BUSINESS

#18-023-089 2103 Wabash – Rezone from I2 General Industrial to IT Transitional Industrial. 2103 Wabash Avenue, NE corner at Montgomery Street. *(Bill Dermody, 651/266-6617)*

Commissioner Edgerton noted that American Engineering Testing, a neighboring business, had appealed the conditional use permit approval for mixed residential-commercial development at this site. At the public hearing, they had expressed concern about noise from their business becoming an issue for new residents.

Donna Drummond, Planning Director, said the City Council public hearing on the appeal would be on April 4.

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

NEW BUSINESS

#18-032-865 B Three LLC – Construction of a metal roof structure covering rail car loading area within the flood fringe. 2145 Childs Road. *(Josh Williams, 651/266-6659)*

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

#18-030-349 Stone Saloon Properties – Historic Use Variance to permit an outdoor seating area accessory to a restaurant/tap room. 445 Smith Avenue North, between McBoal and Goodrich. (Bill Dermody, 651/266-6617)

Bill Dermody, PED staff that the Heritage Preservation Commission has recommended approval of the Historic Use Variance, and also approved the design review.

Commissioner Perryman said if adding the patio would increase their need for parking or requirement for parking.

Commissioner Baker said they had a robust conversation about parking and they received staff's opinion that technically nothing else really needed to be done on parking. There were some concerns with the potential increase of patrons to the business and the impact on the neighborhood. The discussion transitioned towards what could be when parking is an issue but the code requirements are met. There is already residential permit parking in this area.

Mr. Dermody said that there is no required finding about parking, but parking could relate to finding 2(a) in this case, that the proposed use is compatible with the uses in the surrounding area and the underlying zoning classifications in the area. There have been conversations with the Department of Safety and Inspections about the zoning code parking requirement for the patio, with preliminary indications that the use will not need more parking because the patio use is considered accessory to the indoor use. If that ends up to not be the case, parking would be addressed when they go through formal site plan review and the business would need to provide parking nearby or pursue a variance.

Chair Reveal recalled that parking was an issue when considering the original application because there was not much space for parking on the site, so they needed to provide it off site. She was not sure if that has gone reasonably well or if there have been any complaints.

Mr. Dermody said the business has one space on their lot and a parking lot with about seven spaces on the west side of the block, and he didn't know of any complaints about the parking.

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

Commissioner Edgerton announced the items on the agenda at the next Zoning Committee meeting on Thursday, March 29, 2018.

VI. Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee

Initiate Zoning Code Chapter 64 Signs Text Amendments Study – Approve resolution to initiate a study of Zoning Code Chapter 64 Signs Text Amendments. (Kady Dadlez, 651/266-6619)

Kady Dadlez, PED staff said the action before the commission today is to initiate the study. The study will look at two different kinds of signs: advertising signs and temporary signs. In addition, the study will include a few recommended amendments from the Zoning Administrator to correct an incorrect citation and amend the ordinance related to "ground" signs since the term has been replaced with the term "freestanding" sign. With regard to advertising signs the study will

address the sign code section dealing with professional sports facilities in response to a request from Treasure Island Center (the old Macy's building) for a dynamic display sign. The ordinance would need to be amended to allow this. With regard to advertising signs, the study will also address sports facilities sponsorship signs to allow sponsorship signs at the new soccer stadium in the Midway.

Commissioner Baker asked what the timeline for the study is.

Ms. Dadlez said the timeline is as soon as possible. The driver of this is the stadium. They would like to order their signage and know that they can do what they like to do. She is anticipating that a study will go before the Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee at the next meeting or the subsequent one.

Commissioner Edgerton said that these are both very specific type things, why isn't there some other process, some sort of variance process that would allow it, as opposed to just changing the ordinance.

Ms. Dadlez said that these are items that can't be varied. The ordinance must be amended to allow them. For example, the sponsorship signage requested by the soccer team requires an amendment to the sign ordinance to allow it. The current ordinance allows sponsorship signage at golf courses, ballfields, and hockey rinks. By amending the ordinance, the soccer stadium would be an additional city-owned facility at which we would allow sponsorship signage. She added that the soccer team recently received a variance from the Board of Zoning Appeals to allow more signage than is allowed by code.

Donna Drummond, Planning Director, added that generally you cannot get a use variance, so if the use is not permitted in a district or permitted at all then that cannot be varied. Therefore, the route is to look at possible change to the code to address that.

Commissioner Ochs asked whether staff would be looking at examples from other cities. Other cities have multiple code descriptions for these types of uses.

Ms. Dadlez said she is just looking at Saint Paul's code and how it relates to uses and looking at whether or not it appears that what is being proposed is reasonable. At this point the study does not look at other cities.

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

2040 Comprehensive Plan – How economic development and resiliency are reflected in draft goals and policies. (Lucy Thompson, 651/266-6578)

Ms. Thompson gave a Power Point presentation, which can be viewed on the web page at: <http://www.stpaul.gov/planningcommission>

Commissioner Baker stated his concern about how to measure Plan implementation success. It would be great to have a way to determine whether the policies are being implemented throughout the 20 years of the Plan's timeframe, especially since there are some policies in the

Plan over which the City has no control. It would be good to explore, perhaps in annual check-ins, how the City is doing on implementing the Comp Plan. This would allow for “course corrections” to ensure that progress is being made.

Ms. Thompson noted that the draft Plan does not contain specific (numerical) metrics. However, there are subsequent and related planning and budget actions that can provide some measure of implementation success, such as the CIB program, Public Works’ 5-year Capital Improvement Plan, and individual park master plans. These tools “operationalize” the policies in the city-wide Comp Plan.

Commissioner Baker said that it feels like many of the policies are designed to happen organically; however, the City needs to be more strategic and deliberate to achieve the desired outcomes.

Commissioner Ochs said that he sees urban design is a very important element of a physical development plan like the Comp Plan. He would like to better understand how urban design shows up in the Plan’s policies.

Commissioner Thao said the key would be to operationalize the Plan’s policies. The Comprehensive/Neighborhood Planning Committee identified things like Market Watch to gauge economic development results. She stated that implementation needs to be a priority of City leadership. Staff have briefed both Mayor Carter and Deputy Mayor Tincher on the draft Plan, and incorporated the priorities of the new Administration into the Plan. The Plan’s policies are informed by demographic, market and other data, which will help with implementation.

Ms. Drummond reminded the Commission that an annual report has been discussed to help the Commission track implementation progress. The Market Watch report that the Department of Planning and Economic Development prepares could be part of that report. In addition, some of the actions recommended in the Implementation Chapter are things that the Planning Commission is directly involved in, like zoning studies. In the past, the Planning Team’s work plan has followed the directions in the Comp Plan.

Commissioner Edgerton noted that much of the work of the Zoning Committee is directly implementing the Comp Plan through the required finding of consistency with the Comp Plan. Also, even though the 2040 Comp Plan is pro-growth and pro-density, many times residents are opposed to zoning actions due to their assessment that a proposed action will result in too many people, too much traffic, too much disruption, too much noise, etc. It will be important to make sure that people understand the City goals of growth and density.

Ms. Thompson said that she thinks growth and density are generally where people want the city to go, as long as new development is well-designed and public systems (such as transit and parks) keep up with demand. We also have to work with the architectural and development communities to design buildings that work, are beautiful and transition into their context. We need to ensure that every project is the best it can be so that new building projects are models for “good density” in the future. The Comp Plan’s approach is to support having the systems in place to support growth.

Ms. Drummond reminded everyone that, often times at public hearings, the people who show up are those who are really upset about something. The people who support a project typically do

not show up. One exception has been the Ford Zoning and Public Realm Plan, where the Sustain Ward 3 group organized themselves to support the Plan.

Commissioner Lindeke said that Commissioner Edgerton's comments reminded him of research that Lars Christiansen, who resides in the Midway area and is an Urban Sociologist at Augsburg, did regarding how people perceive change in a community engagement process. Using Ford as an example, 10 years before the Plan will be realized, people are positive, because they can each imagine their own utopian vision of the Ford site. The closer you get to actually making a decision, more and more negative thoughts occur, and the conversation turns into a strict "yes or no" argument instead of an open-ended process. The argument might be about density, but sometimes it's just about any kind of change happening. Keeping that in mind, Commissioner Lindeke thinks about how to have more open and positive conversations. The Comprehensive Plan is a great opportunity to do that. An annual check-in on implementation progress (using metrics related to the Plan's goals) would be good not only for the Commission but for the general public as well. Lindeke asked for some guidance on how to read and use the 2040 Land Use Map.

Ms. Thompson said the 2040 Future Land Use Map shows where we anticipate targeting increases in land use density and diversity, primarily at the Neighborhood Nodes. Many of the Neighborhood Nodes are based on already-existing station area plans, small area plans and district plans that have identified those areas for growth, as well as zoning. Urban Neighborhoods are also expected to accept growth, but it will be more incremental in scale.

Commissioner DeJoy said that, regarding implementation, the CIB and STAR programs are examples of how the Comp Plan plays out with City funding decisions. Consistency with the Comp Plan is one of the criteria for project approval. In addition, STAR applications specifically ask how the proposed project addresses the City's equity goals. These programs are a way to keep the Comp Plan in mind from the beginning of a process or project, rather than looking back and seeing how we did in hindsight.

Commissioner Ochs said this discussion is about how we can "sell" the Comprehensive Plan, make it more understandable and more appealing to the public so they take a greater interest in it, learn from it and become greater partners in the building of the city. He likes to see strong community involvement whether people are in favor of or opposed to a project. One way to help people visualize the future might be to have an architect illustrate, on a typical Saint Paul parcel, what density and growth in a future Saint Paul might look like.

Commissioner Thao said that the Planning Commission's Annual Report would be a good way to track Comp Plan implementation.

Commissioner Baker said that it would be appropriate for the Planning Commission to urge the Mayor and City Council to have metrics and departmental action plans to ensure Comp Plan implementation. This could be stated as part of the Commission's recommendation to the Mayor and City Council when it forwards the Comp Plan to them for final adoption.

Ms. Thompson agreed and will see that this is part of the transmittal memo.

Chair Reveal added that the Commission typically uses the transmittal memo to make policy comments or other comments about how the Commission feels a Plan should be used.

Commissioner Vang said that he supports having an annual dashboard to track metrics.

Draft 2040 Comprehensive Plan – Release for preliminary review by Metropolitan Council and adjacent/affected jurisdictions (not for public review) (*Lucy Thompson, 651/266-6578*)

MOTION: Commissioner Thao moved on behalf of the Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee to approve the resolution to release the draft 2040 Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan to the Metropolitan Council for preliminary review and adjacent/affected jurisdictions. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

Commissioner Eckman said that she would be interested in reviewing ours and other Comprehensive Plans to look at continuity and synergy. Her only request is that it be during the Comprehensive/Neighborhood Committee meeting time.

Chair Reveal said Commissioners interested in reviewing other cities' plans should let Ms. Thompson know.

Commissioner Risberg asked if it was appropriate for staff to share its observations about other cities' plans with the Comprehensive/Neighborhood Planning Committee. Staff will bring this to the next Committee meeting as a discussion item.

VII. Transportation Committee

Commissioner Lindeke said at the last meeting the committee heard from Public Works about pedestrian safety engagement and work on a pedestrian plan for the city. We had a report from a researcher at the University of Minnesota who has been working in Saint Paul for a while studying crosswalks, and how many drivers stop at crosswalks. The work is trying to get people to be more attentive about pedestrians in the city. There are a lot of safety and public health issues that come together in this study.

Commissioner Edgerton said that he went to the pedestrian plan open house and Fay raised the question, what is the busiest pedestrian intersection in the city? And then she never told us, do you know?

Commissioner Lindeke said for traffic its Snelling and University, and for foot traffic he would imagine that it's somewhere downtown like Kellogg and 7th.

Chair Reveal asked if someone would find that out.

Commissioner Lindeke said one thing that they talked about was how many more people are walking on University Avenue since the light rail. Also MnDOT came and they are going to reconstruct Robert Street downtown in 2020. There are plans for adding some bump outs to make the pedestrian experience nicer downtown and they are looking for feedback from the city about that. They also provided updates on other MnDOT projects like I-94 east of downtown that has been under construction for many years. On Monday, March 26th meeting of the committee we will hear from Metro Transit about the Route 54 extension and also the Transit Assistance Program.

Bill Dermody, PED staff, said that the Transit Assistance Program offers one dollar discounted rides for low income persons.

VIII. Communications Committee

None.

IX. Task Force/Liaison Reports

Donna Drummond, Planning Director, explained a hand out from Jamie Radel, which is an appendix piece to the Comprehensive Plan draft that is being approved for release today to adjacent jurisdictions. It includes a lot of statistics about housing in Saint Paul and the Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee reviewed it at their meeting last Wednesday. Jamie Radel put this together; if you have questions about anything in there she would be happy to answer them.

Commissioner Eckman said that the district councils had received a grant from the City of Saint Paul to look at equity issues. There were several events and opportunities for district councils to get together to talk about what can do to catalyze and create stronger interconnected between our district councils. They also talked about how to raise awareness that not only are our communities assets but that we are also at a deficit without them. The other part of it was how to make sure that our communities get a larger understanding of how the city is operating and how they can be involved. Commissioner Eckman is in the process of recruiting a few other district councilmembers to talk about how they can use different forms of social media to make sure community members have good information when someone applies for a rezoning or variance or conditional use permit, and how they can be alerted sooner than at the meeting so they can have more of a say in that process.

X. Old Business

None.

XI. New Business

None.

XII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 10:06 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 4/20/18
(Date)



Luis Rangel Morales
Secretary of the Planning Commission

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