

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

Minutes April 6, 2018

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, April 6, 2018 at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

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

Commissioners Absent: Mmes. *Anderson, Lee, and Mr. *Reich.
*Excused

Also Present: Donna Drummond, Planning Director; Ya Ya Diatta, Department of Safety and Inspections, Kady Dadlez, Bill Dermody, Anton Jerve, Tony Johnson and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

I. Approval of minutes March 9, 2018.

Chair Reveal 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 Reveal had no announcements.

III. Planning Director's Announcements

Donna Drummond announced that in the Commissioner's packets is a spreadsheet that lists all of the Neighborhood STAR applications. The Planning Commission's role in the Neighborhood STAR process is to determine each application's conformance with the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee will be talking about that at their next meeting, and the Planning Commission will take action at the May 4, 2018 meeting. The City Council laid over the appeal for 2103 Wabash (conditional use permit for conversion of an industrial building to primarily residential) on Wednesday so the appellant and applicant can talk more and maybe work something out. Mayor Carter is holding the State of Our City Summit on Saturday, April 14, 2018, 9:00 a.m. at Johnson High School. It will be an interactive event; this information will be forwarded to the full Planning Commission. Lastly, Ms. Lucy Thompson will be the Interim Planning Director after Ms. Drummond retires at the end of April. Posting for the permanent position will be soon.

IV. Zoning Committee

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

Two items to come before the Site Plan Review Committee on Tuesday, April 10, 2018:

- Snelling Ave Retail Building – New Commercial at 270-272 Snelling Avenue South. Paul Tucci-272 Snelling Avenue South Partners, LLC SPR #18-046737
- Snelling & St. Clair Apartments – New Mixed –Use at 246-258 Snelling Avenue South. Jim LaValle-TJL Development LLC SPR #18-041419

NEW BUSINESS

#18-036-955 Baker East Partners – Rezone from B2 Community Business and VP Vehicular Parking to T3 Traditional Neighborhood. 821 Raymond Avenue and 2421 Territorial Road, NW corner of Raymond and Territorial Road. (*Anton Jerve, 651/266-6567*)

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

#18-033-224 Transition Homes – Conditional Use Permit for a supportive housing facility for up to 10 program residents and 1 resident manager, variance of the 1320 foot minimum separation from other congregate living facilities (698 and 936 feet proposed), and variance of the 6-resident maximum in the RT1 district. 1947 Roblyn Avenue, NE corner at Prior. (*Kady Dadlez, 651/266-6619*)

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

#18-037-056 Paster Properties – Conditional Use Permit for a 23,000 sq. ft. grocery store, outdoor commercial uses and drive-thru sales. 1150 Prosperity Avenue, 1365-1371 Phalen Blvd., NE corner at Clarence. (*Bill Dermody, 651/266-6617*)

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.

#18-035-742 Scott Kramer – Revocation of a conditional use permit for a bed and breakfast due to noncompliance with conditions of the permit. 241 George Street West between Ohio Avenue and Waseca Street. (*Kady Dadlez, 651/266-6619*)

Commissioner Edgerton announced that this case has been laid over to the April 26, 2018 Zoning Committee meeting.

Commissioner Edgerton also announced the items on the agenda at the next Zoning Committee meeting on Thursday, April 12, 2018.

- V. **ULI Advisory Services Panel - Rondo Land Bridge Recommendations** - Informational presentation by Walter Smith, Executive Director, ReConnect Rondo, Inc. and Marvin Anderson, Board Chair, ReConnect Rondo Inc.

Marvin Anderson, Board Chair, ReConnect Rondo Inc. noted that, in July, ReConnect Rondo, as part of Rondo Days, will have the grand opening for the Rondo Commemorative Plaza, a new addition to the memory and legacy of the Rondo Community. An exciting new vision is to build a land bridge over I94 in the Rondo corridor. ReConnect Rondo is a merger of Rondo Avenue Inc. and the Friendly Streets Initiative, with support from the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the United States Department of Transportation, and the ideas and recommendations from thinkers and urban planners from around the United States. Land bridges are now a topic that has been taken up by Planning Commissions and urbanologists across the country, including Seattle, Boston, Texas, Minnesota, Washington State and Denver. Over the last 18 months, many players and stakeholders have participated in a feasibility study for the land bridge, and ReConnect Rondo is now confident that it is an idea whose time has come.

An Urban Land Institute (ULI) Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) came to Saint Paul from March 19-23 to lead a series of meetings and interviews to determine Saint Paul's readiness for a land bridge. On Friday, March 23rd, the TAP's recommendations were given to and embraced by the Rondo community. The land bridge has the potential to bring economic development and jobs, improve community health, and stitch together a community that was ripped apart by a transportation decision 50 years ago. This possibility is more than a dream.

Walter Smith, Executive Director of ReConnect Inc. gave a Power Point presentation, which can be seen on the web page at: <http://www.stpaul.gov/planningcommission>

Mr. Smith said that they are very early in the land bridge process, and there is a lot to do over the next 5-7 years. Reconnect Rondo hopes that the Planning Commission will support the project as well.

Commissioner Khaled asked about the status of corporate giving from Target, Blue Cross and Ecolab to the project.

Mr. Smith said that these are recommended funders, but no ask has been made yet. They have engaged CVS around the health impact assessment.

Commissioner Khaled said that he can help make some connections in that regard. He worked on the Super Bowl Legacy Fund and feels the value proposition here is significantly more compelling.

Commissioner Ochs asked how deeply they explored a "lid," as opposed to a bridge. He believes the concept of a lid would provide a much broader vision than that of a bridge, and would go beyond the concept options explored by the Minnesota Design Center.

Mr. Anderson said that the renderings by the Minnesota Design Center (MDC) are just concepts to show the range of possible approaches. Concept A, an expanded bridge, exists in Columbus, Ohio. Concept B is the reclamation of the Frontage Road, which adds 70 feet on each side of the freeway that can be used for new housing. Concept C includes an expanded bridge, housing on the embankments, and a lid from Victoria to Grotto that can be used for open air markets, art fairs, walking space, green space, and a performance center. These preliminary concepts will be further fleshed out by August.

Mr. Smith added that the MDC work was supported by a grant. The intent is for more detailed design work to be done by August/September.

Mr. Smith noted that the office of James Burnett, OJB Landscape Architecture, the designers of Klyde Warren Park in Dallas, have already submitted a proposal.

Mr. Anderson added that they're interested in this firm because they're already beginning to work on a project in Oak Cliff, TX, pulling together an African American community that was destroyed by the freeway.

Mr. Smith added that they have invited them to participate in the ReConnect Rondo project.

Commissioner Ochs asked if James Barnett is one of the two preferred designers.

Mr. Smith replied that there are more than two designers who have expressed interest in working on the project. One of the large designers here in Saint Paul has submitted a proposal, and there is interest in working with them as well.

Mr. Anderson said a young woman with Perkins & Will who designed the new National African American Museum in Washington, D.C. is now designing a resurrection park in Charlotte, N.C., which is another city, destroyed by a freeway. Perkins & Will has reached out to ReConnect Rondo. Future work will go beyond the foundational concept plans the MDC prepared, which has been very helpful in showing people that 70 feet on each side of the freeway is buildable - and eventually taxable- land. The site could support 330 new housing units.

Commissioner Baker was part of a panel of community members that talked about long-term sustainability and specifically dealing with the City of Saint Paul. The question was raised as to what might be the City's role in incentivizing in these larger mid-size companies to come in. Commissioner Baker asked if ReConnect Rondo had had any conversations with the City on this point.

Tony Johnson, PED staff, said that he and Ross Currier, PED staff have been staffing the project. Ross is the Project Manager from the Economic Development Team. He is working with ReConnect Rondo on business attraction. Given the unique nature of the land bridge, there may need to be new economic developments programs specific to it. Staff will eventually bring a master plan for the project to the Planning Commission for approval. Part of the master plan can be a business recruitment program tailored to the unique opportunity here.

Commissioner Baker said that there seems to be a lot of moving parts, and he agrees that support will definitely be needed to make this happen. As much as he wants to see this project move forward, he is concerned about the amount of money that it will cost and ensuring that we start tapping into consistent funding sources.

Mr. Smith said that this project is a burden and a blessing. One of the blessings in carrying the burden is that they have people like Bill Lively at the table with them. Bill Lively is a philanthropist who was a critical player in fundraising for Klyde Warren Park. He raised 100 \$1M gifts outside the city of Dallas to make that project happen. Bill Lively is mentoring ReConnect Rondo Inc., and Mr. Smith is in direct communication with him. The report contains federal, state, philanthropy and private funding options that they can tap into for this project. Mr.

Lively is planning to potentially be a part of the foundation that is created to fund the project. He will also be a part of training and recruiting the chair, co-chair and committee that will oversee the fundraising campaign.

ReConnect Rondo is researching and exploring funding options, including TIGER, Kresge Foundation, with the goal of raising \$1-3 million. The ULI panel stated that seed capital from the City would be a critical investment that would be a catalyst for other public, private and philanthropic funding.

Commissioner Eckman shared the story of a project (not in Saint Paul) where families that had been displaced by a project were the first ones offered the chance to buy back in to the neighborhood once some of the properties had been recaptured. She sees ReConnect Rondo as an opportunity to mend the community's broken heart by returning to those values, cultures and other things that feed the community. It is more than a bridge.

Mr. Anderson said they are motivated by Dr. Mendy Fullilove, an urban psychiatrist from New Jersey who wrote a book called Root Shock. She defines Root Shock as a condition like a burn or an amputation that never really heals, you always have it. She considers the destruction of the 1200 African American communities around the United States as an example of root shock - a destruction to this urban ecosystem that will never really heal. But you can take steps along the way to mitigate it. ReConnect Rondo will be a source of hope for communities around the United States and can be a model to begin the healing process. It will help reclaim all of the brilliance and vibrancy in Rondo. Newer immigrants – Somali, Hmong, Oromo and Karen are also being invited to be a part of this. One of their major goals is to hire community organizers from each of those communities. Rondo will be a great model of healing.

Commissioner Edgerton said that it is really important to find champions at both the state and federal levels – for funding and other support. He loves the eight values of Rondo and thinks they are applicable in other neighborhoods as well. He asked how right-of way, land ownership and zoning work when you're on top of a freeway

Mr. Johnson said they are thinking that MnDOT will maintain air rights, so they will own everything on and above the bridge with long term leases for future development over the right-of-way. In Saint Paul, zoning districts go to the center of the right-of way, so the future land bridge is currently zoned single- family on one side and two-family on the other side. A rezoning will be done as part of the master plan. Mr. Johnson is recommending T3 zoning for the land bridge.

Commissioner Edgerton confirmed that MnDOT has the air rights so they would own the land and own some sort of lease agreement.

Mr. Johnson explained that a land bridge in Columbus, Ohio has a 99-year lease agreement has been established between the development and the agency. Klyde Warren Park in Dallas also has a lease agreement. He noted that the group has two standing meetings – a project meeting with MnDOT twice a month, and a monthly meeting with the City of Edina, which is considering a land bridge as well. Edina is ahead of Rondo; they have completed a feasibility study and are currently working on transportation and sustainability studies.

Mr. Anderson added that they have also had an opportunity to talk to MnDOT, talk to Federal

Highway Administration, and Metropolitan Council. In August or September there will be three reports released at that time that are pertinent to the project. The ULI detailed report, Rondo's feasibility report, and the report by MnDOT of the reconstruction of I94. The hope is that these three reports will be delivered to the community and it will be of such importance that they will invite our congressional delegation to attend, they will invite regional administrators to attend and the United States Department of Transportation Secretary will be invited to attend. And if they do it right this presentation in August or September will be a way in which the center of the reconstruction to transportation world this light can be focused on what's happening here in Saint Paul.

Commissioner Vang asked for clarification on how the idea of a land bridge came about and why MnDOT was seen as the appropriate owner (instead of a non-profit or private corporation).

Mr. Anderson said that there are some legal reasons, as well as keeping MnDOT as the agency responsible for maintenance.

Mr. Smith said that with Klyde Warren Park, the City of Dallas has little-to-no responsibility for operations and maintenance of the land bridge; those responsibilities lie with the Klyde Warren Park Foundation. The Saint Paul situation is different. While Klyde Warren Park is in the middle of a downtown business area, Rondo is at the heart of a strong, diverse residential and business community. ReConnect Rondo is a community-driven process, and the community's voice, concerns, vision and heart are the priority.

Commissioner Lindeke said that he is very impressed by the outreach efforts that were made as a part of the health impact study. He has never seen a project that has been so intentional about reaching out to so many community members and letting the people who were most impacted by the history of this lead the conversation (as opposed to experts from outside). Commissioner Lindeke thanked ReConnect Rondo for all of their work.

Mr. Smith thanked him for his public space to study, and they are going to be depending upon that heavily for their work.

Mr. Anderson thanked the Commission for its attention and time. The 35th Anniversary of Rondo is July 18, 2018. The Commemorative Plaza opens on July 11th, and the new housing opens on July 12th. The Planning Commission has a standing invitation to come to Rondo anytime.

VI. Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee

Commissioner Mouacheupao reported that, at their last meeting, the Committee discussed Zoning Code Chapter 64 Signs Text Amendments and is recommending a couple of amendments. The goal is to release the study and set a public hearing for June 1, 2018. Also, Ms. Thompson spoke about Planning Commission review of 2040 Comprehensive Plans from adjacent cities. PED staff have a comment template, where each chapter lead will review the similar chapter from other cities. The Committee asked staff only for higher-level notes and highlights on conflicts and alignment from the other Comprehensive Plans.

VII. Transportation Committee

Commissioner Lindeke announced that at their last meeting, they heard from Metro Transit about

the extension of bus 54 route that goes from the Mall of America to downtown along West 7th Street. Years ago, continuation of that express service to the East Side via East 7th Street was delayed for years, but it will now occur this summer. The route will go from the Mall of America to Maplewood Mall. They also discussed the Transit Assistance Program (TAP), which Metro Transit has revised a bit to riders at the very bottom end of the income spectrum. Eligible people will pay one dollar to ride the bus, and they will receive a special card showing that. It's an amazing opportunity to lower transportation costs for people who need it in Saint Paul. The next Transportation Committee meeting on Monday, April 9, 2018 has been cancelled.

VIII. Communications Committee

None.

IX. Task Force/Liaison Reports

None.

X. Old Business

None.

XI. New Business

None.

XII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 10:10 a.m.

Recorded and prepared by
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Planning and Economic Development Department,
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Respectfully submitted,



Lucy Thompson
Interim Planning Director

Approved May 18, 2018
(Date)



Luis Rangel Morales
Secretary of the Planning Commission