

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

**Minutes June 14, 2019**

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, June 14, 2019, at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

**Commissioners Present:** Mmes. Anderson, Grill, Lee, Mouacheupao, Reveal, Underwood; and Messrs. Baker, Edgerton, Khaled, Ochs, Risberg, Rodriguez, and Vang.

**Commissioners Absent:** Ms. \*DeJoy, and Messrs. \*Lindeke, \*Oliver, Perryman, and \*Rangel Morales.  
\*Excused

**Also Present:** Luis Pereira, Planning Director; Allan Torstenson, Bill Dermody, Kady Dadlez, Michael Wade, Emma Siegworth, Addison Vang, and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

**I. Swearing in a New Commissioner.**

New Planning Commission member Antonio Rodriguez was sworn in by Noel Nix, Mayor's Office.

**II. Approval of minutes April 19, 2019.**

**MOTION:** *Commissioner Baker moved approval of the minutes of April 19, 2019. Commissioner Grill seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

**III. Chair's Announcements**

Chair Reveal announced that Cedrick Baker informed her that he is not going to continue as the First Vice Chair into the next year. Typically, he would move up to the Chairmanship when she was done in January 2020, and Commissioner Luis Rangel Morales is being recommended that he move up into that position, which he is currently Second Vice Chair. The motion will be made under New Business.

**IV. Planning Director's Announcements**

Luis Pereira at City Council next Wednesday, June 19<sup>th</sup> they have invited staff to a policy session on Planning Commission studies and he has been busy working on a presentation for that. He will take the opportunity to talk about everything they are working on the staff team. The focus that they are interested in is Zoning studies and Planning Commission studies, so it will focus more on some of the things that have already been seen at the Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee but also a few things you haven't seen. That is the same day City Council will have the 2040 Comprehensive Plan for final vote to approve subject to Metropolitan Council

review, which we will be stressing them to move it forward have them approve it so it can be submitted to the Metropolitan Council.

The APA-American Planning Association just released **Planning for Equity** Policy guide, which is something they have been working on for a few years. It builds off some previous work that had been done that was more topic focused, e.g. climate change, and housing which integrates it all together. The unique thing about it is they had a big task force process, they have had local chapters form around diversity, inclusion and equity and those have become more active including one here in Minnesota that has kicked off in the last year. At Steering Committee, they had talked about the Commission sending a letter to the City Council about the importance of equity in the Comprehensive Plan in the work that they are going to be doing at Committee level. They have a draft letter for a few commissioners to look at related to some of those themes and hopefully that will get finalized quickly.

Mr. Pereira introduced and welcomed two new members of the Planning Team, Addison Vang from Dunn County, Wisconsin. He was a Planner, Code enforcement officer, interacting with the public, county staff, various committees and prepared plans and maps, drafted staff reports and worked on studies. Mr. Vang has a Master in Public Policy, a Minor in Urban Planning from the Humphrey School and a Bachelor's of Science Engineer Technology from the U of Wisconsin Stout. Addison Vang is the new City Planning Tech focusing on assisting the public at the Zoning Counter, working on HUD environmental reviews and working with the Research team on generating research in maps.

Also, Emma Siegworth from SEH in Saint Paul, a graduate Planner focusing on technical studies for transportation projects including preparing maps, environmental documentation and community engagement materials. As well as researching Transportation Best Practices. Ms. Siegworth has a Bachelor's of Design and Architecture from the University of Minnesota and a Master of Urban Planning from University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. Ms. Siegworth is the new City Planner focusing first on the HUD Consolidated Plan and supporting the Summit Hill Association on their update to the District Plan focused on eastern Grand Avenue. Also, working with Kady Dadlez and Luis Pereira on the Inclusionary Housing Zoning Study.

## V. **Zoning Committee**

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

One item to come before the Site Plan Review Committee on Tuesday, June 18, 2019:

- Eastview Tennis Courts – Five (5) New Tennis Courts at 1675 East 5<sup>th</sup> Street. Song Thao, Saint Paul Urban Tennis. SPR #19-050039

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#19-042-513 Water Street Residential – Rezone from IT Traditional Industrial to T3 Traditional Neighborhood. 84 Water Street West. (*Michael Wade, 651/266-8703*)

Commissioner Edgerton said that at the Zoning Committee meeting he had asked if the Saint Paul Port Authority had weighed in on this loss of industrial land to residential use, because that is a concern of the Port Authority as well as himself. They had not received a letter or any contact

from the Port Authority, he had asked them if they would, so a letter was received and handed out to the Planning Commission today from the Saint Port Authority. Which the Port Authority essentially speaks in opposition as he reads it, and what they state is: "subject parcel lies within a functioning industrial node that was only recently rezoned to IT (industrial transition), with numerous nearby parcels rezoned to T3, which would allow for this type of redevelopment for a residential use. These IT parcels were not rezoned to T3, likely in a conscious effort to reinforce their continued use for job producing commercial/industrial uses. The parcel is adjacent to several other large industrial buildings that, if in need of expansion and/or occupied by job dense maker space and creative office uses encouraged in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, have lost potential parking or expansion opportunities, and additionally introduced an incompatible use into an otherwise industrial zone." That is their comment to preserve industrial land and if we lose it they would request that we look at converting other non-industrial to industrial land so that there is a no net loss. So, the Port Authority spoke in opposition, the Zoning Committee voted 6-0 to approve both applications, but at the same time we did not have this letter from the Port Authority and for him it is creating questions about his vote and he may have voted differently had he heard this input.

Commissioner Baker said based on the Port Authority's letter understanding that Commissioner Edgerton did not have this information during the Zoning Committee meeting. Specifically, the recommendation to convert other parcels of land and if they move forward with this action Commissioner Baker is interested in the feasibility of that happening.

Luis Pereira, Planning Director, said that a parcel by parcel exchange with one parcel going away from industrial another one going towards industrial zoning, there is no policy or approach that would do that now, that he is aware of. They do have policies in both the Comprehensive Plan and district plans that talk about site assembly for employment center and light industrial uses which they have the ability to do that (potentially when land is underutilized or there are a lot of parking lots that are not being fully utilized). The City has policy like that, e.g. in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan there is a policy related to preserving industrially zoned land, he does not believe it has gone as far as the language that the Port Authority has suggested. Based on comments from the Port Authority the 2040 Comprehensive Plan staff strengthened their policies around industrial preservation.

Commissioner Baker said an overall approach as they end up getting into this situation where they feel as if this property or this opportunity may be gone there is nothing happening on the land, what is our overall approach when this happens? He is interested in how you operationalize that. Because, when you have a potential property or builder saying that they want to come in to a site where it is technically no jobs, nothing is happening. He is interested in how you actually operationalize that, because he feels that a lot of times he goes back and forth and the reason he feels he goes back and forth is because we don't have anything set to say that in these types of situations our approach is excellent.

Chair Reveal added that it would be useful to invite the Port Authority into that conversation, because the Port Authority should have some priorities about where they would like to have more industrial land.

Luis Pereira, Planning Director, said that the Port Authority gave an update to the City Council on Wednesday, which is available as a link of the City Council's web site. And that might be useful to review as further contacts in terms of the industrial kind of developer within the City of Saint

Paul their perspective. Their resource would be limited in terms of what they can acquire for what purpose, but they do get involved with speculative land assembly. And partner with the private sector on some of that, but they talk about that in the presentation which might be helpful to answer some of those questions.

Commissioner Edgerton said in this case this is IT and it's not the same as I2 it's not heavy industrial, it's meant to be transitional industrial that can sit next to residential. The IT next door presumably is acceptable to have in a residential, he is still on the fence on it, he would rather see mixed use, he'd rather see this. Because it's not as though this specific one is vacant, if you go through that area it's not like its full of vacant things, it's a growing area. It seems prime for maker space, that type of redevelopment. This is a good application, but he's concerned that they are going to close potential other appropriate uses for the site. He is mixed on how to vote.

Commissioner Khaled said in light of the Port Authority's letter, he has been thinking about what is foundational for what they need to think about encouraging other elected officials to consider. When he thinks about Planning and Economic Development, he looks at this as squarely an economic development type of imperative. You have as a nation and as a global industry the rationale for large industrialized spaces shifting and changing based on the nature of the economy. It might be on this group to include in the equity-related letter something related to consideration of economic development. He sees a note of support from the West Side Community Organization from May 20<sup>th</sup>, and asks staff if they have any understanding of what he heard, which is that they have withdrawn their support.

Mr. Pereira said that the public hearing is closed on this item so he will be careful on what he says, but West Side Community Organization (WESCO) has withdrawn their letter of position and is going to provide a formal position later at the City Council public hearing assuming that goes forward.

Chair Reveal pointed out that their letter on equity to the Mayor and City Council from the retreat, they did identify in particular an implementation standard LU12 to initiate a citywide comprehensive equitable economic development strategy. So, they did have that conversation.

Commissioner Vang asked, what is the percentage of land transferred over to residential in the last 5 years? That would provide us with a good picture of where we are now. If there is a lot of land that has been transferred to residential then it is a concern that we should address. We are doing parcels individually and right now at this point in time the line is offset. That's the information he is interested in knowing.

Commissioner Ochs said that question of housing is a good conversation, however he questions if more affordable housing in this particular area doesn't seem to do the housing situation any better. Because the access to public transportation is low, people are starting to require cars to mobilize. He is on the fence about this, however, he does like the idea of having housing and more mixed use along the park. It would strengthen industrial away from the other side of that because he is in favor of preserving industrial - it's very important. Was there any consideration of the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area or any input from the Friends of the Mississippi River?

Michael Wade, PED staff, stated that there was. They heard from them informally that they will not take a position but they are not opposed because it doesn't affect the view of bluffs, and that is what they were concerned about.

Commissioner Grill said that this parcel is directly across the street from Harriet Island, it has good proximity to downtown. She worked off Plato Boulevard which is further away and she walks that path back and forth all the time, the neighborhood would benefit from more development there. And yes, knows there is a concern about industrial land but there are probably other places where this is better served. Particularly because there is very little housing in that area and it is proximate to downtown. She is in favor.

Commissioner Underwood wanted to know when the public comment period was closed. It was mentioned earlier regarding WSCO's (West Side Community Organization) position.

Chair Reveal said the public hearing was closed at the Zoning Committee meeting.

Commissioner Underwood said to that point we received this letter yesterday from the Saint Paul Port Authority.

Chair Reveal stated that they specifically kept the record open for the Port Authority comment.

Commissioner Edgerton noted that it was a request at the Zoning Committee meeting and we wanted to get their input so they were the exception.

Commissioner Underwood said but that was not done for WSCO.

Chair Reveal said that there was no reason to do that for WSCO at the time.

Commissioner Underwood is struggling with hearing from the Port Authority yesterday when this project didn't show up last week. She knows a project can't be in front of everyone all the time but she is struggling with why the Port wasn't a part of this sooner. And thinking about Planning Commission two weeks ago and voting on variances for a housing development just a little further down the river when she voted against it because there was not enough access and not enough opportunity for people. She is very frustrated that this is a development with no commercial space, commenting that the City needs to have a threshold for how much must be in a facility, not allowing a zero minimum.

Chair Reveal noted that if it had of been a mixed use they would not have had to change the zoning.

Commissioner Underwood said she is going to vote for this, because she thinks it's right for Saint Paul and all the work going into making the river an active, livable space.

Chair Reveal added that this particular property was not technically in the West Side Flats Master Plan. The housing issue is more immediately significant particularly when there are not obvious other potential developers.

Commissioner Edgerton pointed out that the West Side Flats does contemplate a lot of housing, its mixed use, and the intent is to have a residential area close to the downtown. This area was

not included it was not part of that plan this was left outside at IT Transitional Industrial rather than being changed as part of the West Side Flats. Another point is affordable housing has different aspects, one aspect building more units and making the price a certain way, another aspect having jobs that allow people to have good income so that they can afford housing. That is what makes housing affordable: the rent side and the income side. The idea of preserving industrial land is to help keep and build good family supporting jobs.

Commissioner Mouacheupao said that it is important to look at where the conversions have happened. Unlike St. Anthony or the Creative Enterprise Zone where there has been a lot of conversion, she is leaning more to agreeing with Commissioner's Grill, Underwood and Chair Reveal because in this area there is such a lack of any kind of development. In places like St. Anthony where there has been so much conversion, where it has to stop because there is so much of the industrial land being converted. She supported analysis across the city really looking at where it's happening and to create some policies or guidance. Any development is not good development in different areas of the city.

Mr. Wade clarified two points, one is policy and one is timeline. While this area is not included in the West Side Flats Master Plan, it is designated mixed use in the Comprehensive Plan and in the earlier West Side Flats/District del Sol. For industrial designated areas, there are strong policies in the Comprehensive Plan about maintaining industrial land uses, but in the Comprehensive Plan this is designated a Mixed-Use area.

Second is the timeline. This is a date for the developers as he is aware of, and if it does not go through today, he's been told that the project will not happen. He wanted to inform the Commission of the importance as they consider laying decisions over for more time to consider things.

Commissioner Ochs said that, given the neighboring neighborhoods, the Westside Flats and District del Sol, he wants to reiterate that he thinks housing is a positive thing here, but he thinks it can be done with IT and he'd like to see mixed use.

Chair Reveal noted that the rezoning is an advisory recommendation to the City Council so as of the new bylaws, she can and will vote on this case.

***MOTION: Commissioner Edgerton moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the rezoning. The motion carried 9-3 (Ochs, Edgerton, Khaled) on a voice vote.***

#19-042-636 Water Street Residential – Building height variance (45' permitted, 74' 6" proposed). Front yard setback variance (10' required, 8' 6" proposed for building corner near front entry, 5' proposed for balconies). 84 Water Street West. (Michael Wade, 651/266-8703)

Chair Reveal stated that the variances are quasi-judicial, which means that she cannot vote on this case, except if it is a tie vote.

***MOTION: Commissioner Edgerton moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the variances subject to additional conditions. The motion carried 8-3 (Ochs, Edgerton, Khaled) on a voice vote.***

#19-042-697 Alan Hupp – Conditional use permit for a 5-unit cluster development with modification of lot coverage and setback standards, and a parking variance (7 spaces required, 4 spaced proposed). 617 Laurel Avenue, NE corner at Dale Street. (Tony Johnson, 651/266-6620)

***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.***

Commissioner Edgerton announced that the next Zoning Committee meeting on Thursday, June 20, 2019 has been canceled.

## **VI. Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee**

Downtown Overnight Shelters Zoning Study – Review, and recommend release for public review, and set a public hearing on July 26, 2019. (Bill Dermody, 651/266-6617)

Bill Dermody, PED staff, said the recommendation from the Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee is to release for public review and set the public hearing on July 26, 2019. Overnight shelters are permitted in the zoning code in the B5 Central Business Service zoning district with a conditional use permit, and the proposal is to also allow them in B4 with a conditional use permit. B4 and B5 together comprise the downtown. B5 is generally more on the perimeter of downtown, and B4 generally more in the core. An issue has risen with a specific site which caused the City Council to initiate the zoning study and send it to the Planning Commission for consideration. The Ramsey County East building, which is at the southeast corner of Robert Street and Kellogg Boulevard, has been operating an emergency overnight shelter in the winter months only. It’s a shelter of last resort, when the other shelters downtown are full people are referred there. There are no walk-ins, people come by referral only as overflow from the other shelters. That site was intended for a few months one winter, but as the homeless problem in downtown has grown, they have operated for two winters now and have seen a demand for the summer as well. They have had a series of three interim use permits approved by City Council to operate that facility. But the City Council thought that it did make sense to have a process to allow it permanently. Emergency housing facility is a similar use, with the difference that people live there 24 hours per day instead of just overnight. Both uses are intended to serve the homeless population on a temporary basis. Emergency housing facility is allowed in the B4 and B5 Districts with a conditional use permit. The need is most acute in downtown, that’s the reason they are focusing on B4 and B5, but the thought was if an emergency housing facility that can meet the conditions and get a conditional use permit is appropriate in B4, then an overnight shelter is too. The proposal is to add a condition in the B4 column of the zoning code so that this overnight shelter use can be considered under a conditional use permit, as well. If these were to get passed by City Council they anticipate that Ramsey County would immediately apply for a conditional use permit for the Ramsey County East site.

Commissioner Baker said regarding overnight shelters what is the difference between families and individuals? This is designed for families, the shelter that Ramsey County is operating because there are some shelters that don’t allow families.

Mr. Dermody said he does not know how they do or don’t treat families at this facility. This question has not come up in his conversations with them or any of their official application paperwork.

Commissioner Baker said that Saint Paul Public Schools has a large homeless population, a highly-mobile population, and one of the things that they depend on are these types of shelters, specifically in the winter months and other seasons as well. They have seen a large influx in individual shelters, so single individuals being able to take shelter and not families. And it is hurting their ability to support their students and families so if that could be looked at in this process to say will they be able to house families? He wants to make sure because if this is more individuals and not families, then it's not necessarily dealing with some of the needs that are out there right now.

Chair Reveal said she is assuming that nothing in the language of this ordinance would preclude one or the other. Is that correct?

Mr. Dermody said that is correct. However, he will mention that to Ramsey County in anticipation of their conditional use permit coming forward in a few months.

Commissioner Grill said that at the Zoning Committee meeting she had asked the question, why just downtown? She thinks that as part of a longer conversation, considering more areas where this is acceptable is a useful conversation to have.

Commissioner Anderson believes that the Ramsey County program is just for individuals, not families. And there is a great need for families, most of the homeless shelters or emergency shelters that are available are for families. And there is a great number of families that are highly mobile and homeless and living in cars, this also relates to affordable housing and opportunities available to families. She agrees that they should be looking at other locations, is it only that they are looking at this location because it's an existing building that is being used or being temporarily used or is there an opportunity to look at other buildings outside of that?

Mr. Dermody said this zoning study is looking at all of the downtown B4 and B5, it was spurred by Ramsey County making use of a vacant space that they had already, it was convenient for them. The downtown is intended to be the focus of homeless services because that is what where the services are already, you can get a meal at one place and sleep another place. Public transit is great in downtown Commissioner Grill is correct there may be other places too, but downtown is the best suited. There may be a time when they outgrow the downtown and they need to have them in other locations. The focus of what City Council sent to the Planning Commission is just to take care of the downtown for now.

Commissioner Edgerton wanted to know if there was a reason that they couldn't. Even if the City Council said look at the downtown, is there something preventing taking a broader look at other areas? It seems like an unfortunate but necessary thing that we should be considering.

Mr. Dermody said that there is nothing that would limit you to downtown. The City Council asked you to study the downtown, but you could come back and say it's actually appropriate in other districts as well. At staff level they have not analyzed anything beyond downtown. There are other issues that may arise in other districts that are more complicated.

**MOTION: Commissioner Mouacheupao moved on behalf of the Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee to release the draft for public review and set a public hearing on July 26, 2019. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.**



Stryker Avenue Zoning Study – Review, and recommend release for public review and set public hearing for July 26, 2019. (*Michael Wade, 651/266-8703*)

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

Commissioner Baker said during the presentation a slide with the final recommendation says, “moderate increase in housing opportunity” and at the second of two community meetings there was a request for more density and more housing. Commissioner Baker said he is trying to reconcile those requests with the more moderate increase in housing opportunity in staff’s current recommendation, and to understand what came out of the request of the community for more housing and greater density.

Michael Wade, PED staff, referring to the slide with the map of staff recommendations, said that staff had originally recommended rezoning the R4 One-Family in the southern portion of the study area to either T1 or RT2, both of which dramatically increase housing opportunity. The call for housing opportunity was the message that that staff had already heard from the community up to that point, so hearing the call for greater opportunity at the second community meeting was not new to them. What was new to staff was the call to preserve the R4 One-Family zoning in the study area voiced at the first community meeting, and the passionate neighbors who attended.

***MOTION: Commissioner Mouacheupao moved on behalf of the Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee to release the draft for public review and set a public hearing on July 26, 2019. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.***

## **VII. Transportation Committee**

Commissioner Ochs reported that at their last meeting they had three items on the agenda, the Shared Transportation Systems update, B Line Arterial Bus Rapid Transit, and Climate Action & Resilience Plan from the Chief Resilience Officer, Russ Stark.

The Shared Transportation System consisted of information about the number of riders or number of trips currently by scooter, with some information on bikes but mainly about scooters. August through November of 2018, ridership was 18,300 for August, 28,500 for September, 25,000 in October, 8,000 in November. The City currently contracts with two companies for 2019, per city contractor a capacity of 500 units per vendor, currently there are 1,000 on the street.

The B Line Arterial Bus Rapid Transit which is the sixth arterial route in the Metro area that’s planned. This is to replace Route 21 that comes from uptown Minneapolis to Downtown Saint Paul and it will increase transit time with the intent and covers fewer stops. That may be an issue in terms of is it providing enough coverage for everyone along that route, but Metro Transit goal is to have a faster system. Enhanced stations all along the route, currently it spends more than half the time idling either stopped at one of the stations or at stop lights. It’s the second busiest route in the Metro area but also the slowest.

The Climate Action & Resilience Plan regarding transportation chief Resiliency Officer Russ Stark provided a lot of information on climate change and one of the main goals is to change the

attitude towards utilizing public transportation. There are many transportation initiatives set forth for the next several years, and some are very aggressive. For the next 10-years or so looking at decreasing single car drivers by 10% the next 20% and the next is 40% by the year 2040. In climate-related trends, increase and heavier rains, and increasing urban temperatures, there is a need to increase the tree canopy. And other factors to get people on the street, improve shade, and talk about stormwater.

Lastly, Commissioner Ochs announced the items on the agenda at the next Transportation Committee meeting on Monday, June 17, 2019.

#### **VIII. Communications/Nominations Committee**

Luis Pereira, Planning Director announced that the Committee discussed two items, one is that there is one Planning Commission vacancy in the Ward 3 area. The seat that former Commissioner Fredson had, there are 5 applicants for that position and they are in the process of sending a ranking order for those applications to the Mayor's Office. Secondly, the initial outline with Joe Mendyka on Planning 101, community education workshop similar to the Zoning 101 workshop that the Board of Zoning Appeals staff Jerome Benner has been leading. They are focused on the Board of Zoning Appeals and variances and it does talk about the Planning Commission role with zoning. This would be about planning as a field, planning in Saint Paul, and some current topics in planning, the role of the Planning Commission. How the Comprehensive Plan informs what they do neighborhood planning things like that. The Committee will continue to develop it that in hopes to launch that either later this year or early next year.

#### **IX. Task Force/Liaison Reports**

No reports.

#### **X. Old Business**

None.

#### **XI. New Business**

Chair Reveal recommends that they move Commissioner Rangel Morales up from the Second Vice Chair to the First Vice Chair and then next January he would be considered his potential succession as Chair of the Planning Commission. Commissioner Baker has asked her to do this. Commissioner Baker seconded that recommendation. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

#### **XII. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 10:02 a.m.

Recorded and prepared by  
Sonja Butler, Planning Commission Secretary  
Planning and Economic Development Department,  
City of Saint Paul

Respectfully submitted,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Luis Pereira  
Planning Director

Approved 8/9/19  
(Date)

  
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Lue Vang  
Secretary of the Planning Commission

Planning team files\planning commission\minutes\June 14, 2019