

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

Minutes July 12, 2019

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, July 12, 2019, at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

Commissioners Present: Mmes. Anderson, DeJoy, Grill, Lee, Mouacheupao, Reveal; and Messrs. Edgerton, Lindeke, Ochs, Oliver, Perryman, Rangel Morales, Rodriguez, and Vang.

Commissioners Absent: Ms. *Underwood, and Messrs. *Baker, *Khaled, and *Risberg.
*Excused

Also Present: Luis Pereira, Planning Director; Ross Currier, Lucy Thompson, Bill Dermody, Josh Williams, Tony Johnson, Emma Siegworth, Addison Vang, and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

I. Approval of minutes May 3rd and May 17, 2019.

MOTION: *Commissioner Grill moved approval of the minutes of May 3, 2019. Commissioner Vang seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

and

MOTION: *Commissioner Grill moved approval of the minutes of May 17, 2019. Commissioner Ochs 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

Luis Pereira announced that the sustainable power also known as Solar and Wind Energy amendments to the zoning code were adopted at City Council on June 26th. The Planning Commission recommended these amendments in December 2017, which has been a little while ago and part of that was the turnover of staff. However, Michael Wade was able to move those forward, there were some amendments to those amendments from people in the community including Fresh Energy. The amendments were not substantial in terms of changing the content and facilitating additional technology and investment in those modes. On the equity front, they have been doing a lot of in-house work West Side Community Organization (WSCO) has an equity score card, they have been exploring how to figure out a way to have the City recognize that more officially. The proposal is out there to have that be an attachment to their district plan.

In that conversation WSCO was asking in addition to the Planning Commission and the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) what about the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA), and thinking how WSCO's equity considerations could be considered. The city has an in-house tool that they have been using since 2015 that deals with equity and getting more familiar with that. By WSCO asking the question it has been useful for the City to compare what they have talked about with the retreat and the Comprehensive Plan and think what is the pathway towards continuing to incorporate equity considerations in City decisions.

On the Commission's follow-up work, he received some direction on how they are able to do a follow-up committee conversation at the Zoning Committee related to equity and he will be mapping out an outline for what that conversation looks like with the City Attorney's Office at the table.

Also, we are having a Ms. Lucy Thompson career extravaganza celebration on July 30th starting at 2:00 p.m. in this room, please let Sonja or myself know if you will be attending for a head count.

IV. Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee

Commissioner Mouacheupao announced that the last Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee meeting was canceled, however the next meeting will be on Wednesday, July 17th which is an additional meeting from the regularly scheduled meetings, on the agenda is the Highland Park District 15 Plan and the Ford Site Design Standards, discussing the comments from the public hearing last week.

V. Zoning Committee

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

Three items to come before the Site Plan Review Committee on Tuesday, July 16, 2019:

- Mississippi River Vista – 6 new single family residential homes at 104 Mississippi River Boulevard North. Joe Crowley, Elevation Homes. SPR# 19-059929
- 84 West Water Street Development – New multi-family residential at 84 West Water Street. Scott Nelson, DJR Architecture. SPR# 19-060345
- Saint Paul Hot Yoga Parking Lot – New parking lot at 541 Dale Street North. Amanda Kieffer, TKDA. SPR# 19-060381

NEW BUSINESS

#19-051-492 District 2 Mobile Food Trucks – Conditional use permit for up to 10 mobile food units. 1560-1590 White Bear Avenue North, between Iowa Avenue and Hoyt Avenue. (*Tony Johnson, 651/266-6620*)

Commissioner Vang asked if there were additional food trucks allowed because this lot only allows for only 10 food trucks. So, what about those additional food trucks that might want to

park, example: there are 10 food trucks that are already being leased in the space, are there any concerns about additional food trucks wanting to park on the street?

Tony Johnson, PED staff, said that the limit on the food trucks does not apply on the street. Zoning goes to the center line of the street, so you would have to be adjacent to a zoning district that would permit outdoor uses. They could do food trucks all up the street if they wanted, what the zoning standards apply to if it is done on a site and if more than the 10 was needed they would have to come back to update the conditional use permit.

Commissioner Vang said we're leasing it so, we are charging the trucks to be on the site.

Mr. Johnson said the HRA is leasing it to (NENDC) North East Neighborhood Development Corporation and they are booking the food trucks.

Commissioner Vang said there are 10 food trucks wanting to lease the space, what will stop the other food trucks from just parking on the street knowing that they don't have to pay for the lease?

Mr. Johnson replied nothing.

Commissioner Vang said for example if he owned a food truck he would not want to pay the lease, knowing that there's 10 food trucks there, and a lot of people will be there he could drive up and park on the street, go about his business and not be charged.

Mr. Johnson said yes that is correct there is nothing to stop other food trucks from parking on the street for free.

Commissioner Grill said that there is not currently ten there now. Eventually there could be ten there so there's space to grow within the site. And she had talked about there being added benefits, Commissioner DeJoy mentioned that if they decided on trash collection and picnic tables that kind of stuff there might be additional benefits for participating in the space. It was not said at the meeting but there may be potentially something like that, it's something done in other cities.

Commissioner Vang said especially coming from a cost perspective once people come and show up in the space he would not be surprised if the food trucks would avoid leasing and just park on the street.

Commissioner Mouacheupao clarified that the lease between the food trucks is not with the HRA, the lease with the HRA is with NENDC.

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

Commissioner Edgerton noted that he did go to the site after the Zoning Committee meeting and there were three food trucks there. And the Chicken Wings he ate were fantastic.

#19-051-380 Andrew Newby – Establishment of legal nonconforming status as a 3-family dwelling. 1614 Hewitt Avenue, between Snelling Avenue and Fry Street. (*Josh Williams, 651/266-6659*)

In response to the information that the subject property was already in use as a 3-family dwelling at the time that the applicant purchased it, Commissioner Perryman inquired whether in this type of situation the previous owner is held accountable or if they are free and clear because they sold it. He also asked how this information would not come to light during the sales process.

Josh Williams, PED staff, said that there is not mechanism for holding a previous property owner accountable. He added that this situation was unique in that it appears there were permits pulled for the work, but they should not have been able to pull permits for a conversion to a 3-unit dwelling; it may have been because of owner occupancy at the time it was not clear that a unit was being added. In terms of the sale process the City does require a Truth-In-Sale of Housing (TISH) inspection, and the TISH report in this case was interesting because the property was listed as a duplex (which is how it was legally listed with the City and County at the time), but the report also clearly talked about a third unit in multiple places.

Chair Reveal added that she has been arguing for years that they should amend the Truth-In-Sale forms, so that they are clearer on what is a legally nonconforming use, what's a nonconforming use that is not legal. There has not been much progress on getting that fixed.

Commissioner Ochs asked if the only reason why they can't get this in compliance is because of the zoning -is that correct? But it does meet all of the other requirements for a triplex. Mr. Williams said that is correct.

Commissioner Ochs said we can't change the zoning because of spot zoning but if the surrounding uses are similar, then how is that spot zoning?

Mr. Williams said that spot zoning is a difficult issue, and in this case, it would be generally consistent with the surrounding properties in terms of use but in terms of the zoning designation it would be different. Mr. Williams opinion is that you'd probably have a case for rezoning that whole area, subject to a zoning study. Instead of having a mix of RT1, and R4 with a number of nonconforming uses both legal and not legal, a district that allows all of them, which would also be more consistent with the city's larger land use goals of promoting density.

Chair Reveal said that she assumes there is some internal process for talking about and deciding whether rezoning study is appropriate and feasible.

Luis Pereira, Planning Director, said that the Commission could decide to pass a resolution for a zoning study for an area. He thinks it's a good idea to understand the dynamics of the district council and the councilmember. If in fact a wholesale rezoning of an area is proposed we want to know on the front end is there some consideration for that once it gets to the City Council level. He added that staff have a full list of items on our work load that we're not at yet, and that he is not necessarily encouraging a zoning study at this time, ranking it as a fairly low priority.

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

VI. ReConnect Rondo-Project Update – Presentation by Walter Smith, ReConnect Rondo Inc.

Luis Pereira, Planning Director, introduced Walter Smith, Strategic Development Consultant for ReConnect Rondo, with Keith Baker, Managing Director, and Marvin Anderson whom will be giving a project update.

Marvin Anderson, Chair of the ReConnect Rondo Board of Directors, said that it is very important that they are here in the month of July. The month of July is very important for the Rondo Community, 36 years ago they had their first Rondo Days festival in the month of July. Last July 2018 they opened the Rondo Commemorative Plaza and this July they are before the Planning Commission. Walter Smith and Keith Baker will be going back and forth providing an update of where they are with the Rondo Land Bridge Project.

Walter Smith said that the HGA Architects one of the largest architectural engineers, and design firms has been working with ReConnect Rondo since 2018. They have invested pro bono into their community in ReConnect Rondo, approximately half million dollars. This is reflective of it, a short video was shown, which is posted on the Planning Commission web page.

Keith Baker has worked for the Department of Transportation for 18 years his role there was managing the process for hiring the engineering firms that do a lot of the work the Department of Transportation. Also, in the capacity of workforce development, diversity initiatives etc. He has a good understanding of development processes, engineering aspects of projects and networked enough in the engineering community to understand how to speak the language even if he is not an engineer.

Mr. Smith said that the last time they were here in front of the Planning Commission concluded ULI event. Keith Baker the new Managing Director for ReConnect Rondo focused on the entirety of the project and Mr. Smith specific focus is the development of the Land Bridge. The concluded ULI final report and the recommendations from ULI to the Rondo community were significant. Referring to his slide presentation, saying that the first picture is for a web site that is launching called ImaginingRondo.org. Imagining Rondo will use the reach social architectural tool that HGA put together in a portal for the community to use a one to one app to be physically in the room, a physical model the community can give their ideas of what they would like to see for the land bridge and there is an interactive link that the community can go to whether they go to Imagining Rondo or not. What is important to know is that as they move through this process one of the things that has been critical for them to do is look at the regenerative restorative resilience of Rondo, meaning that before a land bridge can happen there are other very strategic and important things that need to occur. The Rondo Commemorative Plaza is a springboard for what they are hoping is the development of a Rondo business and cultural district, which would happen on that corner of Fisk Street and Concordia potentially with the purchase of a few homes and some property adjacent that would be the beginning of a business and cultural district. This cultural district would be geographic area because it would also potentially include Walker West, Hallie Q Brown, Aurora St. Anthony and other entities.

Basically, they are pulling everything together infusing creativity, building on community assets, and bridging cross-sector and cross-disciplinary collaborations. It takes a village theory and change practice around this economically distressed community. In the past Rondo was known for being economically vibrant and after the I94 was laid the community was distressed and

suffered. Now as they are at the conclusion of their feasibility study process the next step is to pursue the business and cultural district.

Mr. Keith Baker said part of what is in front of them now, as they look at their partnerships MNDOT has been at the table since the early beginning because in essence they are the owner. With the transition of the new commissioner they have had an opportunity to speak with her, give her a brief update and looking forward to establishing a meeting through her leadership with all of the partners which includes Ramsey County, Metropolitan Council, City of Saint Paul. The feasibility study what they call has seven concepts, those seven concepts have been reduced to three primary. The seven have gone through a process of looking at how do we screen, and decide the size, and scale of this? Where's the beginning, is this a phased approach, what's the economic analysis or market analysis associated with this. MNDOT and the City of Saint Paul, Ramsey County, and Metropolitan Council all in various ways has contributed to the emergence of this. When talking about size 500 to 800 feet as an example using Victoria as the center piece. The second possibility is looking at 800 to 1200 feet and the largest which is part of the recommendations from ULI upwards to 2800 feet, 14 to 21 acres of space being a great opportunity. This is a blank canvas and there is an opportunity to paint on that canvas so how do they use this canvas to look at how they might address some of the needs in this process ultimately resulting in a canvas that gets filled in through that process of community engagement.

Mr. Smith said as they get into their strategic goals five goals that play into the 2019-2020 priorities. The first two is the Rondo Land Bridge Project Advisory Group and the Rondo Land Bridge Community Task Force made up of Rondo residents in association with key agency and interagency professionals. They are working on organizational fund development planning and they have had great support from the local foundation community they have been funded by Bush, FR Bigelow, Saint Paul Foundation, and pursuing a relationship with Otto Bremer, McKnight Foundation for a small grant to support the feasibility study Phase 2 and they just submitted for a larger grant. The final strategic goal is the research, resiliency and restoration efforts of Rondo this is important because 85-90% of the respondents they've heard from in the community want the land bridge to move forward, every one of them said it is important that they look at the current realities and address them. The land bridge has an immediate long term economic benefit to the community where the community can have some ownership and it also positions the community to emerge out of the ashes of I94.

Mr. Keith Baker said in one of their recent meetings they were trying to look at their partners like MNDOT, the City of Saint Paul and so on and say what do we think we need in the way of support? While they have the feasibility study they also have to think about the planning, the master planning process there is about \$350,000 that has to be raised. Some of that has to come from private or corporate environment but some has to be leveraged through their partnerships with MNDOT, City of Saint Paul, Ramsey County, and Metropolitan Council etc. Also, among the partnership agencies what they are requesting from each of them, a Statement of Partnership Support, a document in a relationship with ReConnect Rondo. They will figure out all of the other stuff as they move forward in the process, but at least they understand each agency's commitment which allows them to go out and raise resources and continue this process of moving the project forward.

Mr. Smith added that the Statement of Partnership Support is very important because going back to some of these foundations for round two funding they're asking us how much are they supporting us? And "they" meaning the agencies they are working with. In one of their

foundation interactions was as they go to the Legislature and talk to these agencies about the land bridge project and Reconnect Rondo they are amazed with what is happening but they don't see the type of commitment that they should see to move this proposition forward. The community has spoken and is speaking about the potential of this project so there should be resources to follow. The phase 1 and phase 2 of the feasibility study were the first asks and it was not arm twisting but it was not easy. When they went to the agencies about the feasibility study on behalf of the Rondo Community they did that because the Rondo Community 50 years ago didn't determine its own fate. But some of the agencies that are now at the table supporting the proposition were a part of the decision making then. The last 5 slides in their presentation talked about their approach, the Rondo brand, Rondo values, ReConnect Rondo's 2019-2020 priorities, and how State leadership will galvanize all stakeholder involvement for the years ahead.

This presentation is posted on the Planning Commission web page at: <http://www.stpaul.gov/planningcommission> for viewing.

Commissioner Mouacheupao said that she has spent a lot of time working with ASNDC (Aurora St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corporation) around the development of Rondo Arts Cultural Heritage Business District. That work centered artist cultural barriers, business development, and partnerships across communities so how much of this cultural business district work is an extension of that?

Mr. Smith replied that it is absolutely an extension, that is foundational work to this. Nieeta Presley's leadership around cultural destination areas specific to Rondo and the work from the past decade they are standing on her shoulders. She is at the table with them leading the charge.

Commissioner Mouacheupao regarding the geography, that is something that is not clear and where they have landed on what the geography of the cultural district would be.

Mr. Smith said that there are ideas around the geographic area of Rondo that incorporate University to Selby, but when talking about it from a business standpoint of the current reality the boundary would be different. Nieeta Presley wants to be sure of is the concern of the actual heritage trail which is the African American Heritage Trail from a geographic standpoint those original lines are recognized but from the standpoint of the business cultural district it may be defined differently they are still working through it.

Mr. Keith Baker noted to look at it in two ways, the historical footprint, with a defined cultural district. The footprint includes so many other communities so much other aspects that have to be acknowledged and leveraged in a way that identifies the full complement of the city.

Commissioner Perryman said that when it comes to actual construction would there be any limitations on the buildings? For instance, would a house be able to have a basement with building over a highway.

Mr. Keith Baker said that they are not done with the feasibility study. The feasibility study is operating under a certain set of assumptions because there are still a lot of unknowns they are so much in the early stages. Where things are settled in terms of transferring what came out of the ULI report, to now the current reality conditions of what a structure could be. What are the most natural pieces of that? What they are really talking about initially are the embankments as being a fundamental foundational area that is available. In terms of what might go on top of the

structure, it is really unknown right now. Because there are considerations to the existing condition of the roadway. They will be able to put together some numbers that say if they were to do this size of a proposition, what is the density of this size of the proposition? Where would the placement be of some of this stuff and they also need to get through that master planning process in order to get a better sense of some of the things. It's hard to determine whether basements will be a part of the equation on top of the lid, right now the embankments are the most natural proposition.

Mr. Smith added that at this point nothing has been flagged as a no go, the possibilities are endless. The concern is, is this affordable, not is it feasible anything is feasible ask an engineer they can build it strong enough the question is can you afford it?

“ Commissioner Edgerton said the ‘Equitable Development: Eliminating Transportation, Income and Housing Gaps slide’, he would suggest that that would be a health gap and he is glad to see they are looking at that.

Mr. Smith said that their ideas are different than a traditional health impact assessment. Because of the significance of the concept of the land bridge and it being a regional discussion some of what they have encountered doing the health impact assessment is that the community wants their voices heard and they don't want to be told what they are thinking they want to say what they're thinking. And what happens at these various committees at the table they can talk about their experiences relative to community. But when asking the community, a question relative to health impacts, it's going to be diverse feedback and also very specific to their needs. They want to expand the health impact to a regional assessment amongst the various neighborhoods in programmatic way. Every year they want a way to talk to the community about the steps they are taking and how its impacting them.

Commissioner Edgerton said regarding the moon-shot comment earlier, there is nothing wrong with it being a moon shot, you want to aim high that way you can inspire and engage people and create energy. Eight days from today will be the 50th anniversary of the lunar landing, so the moon shot is not an impossible dream.

Mr. Keith Baker said having spent 18 years with the Department of Transportation the disposition of the Department of Transportation has evolved. Something is going to happen on I94 from Saint Paul to Minneapolis that's what they know. The question is how to harness this opportunity, how to bring the community ahead of the strategic thinking about this. But what's also important is that they can't get too far ahead of the community in this proposition. Ultimately it has to be something the community leads, defines. He understands the disposition of the players within MNDOT well and he thinks they have a tremendous opportunity.

Commissioner DeJoy appreciates them really drilling down on all the aspects that have to happen and be mobilized to make this a reality. She especially appreciates them specifically asking for the City and she encourages them to really move forward. Asking the City that this be a master plan is reasonable they have done for other areas, recently the Ford site and she would like to see that happen.

Mr. Smith said they know that the Rondo Land Bridge project is a disruption to a traditional mind set around economic development. They know that if they're put on a list of ranking order that this would not be the first project that the CEO of the City of Saint Paul would take on. He is

from Rondo and he has been supportive, but in regard to where they have to go, last year \$35,000 the City helped them with feasibility, this year its \$50,000 and next year he thinks they have a guarantee of \$65,000 but looking at those numbers master planning and design from five or six different firms that have pitched it to them is at least \$350,000. The funds are very much appreciated but that is not enough, so they need advocacy with the CEO of the City of Saint Paul and they also need strategic partnership because there are dollars that they can go after potentially through Metropolitan Council and even federal resources that they can go after, which they will need but there are limitations and are restrictions. But if advocacy can come from this group to Mayor Carter and others they would appreciate it.

Commissioner Rangel Morales requests more information about the health assessment and what actually goes into the health assessment. He is interested in what the results are showing about where it's a good idea to have people living above a bridge over a highway.

Mr. Smith said again that the results are not final. One of the recommendations of ULI last year was a housing stabilization plan which is inclusive of every aspect of housing. Everything from policy related issues, Fair Housing to NOAH to what's needed as far as single and multi-family a general assessment of need. As far as housing is concerned that's one of the issue areas that comes under the Rondo Land Bridge Project Community Task Force. Their expectation is to have people like FNA (Frogdown Neighborhood Association), CSP (Community Stabilization Project), and Aurora/St. Anthony, all of them are invited to this table, not only to have a conversation but to take their research much deeper than what was done through the briefing book at the ULI event then what's been done thus far through the feasibility study. The feasibility study is a base line business document that allows them to have a marketing in economic approach to the land bridge, but it does not go deep enough. They want to do a deep intensive study as recommended by ULI to get all of the data, they even will be looking at the transitioning of elderly, everything that can be imagined they want to look at because that's what has been recommended.

Mr. Keith Baker added that there is deeper and wider activity that they need to engage in around those kinds of impacts within the community. As they approach the health impact assessment initially, he does not see that they are confident in what is going to come about, because he thinks that they did not go deep enough and wide enough in their analysis. Just understand that they are very mindful of those kinds of considerations and also examining other projects around the country in terms of what their findings are as well as what the potentials are here.

Commissioner Grill request a plug for Rondo Days.

Mr. Smith said that ReConnect Rondo does not oversee the Rondo days celebration or work. However, the event is Saturday, July 20, 2019, from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

VII. Transportation Committee

Commissioner Lindeke announced that their last meeting was canceled. But he did announce the item on the agenda for their next meeting on Monday July 15, 2019.

VIII. Communications Committee

Luis Pereira, Planning Director announced that they are continuing to evolve the Planning 101

outline, there will be a second version shortly for the Committee to look at.

IX. Task Force/Liaison Reports

No report.

X. Old Business

None.

XI. New Business

None.

XII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:54 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 _____

9/6/19

(Date)



Lue Vang
Secretary of the Planning Commission