

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

Minutes October 4, 2019

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, October 4, 2019, at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

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

Commissioners Absent: Ms. *Mouacheupao, and Messrs. *Baker, *Khaled, and Oliver.
*Excused

Also Present: Luis Pereira, Planning Director; Yaya Diatta Kady Dadlez, Tony Johnson, and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

I. Approval of minutes September 6, 2019.

MOTION: *Commissioner Grill moved approval of the minutes of September 6, 2019. Commissioner Underwood seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

and

MOTION: *Commissioner Grill moved approval of the minutes of September 6, 2019. Commissioner DeJoy seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

II. Chair's Announcements

Chair Reveal announced that an important former longtime Planning Commissioner, Richard Kramer passed away last week. He was chair of the Zoning Committee longer than anyone, his terms were extended by exception so that he was on the Commission for 18 years. A remembrance for him is scheduled on Thursday, October 17th at the Phalen Co-op meeting room, 1355 Phalen Boulevard. Luis Pereira, Planning Director is working on a resolution in his honor.

III. Planning Director's Announcements

Luis Pereira announced a job posting in Planning & Economic Development Department, for a Senior Project Manager for the Economic Development team. The role is responsible for real estate development projects, managing commercial development deals, and supporting business investment and job growth through business loan programs. The posting is currently open and closes on November 1, 2019.

IV. Zoning Committee

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

NEW BUSINESS

#19-081-471 Dr. David Wetherill – Rezone from RM2 Multiple-Family Residential to T2 Traditional Neighborhood. 600-602 Lawson Avenue West, between Dale Street and Loeb Street. (*Kady Dadlez, 651/266-6619*)

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

#19-080-600 McDonald’s Corporation – Relocation of a nonconforming drive-through service window and addition of a second pickup window. 471 Marion Street, SW corner at University Avenue. (*Tony Johnson, 651/266-6620*)

Commissioner Lindeke asked if it is common for drives throughs and fast food restaurants to have litter collection plans? He added, how does the noise condition interact with the city’s noise ordinance and will their approach differ from the Taco Bell case a couple years ago? Is this similar to Taco Bell in the sense that they are grandfathered in so the condition regarding noise would currently apply?

Tony Johnson, PED staff, said the litter collection plan would be required if you built a fast food restaurant today. This McDonald’s was built in 1985 before this standard was in the zoning, so by attaching the condition we retroactively putting a condition on the approval be required by the current standards. In regard to the drive-through, there is a noise ordinance, but I’m not sure how it has been applied to drive throughs and the Taco Bell case.

Commissioner Lindeke recalls that that Taco Bell had also pre-dated those provisions in the Zoning Code.

Mr. Johnson agreed and said that a second condition was attached that states that the drive through will not result in loud, boisterous and disturbing noise levels to deal with that issue. That condition is a current standard from the Zoning Code as well.

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

Commissioner Edgerton announced that the next Zoning Committee meeting on Thursday, October 10, 2019 has been canceled.

V. Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee

Commissioner Risberg said that they met on Wednesday, October 2, 2019 and reviewed the Hotel Zoning Study & Proposed Zoning Code Amendments public hearing comments which there was only one comment. The Committee discussed that it wasn’t particularly relevant to the changes proposed and approved the recommended changes to move forward to the Mayor and City Council.

Luis Pereira, Planning Director added that on October 16th they have an item that staff is working on to finalize for the agenda.

VI. Transportation Committee

Commissioner Lindeke reported that at their last meeting they heard from Parks and Recreation department about the Swede Hollow Park Master Plan. There is a master plan for Swede Hollow the area on the East Side between Railroad Island and the bluff. They want to add new entryways in and out of Swede Hollow making a connection to the east that would go close to the Hamm's facility currently owned by the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA). But no one has any funding for this and the fact that the plan is being approved is nice but it doesn't mean anything is going to change any time soon.

Chair Revea asked if this addressed the summer homeless issues?

Commissioner Lindeke said that came up a little in conversation but was not part of their plan. Also, they received a report from a consultant hired by the City to look at West 7th Street parking in the area between Xcel Center and St. Clair Avenue. The study involves a lot of different proposals called "big ideas" which are actually small things that can be done to help parking including tweaking some of the permit zones, adding meters and also, the intersections have a lot of triangular oblique and acute angles where the streets come in that are very dangerous if walking, because cars can speed around spots. One of the plans was to tighten all of those up and add parking into the triangles, so it would add parking and calm traffic in those spots. The Committee approved this study to move forward to City Council and he does not know what will happen next.

Commissioner Underwood said what she found interesting in the study was the significant lack of utilization of parking spots in the hospital area. And the number of hospital lots along Smith by 2:00 p.m. in the afternoon there is about 80% vacancy, so the challenge is that they charge a lot during events and people do not use it when it is cheaper across the street. The consultant recommended working with those lot owners to bring down the cost of their event parking. Currently there are a lot of parking spots at the hospital.

Commissioner Lindeke also, announced that the next meeting on Monday, October 7, 2019 has been canceled.

VII. Communications Committee

Commissioner Underwood said they met this morning at 8:00 a.m. to review nominations and vacancies. It is important to know that by the beginning of 2020 there are 6 vacancies from the Commission across the city. Luis Pereira, Planning Director and staff are working with the Mayor's Office on communications strategy to take some different approaches, they talked this morning Commissioner Lee raised the point about the City's traditional form "email blast" which doesn't necessarily reach a wide range of residents. We are hoping the Mayor's Office leverages their strengths on social media and creative language to encourage applicants. We are also willing to go to district council meetings and places where having a real person make a quick pitch to explain what this is could be valuable. And continuing to work on the balance with the Mayor's Office on this process.

Coming up on November 7, 2019 for the first time we will be attending District 1 Community Council's meeting to do an overview of what planning is, development, the role of the Planning Commission, and of the District Councils in planning. The next Communications-Nominations Committee meeting is scheduled on Friday, December 6, 2019, which they will start to work on the annual report.

Commissioner Perryman said with recruiting efforts has the time of the Planning Commission meeting ever been discussed?

Commissioner Underwood replied yes, it is absolutely a very difficult for the average person to come and participate and not be able to participate electronically.

Chair Reveal added that they have been back and forth over that a number of times, and nobody have come up with a creative solution. The biggest impediment is having the recording equipment, so it is hard to do this at a different time in a different location. If we could figure out a solution that gets a clear recording we would have a lot more flexibility.

Commissioner Perryman said that there has to be an easier way to record things, with multiple mics not sure if there is a budget for that. He could look into technology options.

Chair Reveal said that would be great, but let the Communications Committee keep thinking about that and if there is something that could be improved. There have not been funds to replace the mics in the past years so she's not sure how far they get with the City.

Commissioner Underwood noted that in her own efforts and explorations with that challenge it has also been stated in the past that we meet during business hours because of the significant use of City staff in this process. Cities of a smaller size meet at night but that is not good for people who work different hours. She finds it extremely challenging and over the years how many jobs she has had since she has been a Planning Commissioner having different employers supporting her, which she is very fortunate and a lot of others are not.

Luis Pereira, Planning Director, added that in the budget process this year the Mayor was asking are there ways to reduce cost. In some of the meetings they looked at off-site or not meeting downtown or here, and the challenge is that recreation centers charge. They have looked at that in the past and are we paying for the use of that space, and additional cost as opposed to here in City Hall we do not have that challenge and we have access to the technologies available in City Hall. There may be cost savings on the technology side but then are we having to pay for the use. They have looked at time of meetings and tradeoffs to be made, but it's a challenge. If there are further thoughts send them his way.

Commissioner DeJoy said that there are so many factors that weigh into this, the budget is one of many. But this is an equity issue so any further exploration they can do and she is willing to step up and come up with some suggestions.

Chair Reveal would like see them figure out a way to live stream the meetings. It would be easier for people to talk into their phone particularly at a Zoning Committee meeting or when there is a public hearing. She also does not think that they are doing enough with the district councils, and they should pose this problem to them and if they have some creative ideas too.

Commissioner Lindeke said that the Planning Commission meetings in Minneapolis are all on their city YouTube channel video. The thing that is great about that is that it lets the meetings distribute to the public so much more effectively.

Chair Reveal asked if people in Minneapolis are allowed to provide testimony through streaming?

Commissioner Lindeke replied no, you see the conversation and anyone can watch it and you can request the audio files from Sonja Butler and she will send it to you. Accessibility works in multiple ways, if you want to outreach to community members about what we're doing those conversations are valuable. We're discussing things that are important and having lots of different perspectives which is great, and that's what they do in Minneapolis.

Chair Reveal said that she would also like to have an update on the local economics. Business stats, jobs unemployment that is in the Market Watch.

VIII. Task Force/Liaison Reports

Commissioner DeJoy announced that the Hillcrest Master Plan Community Advisory Committee (CAC) will begin on October 15, 2019, meeting at the Hayden Heights Library on White Bear Avenue.

Luis Pereira, Planning Director, added that they just sent a few days ago notes to all of the members so that they can finalize the CAC membership. They also had the Hillcrest TAC, a technical advisory committee of staff from various departments who met this week, Ramsey County, Metropolitan Council, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, Planning & Economic Development, and the Saint Paul Port Authority which was a productive conversation.

IX. Old Business

None.

X. New Business

None.

XI. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 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 11/15/19
(Date)



Lue Vang
Secretary of the Planning Commission