

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

Minutes October 30, 2015

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, October 30, 2015, at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

Commissioners Present: Mmes. DeJoy, McMahon, Merrigan, Noecker, Padilla, Shively, Thao, Wencil, and Messrs. Edgerton, Gelgelu, Lindeke, Makarios, Nelson, Oliver, and Wickiser.

Commissioners Absent: Mmes. *Reveal, *Underwood, *Wang, and Messrs. *Ochs, and *Ward.
*Excused

Also Present: Donna Drummond, Planning Director; Lucy Thompson, Allan Torstenson, Hilary Holmes, Ross Currier, Marie Franchett, and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

I. Approval of minutes September 18th and October 2, 2015.

MOTION: *Commissioner Thao moved approval of the minutes of September 18, 2015. Commissioner Noecker seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

and

MOTION: *Commissioner Shively moved approval of the minutes of October 2, 2015. Commissioner Padilla seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

II. Chair's Announcements

Chair Wencil had no announcements.

III. Planning Director's Announcements

Donna Drummond announced that the City Council adopted the Gateway Station Area Plans and the Zoning Study as recommended by the Planning Commission. The only property owner objecting to the zoning changes was the Sun Ray Shopping Center owner. Also Major League Soccer has selected a Saint Paul site at Snelling and St. Anthony (the former bus barn site) for construction of a new stadium. The Mayor has asked that a community advisory committee be assembled to provide input from the community on the design of the stadium and to develop a master plan for the whole 35 acres of that super block. Applications are being accepted and Julie Padilla has been asked by the Planning Commission to co-chair the committee. The stadium site plan and the master plan will both come to the Planning Commission, potentially in April 2016.

IV. Zoning Committee

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

One item to come before the Site Plan Review Committee on Tuesday, November 3, 2015:

- Snelling Stanford retail building – New 4,500 square foot retail building and parking lot at 300 Snelling Avenue South. (*Tom Beach*)

One item to come before the Site Plan Review Committee on Tuesday, November 10, 2015:

- Hamline office/warehouse – Add 5,500 square foot storage building and pave parking area at 892 Hamline Avenue North.

NEW BUSINESS

#15-031-255 West Side Flats Phase 3A and 3B – Conditional use permit for additional 6 ft. 3 in. building height over 65’ permitted. 41-59 Livingston Avenue East, NW corner of Livingston Avenue and Fillmore Avenue East. (*Lucy Thompson, 651/266-6578*)

Commissioner Nelson said the recommendation is to deny the conditional use permit application for increased building height, but recommend approval of a site plan that reflects the building heights and configurations depicted in Option 3. Option 3 does not require a conditional use permit.

Commissioner Padilla said that an application for site plan review was submitted at the same time as the CUP application, so both are being reviewed under the 2001 *West Side Flats Master Plan*. Even if the Planning Commission denies the conditional use permit, there is still a pending application that will be reviewed under the “old rules.” Therefore, the Planning Commission’s recommendation regarding Option 3 and site plan approval is valid.

Commissioner Thao asked whether Option 3 is supported by community groups, City staff and the applicant.

Commissioner Nelson replied yes. The community (WSCO) had the opportunity to review Options 2 and 3, and stated a preference for Option 2.

MOTION: *Commissioner Nelson moved the Zoning Committee’s recommendation to approve the resolution subject to additional modifications. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

Commissioner Nelson announced the items on the agenda at the next Zoning Committee meeting on Thursday, November 5, 2015.

V. Neighborhood Planning Committee

Koch Mobil Redevelopment Project Area Plan – Adopt resolution finding that proposed amendment is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. (*Ross Currier, 651/266-6611, and Lucy Thompson, 651/266-6578*)

Commissioner Lindeke asked for an explanation of the tax increment financing situation. He is familiar with the basic concept but would like a refresher about what taxes are going where.

Ross Currier, PED staff said that the Koch Mobil TIF district generated and continues to generate TIF Funds, but has used all of the TIF funds that it can use. There are no more eligible uses in that TIF area. However, at Schmidt Brewery, there are a couple of projects (the Keg House and Rathskellar) that could use financial support and are eligible for TIF funding. With this amendment, the TIF generated from Koch Mobil can be used at Schmidt.

Commissioner Merrigan added that there is not going to be an increase in investments; it is just a reallocation of tax increment.

Mr. Currier said that is correct.

Commissioner Merrigan asked if the expiration date for the district changes.

Mr. Currier responded that the expiration date is 2030, the same as it was for the smaller Koch Mobil District.

Commissioner Noecker asked if this normally happens when a TIF district has exceeded all of its use for the dollars. She wondered if we always just dedicate those dollars to another use or if tax revenue can start going back fully to the taxing entities.

Mr. Currier said that his understanding of the Koch Mobil District is that a lot of the remaining land is going to be used for a park, and TIF cannot be used for the park improvements. Knowing the need for assistance at Schmidt, staff is proposing the remaining increment be shifted to Schmidt to assist in the reuse of long-vacant historic buildings.

Lucy Thompson, PED staff added that this is not done very often, but Koch Mobil is a unique case since half of the site was prohibited from development mid-stream at the direction of Exxon (Mobil), significantly changing the planned use of TIF and resulting in future increment that cannot be spent there.

Commissioner Thao noted that the original Koch Mobil District and the proposed expansion area are not contiguous; she wondered how often this occurs.

Mr. Currier said that there was some discussion about whether they should make a continuous TIF district and connect the dots, but looking at the land uses in between the two sites, it just did not make sense. Also, staff wanted to be clear about the intent of the expansion, which is to assist in the final projects at Schmidt.

Ms. Thompson added that since the Neighborhood Planning Committee meeting, the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) has reviewed the proposed expansion because the Schmidt Project Redevelopment Area is within an historic district. She noted that the resolution in front of the Commission incorporates the recommendations from the HPC to ensure consistency with Schmidt Brewery site preservation guidelines.

MOTION: Commissioner Wencl moved on behalf of the Neighborhood Planning Committee recommending approval of the resolution finding that the proposed amendments are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

Chair Wencl added that at the Neighborhood Planning Committee's last meeting they had a discussion about the outdoor commercial uses zoning text amendments. When they started the discussion they were at one point, and when they finished they were at another, so they decided it was time to continue discussing the proposed amendments.

Commissioner Lindeke asked what the debate was about.

Chair Wencl said that they were thinking about restricting hours.

Commissioner DeJoy said that a lot of the discussion started with Union Depot and their ability to have sales in the plaza outside, not within a structure. And there were other examples that were used about store fronts that would use their exterior to sell items and they had some discussion about whether that different than a special event. Union Depot was not interested in continuously getting a special event permit every time they wanted to do something and maybe there was an opportunity to have an ordinance that allowed outside sales. But then there was a lot of discussion about different types of outside sales including the example of somebody pulling into a parking lot and opening their trunk.

Commissioner Wickiser said on one hand in one area of the city you've got people selling pumpkins and flowers and in another area you've got people opening up a trunk and selling things out of their vehicle. And at the same time it is not an allowed use downtown right now. This is interesting and for his own purposes he has come to the conclusion that that is an area of focus, how to allow this in the downtown district without requiring a special event permit each time.

Donna Drummond, Planning Director, added that because of the complexity of the issue with outdoor sales staff has recognized the need to do more work and see what other cities do in regards to regulating these uses. There is a need to distinguish between the flowers and pumpkins and tires for example, and what things the City wants to promote and facilitate and what things it doesn't want to allow.

Commissioner Oliver announced the items on the agenda at the next Neighborhood Planning Committee meeting on Wednesday, November 4, 2015.

VI. Downtown Parking Management Strategy Update – Informational presentation by Hilary Holmes, PED. (Hilary Holmes, 651/266-6612)

Hilary Holmes, PED staff, gave a power point presentation that can be viewed on the web page at: <http://www.stpaul.gov/planningcommission>

Commissioner Noecker asked for clarification about more than 100% full on-street.

Hilary Holmes, PED staff said that happens when cars are parked illegally, so there are more cars on the block than spaces.

Chair Wencil wanted to know when the study was done, and if it took Wild games or events at Xcel Center something into consideration.

Ms. Holmes replied yes. Saturday evening there was a Wild game at the Xcel Energy Center, on Saturday morning there was the Farmers Market and the Monster Dash 5k over by Xcel Energy Center so that activity was captured.

Commissioner Edgerton wanted to know if they have any idea of how parking has changed and if there are any trends over time.

Ms. Holmes said the data collection last year is the most recent. The idea of the study was to have a strong base to work from. One of the recommendations is regarding regular utilization reporting, so that they can check back and keep track of how things are progressing.

Commissioner Thao asked about the availability of monthly permits for HRA facilities, specifically what was the percentage of monthly versus transient.

Ms. Holmes said that it differs based on the facility. Facilities may use the industry standard of 90% full with 10% reserve to work with. It is up to the individual ramp manager to determine the number of monthly contracts per facility.

Commissioner DeJoy asked if anticipated future demand considered the occupancy in downtown, in regards to current and future vacancy, if all the buildings were occupied to their capacity.

Ms. Holmes replied yes, that known redevelopments were used to model future demand. The consultant's model included the parking that would be provided for each development and the new demand that would be generated from those sites. The question is with increased demand and increased supply. Based on the consultant's model they found there is enough supply downtown with the increased activity and that increase can be accommodated. BOMA and Smart Trips did ask about occupancy and what happens when space fills up.

Commissioner DeJoy said that new development would be expected to add parking to support their development, but what about vacant buildings if they got occupied?

Ms. Holmes said the model did take into account those vacancies, the current vacancy rate and future.

Commissioner Edgerton suggested that the distance people are willing to walk should be considered and to look at destinations like Mears Park, Xcel Energy and what the available parking is within a certain distance.

Ms. Holmes said that she had shown a slide related to that in the last update and they did look at sub areas, based on land use and activity.

Commissioner Noecker said that not taking into account monthly contract spaces is a failure, that they can't say these spaces are actually available. She would be interested in seeing this done again taking into account monthly parking. She also referenced safety and signage.

Ms. Holmes said regarding walking distance, that one recommendation is to reserve spots close to the entrance for short term parkers in a ramp. Facility design and working with private ramp managers and operators on betterments is also recommended. Regarding monthly contracts, that issue came up post-data collection and there was also a survey of ramp managers and lot managers regarding utilization and how many monthly contracts they have. Not every operator is comfortable sharing this information.

Commissioner Nelson made an observation regarding the location of parking and even free parking and people's willingness to walk further distance to free parking.

Ms. Holmes said that everyone has their own system and their own tolerance, physical tolerance and comfort and safety.

Commissioner McMahon said there is a difference with comfort of distance regarding gender and time of day.

Commissioner McMahon questioned pay by cell and the ability to keep plugging the meter seems contradictory.

Ms. Holmes said that there is a time limit; you are not supposed to sit in a spot and keep plugging the meter. As it is on the books now you actually have to move at least a block away.

Commissioner Merrigan interjected saying that every 4 hours you have to move a block away.

Ms. Holmes said that enforcement is a big question that had not been addressed yet.

Commissioner Merrigan referenced her experience as resident near Wacouta Commons, that on-street parking is heavily used and enforced. She questioned if the study could be divided into areas that are more heavily residential and heavily office and commercial as the times and the parking needs are very different.

Ms. Holmes said that that was partially addressed in the sub areas. Regarding dynamic pricing, it makes sense to report back yearly to Council with Public Works' data for on-street to show how it is being used and present the adjustments made as a result of that.

Commissioner Noecker said that sometimes when we have a long list of strategies we try one and implement one at a time and that the more dynamic the pricing gets the more

important it is that the app be available. She also said part of this is also trying to encourage people not to drive downtown but in order to do that you have to plan in advance.

Ms. Holmes referenced a refined list of short term recommendations that they asked the consultants for.

Commissioner Edgerton asked about driverless vehicles and how that would change parking.

Ms. Holmes said the question in this work is short-term, high-impact and what needs to be addressed sooner than later and how do they adjust for those changes in the future making sure the investments they make now don't preclude things in the future.

Donna Drummond, Planning Director referenced a presentation on driverless cars and their impact on urban form, and noted it is one of the trends that has been identified to consider for the Comp Plan update.

Commissioner Lindeke referenced his recent experience in a driverless car, stating these things are not that far into the future and they are happening now. The other thing is that they really didn't talk about the opportunity cost and actual physical urban and developer cost for all the lightly used ramps.

Commissioner Nelson said that there have been proposals put out there that all parking lots should be built with flat floor, because there is no reuse for the ramps that go up and down at 5% slopes.

Ms. Holmes said that that was one of the benefits for Rayette since it was able to transition to parking then transition away from parking back into residences in downtown.

Commissioner Nelson said in Lowertown there are buildings that started as warehouses, became parking and then something else and that zoning could address the flat floors.

VII. Comprehensive Planning Committee

Commissioner Merrigan said that at their last meeting on Tuesday, they focused on congregate residential facilities. The code has multiple definitions for supportive housing, sober housing, and transitional care facilities. The zoning study has been initiated and they are discussing how to manage that and maybe consolidate some of the zoning code categories and requirements. There will be ongoing discussion but the committee plans to bring a draft of the study forward with a recommendation for a public hearing. This will be at the Planning Commission meeting on November 13, 2015. The next Comprehensive Planning Committee meeting is scheduled on Tuesday, November 10th.

VIII. Transportation Committee

Commissioner Lindeke announced that they heard a presentation from City Engineer John Maczko on a proposed 5 year plan for street reconstruction and resurfacing. Commissioner Lindeke also announced the items on the agenda at the next Transportation Committee meeting on Monday, November 2, 2015.

IX. Communications Committee

Commissioner Thao had no report.

X. Task Force/Liaison Reports

Commissioner Thao announced that the Grand Round Community Advisory Committee met earlier this month and discussed refining the plan and place making. At their next meeting on Tuesday, November 17, 2015 at the Arlington Hills Community Center at 6:00 p.m. they will be doing some prioritizing because there are a lot of wants for the project that are not necessarily in the budget.

XI. Old Business

None.

XII. New Business

None.

XIII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 10:01a.m.

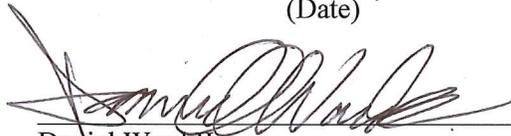
Recorded and prepared by
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Respectfully submitted,



Donna Drummond
Planning Director

Approved 12/4/15
(Date)



Daniel Ward II
Secretary of the Planning Commission