

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

**Minutes November 15, 2019**

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, November 15, 2019 at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

**Commissioners Present:** Mmes. Anderson, DeJoy, Mouacheupao, Reveal, Underwood; and Messrs. Baker, Edgerton, Hood, Lindeke, Rangel Morales, Risberg, Rodriguez and Vang.

**Commissioners Absent:** Mmes. \*Grill, \*Lee, and Messrs. Khaled, \*Ochs, Oliver, and \*Perryman.  
\*Excused

**Also Present:** Luis Pereira, Planning Director; Josh Williams, and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

**I. Approval of minutes October 4, 2019.**

**MOTION:** *Commissioner Rangel Morales moved approval of the minutes of October 4, 2019. Commissioner DeJoy seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

**and**

**MOTION:** *Commissioner Baker moved approval of the minutes of November 1, 2019. Commissioner Lindeke 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 had no announcements.

**IV. 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, November 19, 2019:

- Metro Transit 6<sup>th</sup> & Minnesota – Site work at 390 Minnesota Street. Alicia Vap, Metro Transit. SPR #19-099875

**NEW BUSINESS**

#19-094-559 Blackstone 1, LLC – Rezone from R4 one family residential to RT2 townhouse residential. 823 Englewood Avenue between Victoria and Avon. (*Josh Williams, 651/266-6659*)

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

Commissioner Edgerton announced the item on the agenda for the next Zoning Committee meeting on Thursday, November 21, 2019.

**V. HUD Consolidated Plan 2020-2024** – Informational presentation by Luis Pereira, PED. (*Luis Pereira, 651/266-6556*)

Luis Pereira Planning Director, gave an informational Power Point presentation, which is posted on the web page at: <http://www.stpaul.gov/planningcommission>.

Commissioner Lindeke referred to slide #5, asking how has HUD funding changed over time? CDBG funding has drastically decreased. Also, if those were real dollars or inflation adjusted in anyway or not.

Mr. Pereira said that he thinks they are not inflation adjusted.

A couple of papers were handed out, one is a two page that has what the Consolidated Plan is, a synopsis of the funding sources. The other one is a flyer about the survey, there are two community surveys that have been out there for a little while, which will be open through early December. One is targeted at agencies, public and non-profit agencies, organizations in the community from Ramsey County departments to Hmong American Partnership, they want as many organizations that serve the Saint Paul community to be participating in that survey to give as much information, input on what those community needs are. In addition to that they will be meeting with organizations to get input, Emma Siegworth, PED staff is doing a lot of work trying to get those meetings set up. There is an agency survey and a resident survey, he encourages all residents, friends and families to participate in the resident survey.

Commissioner Edgerton said regarding the online survey, what’s the demographic? Who is responding to this? How do you hear about it?

Mr. Pereira said the he has not specifically looked at the break down, and they do ask for the neighborhood of residents, it asks for income levels, it’s not a requirement, you don’t have to answer those questions in order to participate. But they do want to get responses from low and moderate-income populations to the extent that people hear about it. And as much as they can they want to promote this survey being out there, they’ve talked to the district councils to meet with some of them, they’ve promoted it on social media. It’s a challenge.

Commissioner Edgerton said that basically the people responding will have a certain perspective so there will be certain types of answers that will reflect a group. But you don’t want to put too much weight on the survey results, because you’re getting just a certain slice in a way. He worries that there is going to be some like the homeless that in the public survey they don’t show up so much and you have to weigh all that and realize who is responding. Sixty percent of

homeless adults have a serious mental illness, 60% of homeless adults in Minnesota are long term homeless and he thinks that there is overlap there. And children are 35% of the homeless population, some of those same homeless people with mental illness might have children. So what part of the HUD money goes towards addressing those issues?

Mr. Pereira said they get just under \$600,000 which is not a lot of money for ESG (Emergency Shelter Grants), ESG really has the Homeless Prevention as the core use, but CDBG can be used for public services as well as HOME dollars can be used for housing. All three of the sources could be utilized, HOME is a little trickier because the line between affordable housing and permanent supportive housing it's a specific type of affordable housing that could help long term or short term homeless to be sustainably housed.

Commissioner Baker said regarding the survey, he is trying to understand the use of the information in the decision making for the disbursement of the funds with the city. As a hypothetical; suddenly, the influx of responses that lean towards a higher priority of homelessness. Are we saying that that information will help decide that there should be a higher priority of disbursement in that area?

Mr. Pereira said the question of how do we use the information we get? We have broad community meetings, and how many people think that all of these things are important? HUD says how we can use the funds so we can only use 15% of CDBG funds for public services, so even if everybody voted for public services and nothing else, we still have to use 85% of it for other things, so we have those constraints. In his mind this activity is more about levels of priority or shifts, in our current Comprehensive Plan we talk about homelessness and how we work with our community partners that's there partially because we have ESG, the use for those dollars. If we really should be emphasizing that more but given what we have heard, what does that actually mean? So maybe we need to start thinking about additional shelters, capitol improvements or supporting expansions or additional programing.

Commissioner Baker said that he agrees with Commissioner Edgerton on those that are participating in the survey do not speak for all the city. He is interested in the weight that is on the survey because he does not want this to be an exercise of futility where we ask people for information but because of the constraints and parameters we end up still dispersing the funds the way that we were planning as a City to disperse them. He wants to learn more about how we're planning on dispersing the funds and tapping into those types of relations within the city that would be helpful for their voice to be heard. He's trying to think through are there any other creative ways to get information out there for other populations in the City.

Commissioner Underwood said Catholic Charities Dorothy Day Place could have hosted listening sessions with clients and recipients of services to weigh in on this survey. While we were a popup early voting location for Ramsey County to help people in the shelter vote. The space is meant for community to bring people together. If not this survey then future ones she encourages the City to reach to and host sessions with people receiving the services that these dollars fund. Ramsey County also receives these funds and how does the Saint Paul plan collaborate and work in sync with Ramsey County?

Mr. Pereira said one of the things that this Administration has done is challenge us to think about how we use our ESG, there has been conversations with departments that interact most with vulnerable populations, homeless populations in our City. DSI (Department of Safety and

Inspections) and Police to an extent, is there a new model for how we engage populations but then how do we be more strategic with Ramsey County, which has ESG funds as well. There some overlap in geography there's a proposal and some movement on this that we will be mapping out more for this plan to better understand and communicate about it. The City gets under \$600,000, and Ramsey County gets a chunk, we're having strategic conversations with Ramsey County on this front. Like affordable housing, homelessness is not a challenge that stops at a city border or county border. If we can make headway on the affordable housing front, that impacts how people are housed, it's a spectrum of needs. On the hosting side of it, he was interested in partnering with community organizations to host and something we did pursue, but we are going to be meeting with community organizations, so meeting with Catholic Charities is a good idea. We also have to be careful because some of the community organizations are going to be recipients of the funds. This plan does not make decisions about who gets what but we want to make sure that all community agencies have an ability to participate, both public and nonprofit.

Commissioner Underwood noted that we would not be able to host a meeting at Dorothy Day Place because of the recording need, but when we have a very short agenda she would be happy to give the Planning Commission a tour of the new Dorothy Day Place campus, she has an office there.

Commissioner Mouacheupao asked if she was accurate that the money is already determined on how its distributed by HUD rules. This information is helpful but she would like to know what the analysis has been, the disbursement in the past. Mr. Pereira shared how the money is allocated but what is the evaluation on whether that was the right allocation or what was the impact of that? Understanding the impact of how the money has been disbursed in the past would help them make better decisions moving forward.

Mr. Pereira said that 58% CDBG is going to the CIB Committee for decision, they are important decisionmaker, but this is a high-level plan. Who actually makes the decision on a year to year basis who gets a chunk of the capital dollars the city has available to CDBG. The broader evaluation of not just CIB Committee but how the city, when holding back dollars do we evaluate that along with what the CIB decides. Put those next to each other and say what are the outcomes? Also, every year we do a CAPER Consolidated Action it's an analysis for HUD a report about how we are using the funds. On the web site if you wanted to see from year to year what that is in terms of the actual dollars spent. It's probably not a traditional evaluation but at least some transparency about how the funds are being spent.

Commissioner Mouacheupao said she is interested in the impact of how those dollars are being used not just how they are being used. In the collection of information, she would like to know if there are any goals set. How many surveys, how many responses from certain populations or communities that might help in thinking about how to do outreach and engagement.

Commissioner Hood said that he has not read the 2014-2019 HUD Consolidated Plan, so for 2019-2020 there is approximately 6.3 million dollars to spend. Does the City spend all of that money? It's an unfortunate amount of money in the sense that it's a lot of money and we should spend it but when looking at the needs out there it's a drop in the bucket. And it requires leveraging other agencies other private and nonprofit entities to make these dollars go farther. Sometimes it's hard to spend that money in the allocated amount of time. Is the City spending all our CDBG dollars and do we have any successes that we can highlight from 2014-2019? Mr. Pereira mentioned that there is some administrative cost that the City takes out of the funds that

we receive. What is being taken out for City admin on that? And had there been any discussion of not taking admin cost. And using that 20% to further some of these programs and the City just paying staff as per usual. Has that been part of the dialogue?

Mr. Pereira said 15% of CDBG goes to Administration, which can pay for planning, they have used some CDBG for planning cost. The grants Admin Team are responsible for are tracking of the funds, disbursement of the funds, dealing with HUD, doing reports all of that. Some of those dollars are used to pay for the staff operational cost. If you were to say let's not use it for admin cost, then we would have to figure out the budget for that. If we don't use CDBG how do we pay for that? In terms of evaluation of how we've used the funds in specific projects. And yes, we do spend all of the money annually, we have spend down requirements, we must spend the funds. Sometimes we have agreements with organizations and their facing challenges getting a project together. CDBG or HOME maybe only a small component to make a project happen. So, they have other timelines they're trying to hit, construction season to hit in a timely way. If we don't spend it down by certain dates we do have to give it back and nobody wants to give federal dollars back. Especially when there are needs.

Commissioner Rangel Morales said that it looks like the between the HOME and CDBG about 1.5 of the 8.2 million is going towards the development of new housing and 3.1 million goes to the housing rehabilitation. So, what does that translate to in terms of how many units does that create, how many new units were created for 1.5 million? And the housing rehabilitation how many housing units did it preserve? In the areas that the city's investing to maintain housing rehabilitation for affordable housing, are we somehow damaging or hurting it by allowing different buildings to go up nearby or in the area that are making the rents go up. His concern is whether all of that investment has been made around the University area where the stadium has gone up and the building where the Bremer Bank is going up, and the site plan review for the Wilder area, so how does those type of new developments impact the City's goals in trying to preserve naturally occurring affordable housing. And what is the benefit of where the money is being spent?

Commissioner DeJoy said going back to the survey and who fills this out. She did get one because she is a sub-recipient of CDBG funds. And the Admin. is 15% and there is a very long list of compliance that must be fulfilled in order to get this money out the door. It takes 6 months from the time of application to the time you can actually get under construction. Because of the number of environmental reviews, historic reviews, flood maps all of these things just for a sign in some cases. She worries about that money gets taken away from economic development because it does not feel like it's as high a priority as affordable housing or addressing homelessness. The money she manages goes to small businesses, and she'd be happy to bring statistics or maybe put them in the survey somehow about the number of jobs created, the number of low income residents that are served through these businesses, families that were able to go into business that needed the extra revenue to fix up their building. Also, the actual money has gone down over time. It's important if you're just weighing priorities and you don't how the economic development funds really help the neighborhoods then it might be hard to fill out the survey without that information.

Commissioner Lindeke said that \$455,000 across the whole city for housing rehab in a year is a meaningless number, the 1978 dollars if you do the spending power in today's money it's \$74 million (he looked it up) and what that would do for the city.

Mr. Pereira referred back to some questions that Commissioner Rangel Morales had asked. In terms of the actual spending results of the Housing Rehab versus new development those are all figures that exist. The challenge is HOME and CDBG are often one public funding source for projects, and he can get you figures like how many units did HOME support in terms of rehab versus new construction. But he would not want to suggest that those funding sources alone were able to make projects happen because often times its other local sources state, local housing tax credits, developer equity things like that. In terms of how their displacement affects spending CDBG or HOME dollars in an area, a few things that would play into this low and moderate-income area have a definition in terms of actual incomes of populations living there and the actual benefit to individuals receiving the housing. The Hamline Station Project has 100% affordable housing at various levels that had to come back to both the City and State for tax credits a few different times to make that happen. That is probably more typical with HOME having projects that are 100% affordable housing. Are there displacement effects of 100% affordable housing in an area that raises rents, he does not know, he has not done that analysis. With HOME he thinks these are 100% affordable housing projects and on the single-family side they are focused on up to 80% of the median area income homeowners, whether it's down payment assistance or rehab.

HUD funds are not going to lead to a lot of problems in terms of displacement, there are other programs as well that might be publicly funded. And those might go up to 115% Area Median Income which is not a high income in terms of recipients. Often times we're between 80% - 100% on the homeowner side but mostly at 80%. Those are citywide programs unless we are working with a CDC partner so they will be first come first serve. So, he does not see those having wholesale displacement impacts unless you're targeting a block and trying to get everyone on the block to rehab all at once. Mr. Pereira does not have the analysis to base that on, but just his experience.

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

Commissioner Mouacheupao had no report. However, they did meet on Wednesday, November 13, 2019. They had an informational presentation from Tony Johnson, PED staff about a Zoning Code Parking Study.

#### **VII. Transportation Committee**

Commissioner Lindeke at their last meeting they heard from the Public Works Department on two projects going on, one is Como Avenue towards the western border of the City and reconstructing the street there adding in sidewalks, and a bump out, and a turn lane, whether they are needed or not. The other one was Tedesco Street in Railroad Island coming out of downtown west of where Morelli's is located, a landmark for people. That bridge is being reconstructed and also the street. The big news was the parking study that they saw for the first time coming out of PED, Tony Johnson reported on it. Committee talked about looking at the study reducing parking minimums and whether a proposal was the right approach to take versus getting rid of minimums altogether and looking at a different approach for how to do Travel Demand Management in the City. Committee would like PED to come back looking at that second option more carefully. The next meeting scheduled for Monday, November 18, 2019 has been canceled.

#### **VIII. Communications-Nominations Committee**

Commissioner Underwood announced that they had their District 1 Community Planning 101

event. A few weeks ago, it had a good turnout for being an evening event not all District 1 people. There were people from the Port Authority, White Bear Avenue and people who live in the area. Luis Pereira, Planning Director put a lot of time into this and did a very thorough review of: What is planning? (Comprehensive and Neighborhood Plan). And there was a break out of understanding deeper some of the different projects.

**IX. Task Force/Liaison Reports**

Chair Reveal announced that Commissioner Ochs, who is not present today, will have a report on Rondo in December. He has been meeting with them and he will be leaving the Planning Commission at the end of January 2020 so there will be a need for a replacement to pick up a willingness to work with the Rondo team representing the Planning Commission.

Commissioner DeJoy announced that the Hillcrest Master Plan Community Advisory Committee meets on Tuesday, November 19, 2019 at 5:30 p.m. in the Hayden Heights Library. Also, (NENDC) North East Neighborhood Develop Corporation is having a special meeting around the Hillcrest redevelopment. They are having a public forum on November 21<sup>st</sup> at the Hayden Heights Recreation Center.

Luis Pereira, Planning Director, added regarding the Hillcrest that they have at the staff level reached out Councilmember Elect Yang to sit with her and bring her up to speed on where they are so far in terms of the process.

**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,

  
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Luis Pereira  
Planning Director

Approved December 20, 2019  
(Date)

  
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Lue Yang  
Secretary of the Planning Commission