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

Minutes February 10, 2017

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, February 10, 2017, at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

Commissioners Present: Mmes. Anderson, DeJoy, McMahon, Mouacheupao, Thao; and Messrs. Edgherton, Fredson, Gelgelu, Khaled, Lindeke, Makarios, Ochs, Oliver, Perryman, Reich, Tanaka, and Vang.


*Excused

Also Present: Donna Drummond, Planning Director; Reuben Collins, Department of Public Works; Margaret Jones, Lucy Thompson, and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

I. Swearing in New Commissioners Adrian Perryman, Tats Tanaka, and Lue Vang.

New Planning Commission members Adrian Perryman, Tats Tanaka, and Lue Vang were sworn in by Shari Moore, City Clerk.

I. Approval of minutes January 27, 2017.

First Vice Chair Terri Thao announced that the minutes are not available at this time; however they will be ready at the next meeting.

II. Chair’s Announcements

Commissioner Thao, the Commission’s First Vice-Chair, chaired the meeting and she had no announcements.

III. Planning Director’s Announcements

Donna Drummond announced that there will be one more new commissioner, Luis Rangel Morales, sworn in at the next meeting. We will then have a full commission. At that meeting we will take a new photo of the commissioners to post on the web page. Also, the Comprehensive Planning Committee decided at its last meeting to change the meeting time to 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. because they have a very heavy schedule working on the Comprehensive Plan update through this whole year.
IV. Zoning Committee

SITE PLAN REVIEW – List of current applications. *(Larry Zangs, 551/266-9082)*

Two items came before the Site Plan Review Committee on Tuesday, February 7, 2017:

- Dickerman Park Phase II – Construction of new park and amenities at 1753 University Avenue West. David Ronzani-St. Paul Parks & Recreation. SPR #17-005061

- Linwood Elementary School – Building addition, parking, stormwater at 1023 Osceola Avenue. Trinh Tranberg-SPPS. SPR #17-004218

Two items to come before the Site Plan Review Committee on Tuesday, February 14, 2017:

- Major League Soccer Stadium – New development of stadium and infrastructure at 400 North Snelling Avenue. Nick Rogers – MN United SPR #16-042321

- Plat for Soccer Stadium area

Donna Drummond, Planning Director, explained to the new commissioners that site plan review always appears on the agenda. Site plan review is normally delegated to staff but the commission has the right to call up any site plans that are coming before the Staff Site Plan Review Committee to review itself and the list of upcoming site plans is always part of the report.

**NO BUSINESS**

VI. Transportation Committee


Reuben Collins, Department of Public Works staff, gave a power point presentation, which can be seen on the web page at: [http://www.stpaul.gov/planningcommission](http://www.stpaul.gov/planningcommission)

Commissioner Ochs suggested that the plan include a detail that highlights some of the complicated or densely trailed areas; downtown might be an example, or Pelham and the West 7th, 35E area where things get complex. People who want to use this bike map can zoom in and look at some of those details. This could also be an economic development tool if those detailed areas were places that we want to encourage development or activity.

Commissioner Mouacheupao wanted to know if there were any plans for how drivers and bicyclists will be educated about the bike plan and safe driving and bicycling.

Mr. Collins said that the bike plan is a very broad overview document and one of the recommendations of the bike plan is that we develop some educational materials. Public Works has not historically done much education efforts around bicycling or rules of the road. The typical approach in the past is to partner with other agencies that do that sort of work. For example the Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota is a statewide organization. They focus very heavily
on educational materials and provide educational opportunities. One opportunity for us would be to partner with them. At this point there aren’t any details fleshed out about what that looks like but one of the recommendations in the plan is that education is very important.

Commissioner Mouacheupao inquired about the regional trail search corridor and the significance of that change.

Mr. Collins said that the process of designating a regional trail is an important designation because there is funding tied to it at the regional level. If something has been designated a regional trail it becomes eligible for metropolitan level funding. Because of that the Metropolitan Council keeps a very close eye on how people use the term regional trail. The Parks Policy Plan establishes where these regional trail search corridors are. The Met Council’s approach is that they like to see regional trails that connect regional parks to each other. The Met Council will establish a search corridor if there isn’t a trail connecting two regional parks. At the local level we can ask the Met Council to change where those search corridors are and we can recommend that new search corridors be added. If there are any places where we anticipate developing a regional trail we need to make sure the Metropolitan Council has identified it as a search corridor.

Commissioner Ochs said that the Department of Public Safety should be a good resource for rules of the road and biking laws.

Commissioner Vang wanted to know how long it takes to go around the Grand Round.

Mr. Collins replied that it is about 26-27 miles. Depending on if you want to make the loops around Lake Phalen or Lake Como or go straight through, it’s a of couple hours.

First Vice Chair Thao added that she was the co-chair of the Grand Round Advisory Committee that completed its work last year. There was a lot of really good work looking at the bike and sidewalk infrastructure on the Eastside along Johnson Parkway where there is not a lot of sidewalk infrastructure. Also the Grand Round just received $10.5 million from the Met Council’s Transportation Advisory Committee. So the designation has a lot of financial impact on helping build out the infrastructure of those lines.

Commissioner Lindeke asked where that $10.5 million is going on the Grand Round project.

First Vice Chair Thao said she thinks that the funds are for construction on Wheelock Parkway, and there are different phases of the project.

Mr. Collins clarified that the federal money is tied specifically to construction of a trail along Como Avenue between Raymond Avenue and Hamline Avenue and also construction along Johnson Parkway between Burns Avenue and Phalen Boulevard. Wheelock Parkway is still moving forward and that will be locally funded.

**MOTION**: First Vice Chair Thao moved on behalf of the Transportation Planning Committee to release the draft for public review and set a public hearing on March 24, 2017. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

**VII. 8-80 Fellowship Final Report** – Informational presentation by Margaret Jones, PED. 
(Margaret Jones, 651/266-6637)
Margaret Jones, 8-80 Fellow, gave a power point presentation, which can be seen on the web page at: http://www.stpaul.gov/planningcommission

Commissioner Ochs asked if the Capstone Event has already passed.

Ms. Jones said next Tuesday, February 14th, Professor Gil Penalosa is coming to participate in the Capstone Event which is at the Ever-Green Energy building, 305 St. Peter Street from 3:00-4:30 p.m. The Mayor and Gil Penalosa will speak. There will be a quick celebratory recap and a thank you to everyone for all of the support and great energy that’s been put behind this.

Commissioner Edgerton wanted to know what’s next for Margaret Jones.

Ms. Jones said that she is moving on to a new fellowship, but the scope of it has not been worked out yet. However, she can say that beginning March 20th she will be coming back for a 12-month fellowship. She will be working in the North End, taking a look at what kinds of things are going on and where there are gaps. She will be identifying opportunities to build on the good energy and activity that is there and see what else we might take a look at. The job won’t be too defined before talking to people and exploring what people want and might be looking for. The hope is to build on the assets and find opportunities for economic development and connecting people with resources. Perhaps there will be some type of place making and capitalizing on the community pride. It’s an awesome neighborhood, a very diverse neighborhood and the next fellowship is going to be about opportunities. Are there ways to bring in businesses that might do some skills training or perhaps become a pipeline for career building and businesses? Yesterday during a broad community conversation on aging—people talked about the increasing number of people who will need care and different services – not just health care but transit and household chores and more. So is there a way to be creative and think about establishing some type of incubator for services or skills training for elderly care? She is really excited to get started.

VIII. Comprehensive Planning Committee

First Vice Chair Thao reported that at their last meeting Lucy Thompson gave an update on the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and background on the current Comprehensive Plan. Also, at that meeting it was decided to change the meeting time from 3:30 p.m. to start at 4:00 p.m. ending at 6:00 p.m. So the next Comprehensive Planning Committee meeting scheduled on Tuesday, February 21st will start at the new time of 4:00 p.m.

IX. Neighborhood Planning Committee

Commissioner DeJoy announced the item on the agenda for the next Neighborhood Planning Committee meeting on Wednesday, February 15, 2017.

X. Communications Committee

2016 Planning Commission Annual Report

Commissioner Gelgelu reported that the 2016 Planning Commission Annual Report has been completed. It lists all of the completed and ongoing projects that the Commission and staff
worked on throughout 2016. There is also a summary of the various zoning applications that come before the Planning Commission throughout the year.

Planning Director’s Report on 2016 Achievements and 2017 Projects

Donna Drummond, Planning Director, briefly discussed the 2016 accomplishments, both completed projects and ongoing projects, which are in the annual report. She also discussed major projects that are coming up in 2017.

Commissioner Mouacheupao said that she did not see anything about the Macy’s site.

Ms. Drummond said the Macy’s project is under construction and that has already been through site plan review so it is a matter of implementation and seeing how that project may spur some additional activity downtown around it. The Walgreen’s will be moving from across the street into the Macy’s building. The new name of the building is Wabasha Center and the major tenant will be the Wild with a practice facility on the top of the building. It will bring a lot of people downtown because in addition to the Wild it will be used for adult leagues, high school games and hockey camps so there will be a lot of activity. We don’t know all of the tenants yet.

Commissioner Lindeke asked about the South Snelling Zoning Study and what the timeline is for that.

Ms. Drummond said that it should be coming to the Neighborhood Committee next month to release for public hearing.

Commissioner Ochs asked about the Snelling Midway redevelopment and the role of the Port Authority.

Ms. Drummond said that the Port Authority has stepped in and is trying to form a joint venture partnership with an outside development entity and the team to look at redeveloping the balance of the superblock at Snelling Midway. There was an action at the Port Authority board last month to approve that concept and they are hoping to bring a final agreement to be the Port Authority board later this month if they stay on the current timeline. The current shopping center owner was reluctant to tear down half of the shopping center and lose that income because it has an existing mortgage on the property. This is a complicated set up but it is good that the Port Authority has stepped in.

First Vice Chair Thao wanted to know where Southport is.

Ms. Drummond said Southport is the Barge Channel Road area down along the southern edge of the city. The surrounding residential neighborhood has had a lot of concerns about environmental impacts from being next to the industrial area. Trains are often blocking access to Barge Channel Road, and then trucks are backed up waiting to get in there. Air quality is a big concern with emissions and a lot of dust particulate that seems to be generated down there. Because of the concerns about air quality and traffic they asked for a study of that area. This is a non-traditional study for the Planning Commission and Planning staff to be working on in that it is not really looking at land use changes or zoning changes. A report is being put together that will be coming to the Planning Commission for review and comment then on to the City Council.
First Vice Chair Thao was pleased to see the Tiny Houses Zoning Study on the list.

Ms. Drummond said that a Metropolitan Council Livable Communities grant was awarded for the Payne-Maryland intersection to look at a redevelopment project on the southwest corner. It is looking at an unconventional development project with smaller than average housing units and how that fits into the zoning code. It was determined that that development as proposed could be done under a traditional neighborhood zoning district so that might be the route for that particular project. In general, staff is looking at possible zoning code amendments that would facilitate alternative housing types such as smaller units that could be more affordable or meet other lifestyle needs.

XI. Task Force/Liaison Reports

No Reports.

XII. Old Business

None.

XIII. New Business

None.

XIV. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:55 a.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,

[Signature]
Donna Drummond
Planning Director

Approved [2/24/17]
(Date)

[Signature]
Melanie McMahon
Secretary of the Planning Commission