A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, April 7, 2017 at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.


*Excused

Also Present: Donna Drummond, Planning Director; Lucy Thompson, Bill Dermody, Josh Williams, Tony Johnson, Mollie Scozzari, and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

The Planning Commission did not have a quorum, so no action was taken on these items. However they will be on the agenda at the next Planning Commission meeting on Friday, April 21, 2017.

I. Approval of minutes March 24, 2017.

II. Chair’s Announcements

Chair Reveal announced that she was tabling all actions that require a quorum. Chair Reveal also noted that this is the first time in at least 8 years that the Planning Commission did not have a quorum. She changed the order of the items on the agenda to have the River Balcony presentation by Lucy Thompson first.

III. Planning Director’s Announcements

Donna Drummond announced the kick off a two major studies. One is a study of the Rice and Larpenteur area with the cities of Roseville and Maplewood. Applications for a community advisory committee are being solicited, and Commissioner Edgerton will be the Planning Commission representative. There will also be representatives from the Roseville and Maplewood planning commissions as well as area residents and business owners. The CP Rail Spur study is also getting started. The City had received a federal TIGER grant to study the abandoned CP rail spur that runs several miles parallel to West 7th and up into the Ford site to determine possible reuse as a bicycle and pedestrian corridor.

In the commissioners’ packets is the spreadsheet of Neighborhood STAR applications that have
been received. Every year the Planning Commission reviews the applications and provides comments to the Neighborhood STAR Board as to conformance with Comprehensive Plan. This will be going to a future meeting of the Comprehensive Planning Committee.

IV. Zoning Committee

SITE PLAN REVIEW – List of current applications. *(Larry Zangs, 651/266-9082)*

Two items came before the Site Plan Review Committee on Tuesday, April 4, 2017:

- Metro State University parking lot expansion – 41 off-street parking spaces, landscaping, and stormwater management at 383 Bates Avenue. Chris Maas-Metro State University SPR #17-022401

- 2-Story Mixed-Use Building – New mixed-use development, off-street parking, landscaping at 918 Raymond Avenue. Richard “Starke” Mueller-918 Raymond LLC SPR #17-022408

NEW BUSINESS

#17-017-620 Verizon Wireless – Conditional use permit for small cell canister antennas on 3 light poles (total heights: 41’, 22’, and 43’9”) and rooftop panel cell antennas on Kagin Commons. 1605 Grand Avenue, Macalester College Campus. *(Bill Dermody, 651/266-6617)*

#17-017-675 Verizon Wireless – Conditional use permit for a small cell canister antenna on a light pole (33’ total height). 1679 Grand Avenue, NE corner at Cambridge. *(Bill Dermody, 651/266-6617)*

#17-019-449 Verizon Wireless – Conditional use permit for panel cell antennas on a light pole (26’8” total height) and rooftop panel cell antennas on Buetow Music Center. 300 Hamline Avenue North and 1245 Carroll Avenue North, Concordia College Campus. *(Bill Dermody, 651/266-6617)*

#17-019-520 Verizon Wireless – Conditional use permit for panel cell antennas on a light pole (32’3” total height). 199 Hamline Avenue North, Concordia College Campus. *(Bill Dermody, 651/266-6617)*

*All of the above applications will be considered at the April 21, 2017 meeting.*

#17-019-179 Wingspan Life Resources – Establishment of legal nonconforming use status to use the house as an office for two employees who do not live in the house (along with use of the house as a residence for two people). 1239 Sherburne Avenue between Syndicate and Griggs. *(Josh Williams, 651/266-6659)*

*This application had been laid over by the Zoning Committee to its April 13, 2017 meeting.*

Commissioner Makarios announced the items on the agenda at the next Zoning Committee meeting on Thursday, April 13, 2017.

V. Comprehensive Planning Committee
River Balcony Master Plan – Release draft for public review and set a public hearing for May 19, 2017. (Lucy Thompson, 651/266-6578)

Lucy Thompson, PED staff gave a power point presentation which can be seen at: http://www.stpaul.gov/planningcommission

Chair Reveal commented that, in Seattle at Olympic Sculpture Park (one of the precedents studied as part of the master planning process), there was a two-day live dance festival that attracted 20,000 people. Not only would the proposed land bridge in Saint Paul act as a way for pedestrians to get over both the railroad tracks and Shepard Road to the river’s edge, but it could also function as a public performance space as it did in Seattle.

Commissioner Edgerton asked whether the document can be released today as planned, since a quorum is not present.

Chair Reveal responded that the Commission will announce the release of the Master Plan for public review, set the public hearing for May 19, 2017 and then ratify this action at the next Planning Commission meeting.

Commissioner Makarios asked what vertical circulation towers are.

Ms. Thompson said they are stair/elevator towers that take you from downtown on the upper bluff to Shepard/ Warner Road level below.

Commissioner Makarios asked about accessibility and how the land bridge might work.

Ms. Thompson said that all the vertical towers have stairs and elevators to be ADA-accessible, and that the two elevated boardwalks are all planned at ADA-required grades/slopes.

Commissioner Underwood asked who will own the River Balcony and how it will be managed.

Ms. Thompson said that the ownership and operation/maintenance structure has not been determined; this will be part of the next phase of implementation to be undertaken by the Great River Passage Division in Parks. Regardless of ownership, the intent is that the River Balcony will be publically accessible all the time.

Commissioner Mouacheupao asked how safety will be addressed, especially if the River Balcony is going to be accessible to the public at all times, and whether there will be space for the vendors along the Balcony.
Ms. Thompson said safety is absolutely a concern. Lighting will be important, as will some kind of a public-private partnership on security. Beyond security, privately-developed buildings that provide activity and “eyes” on the Balcony will help make it safe. Connections back into downtown will be critical to ensure that the Balcony is not an isolated path along the edge of downtown; signage directing people to and from the Balcony will help keep it active more hours of the day.

Chair Reveal added that they are not contemplating 24-7; they are contemplating public access during the day.

Ms. Thompson stated that the vision does contemplate a place that is publicly-accessible 24-7. Regarding Commissioner Mouacheupao’s question on vendors along the Balcony, the design guidelines encourage and allow for vendors, public art other public activities. The preliminary Phase 1 schematic design includes wider areas along the Balcony where it bulges out to create gathering spaces.

Chair Reveal hopes that in Phase II or Phase III, staff is contemplating ways to link the activity generated on the Balcony across the river to the West Side Flats.

Ms. Thompson agreed that this is a great opportunity to connect the two areas, and acknowledged that, as the West Side Flats grows, there will be increasing demand for the connection.

Commissioner DeJoy noted that there is still interest in recreating the Green Stairs on the West Side, and that maybe this elevator/stair combination could be a template for that.

Commissioner Mouacheupao said that the more people come to the river’s edge, the more risk there is for pollution, and asked how the river will be kept clean.

Ms. Thompson responded that managing the human impact on the river from increased activity will be very important. One of the options for vacant land on the Shepard Road level below Kellogg Mall Park is for shared, stacked-function green infrastructure, which would provide both stormwater management and a green amenity. This area could address runoff coming from the Balcony. Trash and other potential pollutants will have to be managed very carefully.

*No action was taken on this, since a quorum was not present. Staff will release the plan and schedule a public hearing for May 19, 2017. The Planning Commission will confirm the public hearing date at its next meeting.*

Commissioner Thao announced that on the agenda for the next Comprehensive Planning Committee meeting on Tuesday, April 18, 2017 they will be discussing the Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan.

**VI. Neighborhood Planning Committee**

**Snelling Avenue South Zoning Study** – Release draft for public review and set a public hearing for May 19, 2017. (*Josh Williams, 651/266-6659, and Tony Johnson, 651/266-6620*)

*Commissioner DeJoy announced that since no action can be taken on this, the staff will*
release the draft for public review and announce a public hearing for May 19, 2017. The Planning Commission will confirm this date at its next meeting on April 21, 2017. The staff presentation on the study recommendations will also occur at that meeting.

Commissioner DeJoy announced that the Short Term Rental Study and Zoning Amendments will be on the agenda for the next Neighborhood Planning Committee meeting on Wednesday, April 12, 2017.

VII. Transportation Committee

No report.

VIII. Communications Committee

No report.

IX. Task Force/Liaison Reports

Commissioner Makarios announced that the Ford Task Force will be meeting on Monday, May 1st. The Comprehensive Planning Committee will be considering the Ford zoning and public realm plan soon. The Comprehensive Planning Committee will be digging into that and the Ford Task Force has a couple of additional meetings as well.

X. Old Business

None.

XI. New Business

None.

XII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:20 a.m.

Recorded by Laura Eckert, Executive Assistant and prepared by Sonja Butler, Planning Commission Secretary Planning and Economic Development Department, City of Saint Paul
Respectfully submitted,

Donna Drummond
Planning Director

Approved \underline{May 5, 2017}
(Date)

Melanie McMahon
Secretary of the Planning Commission

Planning Team Files\planning commission\minutes\April 7, 2017