Saint Paul Planning Commission
Minnesota State Capitol
State Capitol Bldg., Room 123
75 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Blvd.

Minutes June 16, 2017

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, June 16, 2017, at 8:30 a.m. in the State Capitol Bldg., Room 123.


Commissioners Absent: Ms. *Anderson, and Mr. *Fredson

*Excused

Also Present: Donna Drummond, Planning Director; Allan Torstenson, Anton Jerve, Tony Johnson, Marcq Sung, and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

I. Approval of minutes May 19, 2017.

MOTION: Commissioner Underwood moved approval of the minutes of May 19, 2017. Commissioner Vang seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

II. Chair’s Announcements

Chair Reveal announced that it was Commissioner Wendy Underwood’s birthday so she wished her a happy birthday. Commissioner Cedrick Baker agreed to be Secretary of the Planning Commission which entails the signing of minutes and attending the executive committee meeting once a month. Also, Commissioner Kyle Makarios is taking a new job as the National Political Director of the Carpenters National/International Union. He will continue to live in Saint Paul but will involve considerable traveling. He will continue to chair the Zoning Committee as long as he can. Commissioner Edgerton serves as vice chair and will succeed Commissioner Makarios as chair if Commissioner Makarios determines he can no longer serve. Chair Reveal congratulated Commissioner Makarios and said that the Commission is still in need of members to be on the Zoning Committee. There is one person who has tentatively agreed but there is still one more vacancy beyond that.

III. Planning Director’s Announcements

Donna Drummond announced that City Attorney Peter Warner asked her to remind the commissioners that they can call him anytime if they have questions about a zoning application. He is happy to talk one on one with commissioners and staff. Also, a guided tour of the State Capitol building is being offered to commissioners and staff at 10 a.m. following the meeting. We will meet outside of the office for visitors and tours.
IV. Zoning Committee

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

Two items to come before the Site Plan Review Committee on Tuesday, June 20, 2017:

- Cleveland Avenue Triplex – New development, landscaping at 639 Cleveland Avenue South. Graham Merry-Cullen, LLC SPR #17-046638
- Firehouse Wine Bar – Renovation of former Hope Fire House at 1 Leech Street. Brody Nordlund-Hope Engine Company, LLC SPR #17-047495

NEW BUSINESS

#17-042-099 Shahid Aziz – Rezoning from LI Light Industrial to IT Transitional Industrial. 495 Kenny Road, NE corner at Brunson. *(Bill Dermody, 651/266-6617)*

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

#17-042-435 Beacon North I – Rezone portion to become part of the railroad ROW from I1 Light Industrial to I2 General Industrial. 777 Forest Street, West side of Forest/South edge of the Railroad ROW. *(Bill Dermody, 651/266-6617)*

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

#17-042-216 Vertical Endeavors – Conditional use permit for indoor recreation, with modification of standard for primary access from an arterial or collector street. *(Anton Jerve, 651/266-6567)*

**MOTION:** Commissioner Makarios moved the Zoning Committee’s recommendation to approve the conditional use permit subject to additional conditions. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

#17-042-160 Evergreen Recovery – Variance and conditional use permit for supportive housing for 16 residents. 203 Robie Street East, NE corner at Ada. *(Jake Reilly, 651/266-6618)*

Commissioner Reich asked about the minimum distance requirement for this use from other similar uses.

Commissioner Makarios explained the reasons for avoiding clustering them in a neighborhood.

Commissioner Baker asked if concerns that have been expressed are about the use itself or more a matter of the number of residents proposed for the house.

Commissioner Makarios said the applicant has requested for a variance to have more residents in this facility then the underlined zoning allows, and the burden of proof is on the applicant to show
that the requirements for a variance, including special circumstances unique to the property, are met. He thinks a variance is reasonable in this case.

Commissioner Underwood asked if they are proposing to add on to the building to accommodate 16 residents.

Commissioner Makarios said the applicant is proposing up to 3 residents in the largest bedrooms, which are very large.

Commissioner Underwood asked if the recommendation to reduce the number of residents from 16 to 12 is acceptable to Evergreen Recovery.

Commissioner Makarios said Evergreen Recovery had indicated that they would be able to make it work with 12 residents, but with only the 6 residents permitted without a variance it would be financially unfeasible for them to have 24 hour round the clock care and staff on site.

Commissioner Ochs said he thinks there is a reason for the limitation on the number of residents this type of facility can serve in this zoning district, and neighbors are concerned about the intensity of the use.

Commissioner DeJoy said that the application is for 16 facility residents plus 1 resident manager. The reduction to 12 facility residents plus 1 resident manager came from staff. This area is intensely used, with a hi-rise, public housing, El Burrito, and a church across the street. Although the applicant said that the residents don’t have cars or many visitors, they can have cars and visitors, and there is limited parking and very intense use at this location already.

Commissioner Makarios noted recommended condition #3 in the draft resolution that no staff or residents shall park on the public streets, and that the applicant must provide adequate off-street parking for the use on-site.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Makarios moved the Zoning Committee’s recommendation to approve the variance and conditional use permit subject to additional conditions. The motion carried 14-2 (DeJoy, Ochs) on a voice vote.

Commissioner Makarios announced the items on the agenda for the next Zoning Committee meeting.

V. **Capitol Area Parking Study** — Informational presentation by Ezra Kramer, Walker Parking Consultant, and Kelly Morrell, Metro Transit.

Kelly Morrell and Ezra Kramer together gave a power point presentation which can be seen at: [http://www.stpaul.gov/planningcommission](http://www.stpaul.gov/planningcommission).

Donna Drummond, Planning Director, noted to the new commissioners that the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board (CAAPB) has jurisdiction in the Capitol area, with boundaries that go west to Marion Street, and south into the northern part of downtown area across Interstate 94, therefore city zoning does not apply in that area. However we have done some planning work in the area, including the Rice Street station area plan and the CAAPB took that plan and endorsed it as part of their guiding planning documents for the area. The City is very interested
in seeing what happens in this area, especially at Rice and University because there are a lot of surface parking lots and we would like to see development of them to be a better entrance into the Capitol area.

Commissioner Lindeke said that it seems like the parking ramp proposals that the consultant has come up with seem to be a little bit of a solution in search of a problem. He asked the consultant to describe exactly why more parking is needed. Also, he noted the Ford Building is a historic property and asked why the plan shows developing a parking ramp on it.

Mr. Morell said they have had discussed the status of that building with the Dept. of Administration (DOA) and what is shown is based on their thoughts about the future of that property. Within the capitol area there is a considerable amount of surface parking. Surface parking takes up a lot of space and it creates dead zones. So aside from starting to gather up those dead zones and push them into higher density structured parking, there was also information from the DOA that the state administration may need 1300 additional parking spaces in the capitol area because of state office consolidations. One thing the study does not currently include is the utilization of existing parking on the state campus. They hope to get utilization information from the DOA.

Commissioner Lindeke said that the parking spaces in the ramp along Rice Street cost $25,000 each, which is very expensive per car. Ideally, we could use other sorts of policy tools to manage demand and you had a great list of possible tools. A lot of people who work at the legislature actually live in Saint Paul. There is good availability of transit and we should maximize the use of that to help solve the demand problem. It is in Saint Paul’s best interest to have less parking and more active uses in this area.

Ms. Drummond said that the City has identified Rice Street north of University Avenue up to the railroad tracks as one of its Commercial Vitality Zones. That’s an initiative of Economic Development division of PED, with the idea of focusing some investments on that commercial zone that’s along Rice Street. The Economic Development Division viewed this parking study as being important to understanding existing parking needs and what might be possible in terms of additional development and revitalization. The two staff people from our department working on the Rice Street CVZ, Marcq Sung and Tony Johnson, have been instrumental in getting this parking study done.

Commissioner Ochs said that he is in favor of structured parking and he likes the idea of retail uses lining the parking along the street that have been shown. Structured parking is a valuable asset and when the state takes the initiative to construct those it will be valuable to all along University Avenue, not just the campus area. We want to have as much infill development and remove as much surface parking lots as possible but we do need to rely upon people coming from outside of Saint Paul and providing parking for them, not just the people who live down the block, to provide or spend money in our area and collect that tax revenue to make our city better.

VI. Comprehensive Planning Committee

Commissioner Thao reported that they met on Tuesday and went over the Snelling Avenue South Zoning Study and a resolution recommending approval will come to the Planning Commission for the July 30th meeting. They also had a preview and review of the Comprehensive Plan update process, the community engagement work and received drafts of transportation and land use
chapters. The next meeting is on Tuesday, June 27, 2017.

VII. Neighborhood Planning Committee

No report.

VIII. Transportation Committee

Commissioner Lindeke reported that at their last meeting on Monday they talked about permit parking and they also have been working on review of the Transportation Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. They will finish that at the meeting on Monday, June 19th as well as look at the proposed process for the upcoming citywide pedestrian plan.

IX. Communications Committee

Commissioner Underwood had no report.

X. Task Force/Liaison Reports

Commissioner Edgerton announced that the Rice/Larpenteur study had a community workshop last Wednesday and there will be a follow-up workshop to present findings and do some planning next Wednesday, June 21, 2017, 6:00 p.m. The next Advisory Group meeting will be on the following Tuesday, June 27, 2017.

XI. Old Business

None.

XII. New Business

None.

XIII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:58 a.m.

Recorded and prepared by
Sonja Butler, Planning Commission Secretary
Planning and Economic Development Department,
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Respectfully submitted,                                        Approved    July 14, 2017

Donna Drummond                                             (Date)
Planning Director

Cedrick Baker
Secretary of the Planning Commission