A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, December 1, 2017, at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.


*Excused

Also Present: Donna Drummond, Planning Director; Lucy Thompson, Allan Torstenson, Josh Williams, Kady Dadlez, Jamie Radel, Tony Johnson, and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

I. Approval of minutes October 6th, October 20th, and November 3, 2017.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Baker moved approval of the minutes of October 6, 2017. Commissioner Lindeke seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

and

**MOTION:** Commissioner Baker moved approval of the minutes of October 20, 2017. Commissioner Lindeke seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

and

**MOTION:** Commissioner Baker moved approval of the minutes of November 3, 2017. Commissioner Lindeke seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

II. Chair’s Announcements

Terri Thao, First Vice Chair, chaired the meeting. She announced that Chair Reveal will be asking commissioners to be on the Nomination Committee to nominate officers for next year. If anyone has interest in any of those positions please let Chair Reveal know.

III. Planning Director’s Announcements

Donna Drummond reminded commissioners to fill out the Committee Preference form if they haven’t done that already. The Steering Committee will be meeting before the next meeting on December 15th to review the results and decide when the Comprehensive and Neighborhood
Planning Committee will be meeting. She noted that the Mayor-elect Melvin Carter has announced an open application process for appointing his department heads, and will have community review panels reviewing applications and interviewing applicants. Planning staff will be briefing the Mayor elect and his staff on the progress on the Comprehensive Plan update. On next week’s Council agenda there will be a resolution related to the petition that’s been submitted related to the Ford Plan. A group of neighborhood residents are unhappy about the decisions that were made on the Ford Public Realm Plan and Zoning and have submitted a petition that this issue be on the ballot next November for referendum. The resolution that is on the council agenda for next Wednesday will determine or state that the petition is insufficient because it didn’t meet the percentage of signatures needed to be on the ballot based on this most previous election, because of the number of people who voted this election was a lot higher than the last election. Also it will state that because state law is so prescriptive in how zoning decisions are to be made that it is not valid to use referendum to make those decisions. This opinion is based on several previous court cases.

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, December 5, 2017:

- St. Catherine’s University – New off-street parking lot at 2004 Randolph Avenue. St. Catherine’s University SPR #17-213804

- Zvago Cooperative (FKA Luther Place Seminary) – New Multi-Family Residential at 2265 Como Avenue. Matt McNeill-Ecumen SPR #15-186591

NEW BUSINESS

#17-211-599 Dorothy Day Place – Conditional use permit to increase the number of overnight shelter beds from 278 to 320. 435 Dorothy Day Place (formerly Main Street), NW corner of 6th and Dorothy Day Place. *(Jamie Radel, 651/266-6614)*

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

#17-210-652 Scout Service Center – Rezone from OS Office Service to T2 Traditional Neighborhood. 393 Marshall Ave., NW corner at Western. *(Tony Johnson, 651/266-6620)*

Commissioner Edgerton noted public testimony expressing a desire for more community review, and in response said he thinks it would be worthwhile to have a Zoning Committee public hearing to consider the site plan.

Commissioner Baker asked if the Zoning Committee recommendation to approve the rezoning was predicated on reviewing the site plan at Zoning Committee.

Commissioner Edgerton replied no, having the site plan come to the Zoning Committee was not considered at the Zoning Committee meeting, just his thought after the meeting.
Donna Drummond, Planning Director, noted the 2004 Planning Commission resolution that generally delegates authority for site plan review to the Zoning Administrator, and lays out criteria for bringing an individual site plan to the Planning Commission for review. The Zoning Administrator can decide to bring a site plan to the Planning Commission or the Planning Commission can vote to bring a site plan to the Planning Commission for review. In the 9 years that she has been the Planning Director she does not believe that there has ever been a vote by the commission to bring a site plan to the Planning Commission because the Zoning Administrator has been proactive about referring site plans to the Planning Commission for review if they are major projects or if there are neighborhood concerns or major community discussion about it. She will talk with the Zoning Administrator about bringing the site plan to the Commission.

Commissioner DeJoy said that some neighbors talked about not receiving notification for the hearing. Property ownership information and addresses used for public notification is from Ramsey County records that may not be completely up to date, but it is important for neighbors to know that notification requirements were followed.

**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 items on the agenda at the next Zoning Committee meeting on Thursday, December 7, 2017.

**V. Joint Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee**

Southport Industrial District Study – Release draft for public review and schedule a public hearing for January 12, 2018. *(Kady Dadlez, 651/266-6619)*

Kady Dadlez, PED staff gave a presentation which can be seen on the web page at: http://www.stpaul.gov/planningcommission

Commissioner Baker commented that there are many factors contributing to the fugitive dust problem in the Southport area. He asked whether members of the Protect Our Riverfront Together (PORT) group are affected by fugitive dust.

Ms. Dadlez said that fugitive dust is anything that does not come out of a vent or a smokestack, and there are no businesses with vents or smokestacks in the Southport area. At the first meeting with the PORT group, attendees expressed concerns about asthma in children and respiratory disease in older residents. These concerns point directly to air quality in the area. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) identified fugitive dust as a major contributor to air quality concerns in the area. The area near Our Lady of Guadalupe Church was assessed as part of the MPCA’s community air monitoring program in 2014. While they detected some elevated levels of arsenic, though nothing that exceeded a standard, there were enough concerns to do follow up monitoring. This led to the yearlong monitoring that took place in 2016.

Commissioner Baker said there are no vents or smokestacks in the Southport area, but that vehicle idling and venting from diesel trucks affects air quality in the area.
Ms. Dadlez agreed, and said that dust kicked up by trucks going into and out of Barge Channel Road is a major source of fugitive dust as well.

Commissioner Lindeke asked several questions: 1) what speed limit would Ms. Dadlez recommend for Barge Channel Road; 2) how has truck and rail traffic changed over the past 10 to 20 years; and 3) does the study relate at all to the bike trail proposed to go through the area, and if so how is traffic impacted by it.

Ms. Dadlez said the current speed limit is 30 mph; she does not have a specific recommendation for how much that could be reduced, whether 5, 10, or 15 miles an hour. We do know that fugitive dust can be reduced with slower speeds, especially during windy conditions. She added that Alter Corporation which is at the southern end of Barge Channel Road sweeps the street a couple of times a week to pick up dirt that truck tires pick up and carry off-site.

Commissioner Lindeke said that it might be useful in the recommendations section to suggest a specific speed reduction to reduce dust, though he does not know what the right amount is, say 15 miles per hour. He added that speed along Barge Channel Road is not a big issue for traffic, the single point of access into and out of the area is the greater issue for traffic.

Ms. Dadlez said regarding the bike trail through the area, she does not know a lot of specifics about it but she does know that Parks staff is working with the Port Authority and others on plans to bring the bike trail through the area. She has no details to provide but knows the necessary parties are working on it.

Regarding Commissioner Lindeke’s question about trends in truck and rail traffic Ms. Dadlez said that she is not sure about rail but truck traffic has increased over time in tandem with increased barge shipping. The Port Authority’s goal is to optimize the use of the barge channel which has a relatively new dock wall. Union Pacific Railroad attended one of the community forums and said that there had been a lot of improvements made in the switching yard in South Saint Paul just south of the study area that was really helping to limit the amount of time that trains block Barge Channel Road. Union Pacific Railroad representatives were made more aware of what the neighborhood concerns were regarding trains blocking the road in that they were not just traffic and congestion-related concerns but also about air quality and access for emergency vehicles when trains block access into and out of the area.

Commissioner Lee said that this is a very comprehensive study and asked what the plans are to simplify it for residents so they know what the public hearing is about and how they can bring forth their concerns.

Ms. Dadlez said that she did not anticipate an interest in simplifying the study. She noted that she had heard that the West Side Community Organization (WSCO) identified environmental justice as one of its new initiatives and they have hired someone to take that on. Perhaps the person in that role will be able to help make the study useful and accessible to area residents.

Commissioner Thao requested that Ms. Dadlez repeat the presentation given today prior to the public hearing in January and asked whether WSCO will be offered an opportunity to have the study presented to them prior to the public hearing.
Ms. Dadlez said she had not planned on that but she certainly could make the offer to WSCO.

Commissioner Lindeke said it would be good to have a one page summary document of the study translated into Spanish.

Ms. Dadlez thanked Commissioner Lindeke for the suggestion.

Commissioner Edgerton asked what is the end target here, is this a freestanding report on its own, does it get adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plan, where will it go?

Ms. Drummond said that this is not a typical land use and zoning study that we would normally undertake and in those cases we’re adopting a plan as an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan. This is not really a plan that would fit into the Comprehensive Plan, so we’re recommending the Planning Commission review it and make any recommendations it desires on to the Mayor and City Council. And we would recommend that the City Council approve the study or adopt it and it could be used to guide City positions or City policies in the future but it wouldn’t technically be a part of the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Wojchik said one of the first things that Ms. Dadlez said was that the issue of fugitive dust was related to unpaved roads. Given that unpaved roads in the Southport area contribute to the fugitive dust problem why isn’t paving one of the study recommendations?

Ms. Dadlez said it is one of the recommendations and if it is not included it is an oversight and should have been one of the first recommendations. She added that the Port Authority is planning to undertake some paving this spring at an intersection and this will help reduce dust. The study identifies paving unpaved driving surfaces as one way to reduce dust, especially the most traveled unpaved areas.

Ms. Drummond added Port Authority staff will be invited to attend the public hearing and this would be a chance for the Commissioners to ask them more questions about their operations in Southport.

Commissioner Risberg said looking at the recommendations, what might the process be after this for coming up with a more specific action plan and funding recommendations, and where those funding sources might be. Is that dependent on City Council decision making? He is unclear about this.

Ms. Dadlez said there is not a plan of action beyond seeing the study through the review and approval process with the Planning Commission and City Council and getting the study into the hands of area residents and businesses to use it as a guide for understanding what is happening in the area. She added that the Port Authority and Union Pacific Railroad are very interested in developing plans for a grade separated access onto Barge Channel Road and are pursuing grant funding for planning, design, and construction.

Commissioner Risberg asked whether this project will be raised at the public hearing.

Ms. Dadlez said she is not sure but the Port Authority did present a proposal for a grade separated road to WSCO in October when they were seeking a letter of support from the community for the
federal and state grant applications. Union Pacific Railroad would be a financial partner in the project.

Ms. Drummond added that the question is, more generally, how do these plans get implemented. Plans lay out information and recommendations and there are often multiple parties that can use the information or those recommendations to either apply for funding to different programs or a neighborhood group could use that as a reason to approach the City Council for some kind of action or use it as part of a justification for a CIB application, that type of thing. The study does not mandate that money be spent on the things that are recommended in the study but it is support for that when there is an initiative to apply to various funding sources or take various actions.

Commissioner DeJoy said that page 12 of the study identifies a list of strategies to control fugitive dust and the first bullet point is paving unpaved driving surfaces. These are not called recommendations but identified as strategies for controlling fugitive dust.

Commissioner Underwood said that many people may not be familiar with the Southport area if you don’t live there or work there. She encouraged commissioners to go to Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, and just stand in the parking lot for a few minutes to understand what this study is all about, and why the neighbors organized and pushed for this work. It really gives a good context. Also, the community is largely Latino and Commissioner Lindeke’s suggestion of a one page summary translated into Spanish is a good one and she strongly encouraged that the whole study be translated into Spanish. The community has put a lot into this and all of the information should be provided in Spanish. To Commissioner DeJoy’s point there is more specific action identified in other places in the study, she encouraged the study summary and recommendations to be strengthened by providing more specifics.

Commissioner Eckman asked if there was any information given why the EPA small grant application was not funded.

Ms. Dadlez said they did not get any information only that it was unsuccessful.

Commissioner DeJoy asked if staff is aware of any efforts beyond the borders of Saint Paul, like down into South Saint Paul if similar efforts are being looked at.

Ms. Dadlez is not aware of any other efforts. The only contact she had with South Saint Paul was inquiring if they had any plan for an alternative access and at that time they said no.

Commissioner Baker said if we move forward with this will there be more meat on the recommendations?

Ms. Drummond said usually the procedure is to release something for public review and then take in the testimony that comes in. Then the committee can consider all of that plus the discussion here today and decide what changes the committee would like to recommend to the study.

Commissioner Thao added that as chair of that committee Commission Baker is welcome to join them for discussion on that day.
Commissioner Eckman asked if the City or PED have a general policy around translating documents like these. It would be great if all of it was in Spanish. She works for a small nonprofit and they do have people who will do it for free, but she also wants to recognize that it can be very expensive. Is translation a regular line item for City department and committee documents?

Commissioner DeJoy added that there is a large Somali community that lives along Concord Street and Caesar Chavez Street so for us to say this document should be translated only in Spanish gives her concern that we are not including everyone.

Ms. Drummond said that the Department of Planning and Economic Development (PED) does have a budget for translation and hiring translators, at meetings and things like that and we will certainly investigate the possibilities for developing an executive summary and translating that and then to see what would be entailed in translating the whole document.

Commissioner Lindeke said it’s a good opportunity to work with the neighborhood groups and get that bottom up feedback.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Perryman moved on behalf of the Joint Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee to release the draft for public review and set a public hearing on January 12, 2018. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

_Draft Water Chapter of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan – Overview and Key Themes. (Josh Williams, 651/266-6659)_

Donna Drummond, Planning Director, asked Lucy Thompson to give an update on upcoming schedule for drafting, release and adoption of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

Lucy Thompson, PED staff and lead for the Comprehensive Plan update, said that at the January 24, 2018 Comprehensive Planning Committee meeting, staff will have a full draft for the Committee to approve for presentation at Open Houses in February 2018. There will be two Open Houses – February 10 and 13 – at which the entire draft will be available for preliminary review. The Mayor-Elect will be briefed in January, and staff will meet with district councils and advocacy groups as requested in February and March. The schedule has the Planning Commission releasing the _final_ draft on March 9 and setting a public hearing for April 20, 2018. The goal is to have the final Plan adopted by the City Council in June so that the required 6-month adjacent municipality review can occur before the Plan is due at the Metropolitan Council on December 31, 2018. Ms. Thompson encouraged all Commissioners to come to the Comprehensive Planning Committee meetings whether they are on the Committee or not, as it is an opportunity to delve into Plan content in much more detail.

Ms. Drummond added that, besides the original Open Houses in 2015, staff did a robust community engagement process in 2016 where they talked to over 2,600 people and received over 3,000 comments. Staff tracked attendance, matched it with city-wide demographics and felt that they got a representative sampling of the community. The community engagement effort for the 2040 Comprehensive Plan was much more extensive than that done for the existing Comprehensive Plan. With additional input from district councils and advocacy groups, staff feels that the public hearing draft will truly capture the community’s aspirations and vision.
Josh Williams noted that in addition to the chapters Ms. Thompson mentioned there is a new Comprehensive Plan requirement this year to update the chapter addressing the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area based on new DNR (Department of Natural Resources) rules that were developed over the past few years. The new state rules mandate management standards and that cities with land in the critical area adopt a new plan and new ordinances that are consistent with the requirements of the new rules. He will be working on that in the coming months as well. It's focused on a part of the city so it is different than the more general Comprehensive Plan chapters that cover the whole city.

Mr. Williams gave a power point presentation on the draft Water Resources chapter of the Comprehensive Plan, which can be seen on the web page at: http://www.stpaul.gov/planningcommission

Commissioner Lindeke said that he read an article recently about the impact that road salt in the winter plowing has on water quality, surface water, rivers and lakes. He asked whether that topic came up in the plan development process and, if so, how it is addressed.

Mr. Williams said the issue is addressed in detail in the Local Surface Water Management Plan, which is incorporated into the Water Chapter as an appendix. The issue is that chloride gets into surface waters and it is not good. A few years ago Saint Paul tried to cut back on salt usage and it just happened to coincide with a terrible winter for ice on roads with freeze and thaw cycles. One thing specifically that Public Works is doing is moving to a brine system, where road salt is dissolved in water. Rather than applying solid salt which goes all over, brine can be applied beforehand, so when the snow comes down it's already been treated. It is a lot easier to titrate the amount that's being applied. But it is expensive, because it requires different equipment. The City did get a grant to help upgrade their fleet, but Mr. Williams did not have details on the grant.

Commissioner Edgerton suggested adding specific policy language to the Water Resources Chapter regarding salt application.

Mr. Williams said that is a good suggestion, because although salting goes with the snow removal, which is already referenced in the chapter, they really are two different activities.

Commissioner Baker stated that he wanted to make sure that there is still an emphasis on equity in the chapter. He noted that a lot of people automatically go to race and ethnicity when discussing equity, but that there are also other aspects to equity. He gave a general example of maintenance practices: where things happen and who gets maintenance first compared to others. He suggested that it would be worthwhile to think about or even create an internal rubric or criteria for making sure that an equity lens is applied to those types of decisions. He also suggested it could apply to policy implementation as well.

Mr. Williams said that it is challenging for the Water Resources Chapter in particular, and that he struggled with how to apply an equity lens. He gave an example of the storm sewer system; it serves the whole city, and its construction is largely based on spatial factors. Mr. Williams added that Commissioner Baker's comment was well taken, and that he agreed it is a very important issue. He said that the issue also came up in committee review of the chapter.
Commissioner Baker added that it is important to have language and commitment to equity within the chapter because even though the City or an administration may commit to equity in other ways, it is important for the Comprehensive Plan to provide guidance and to positively confirm that commitment in policy.

Commissioner Wojcik said on the operational side it is challenging to build equity into public utilities and storm water management, but there are some good examples. He specifically encouraged City staff to look at the city of Seattle. He stated that the Seattle public utility built in really good equitable policies and implementation into their operations and maintenance practices. Commissioner Wojcik stated the he also thought the emphasis on integrated approaches in the plan is really important. He noted that the topic of resiliency was somewhat lacking in the chapter, and that connection between land use and water is so important in regard to resiliency. He asked whether or not Anne Hunt, the City's environmental policy director, was involved in the development of the Water Resource Chapter. He added the he was more generally concerned that staff sometimes work in a very siloed way on the different chapters of the Comprehensive Plan, that it is important that the various chapters speak to one another.

Mr. Williams said that he thought Commissioner Wojcik raised a very good point, and he agreed that the subject matter is definitely in Ms. Hunt's area of expertise. He said that Ms. Hunt is not on the chapter working group, but she is part of the City's Water Resources Working Group (WRWG), and that there is a high degree of overlap between the chapter working group and the WRWG, which was established by the City Council a number of years ago. He continued by noting that the idea behind the WRWG is that the City should take an integrated approach to thinking about water resources. Mr. Williams went on to say that the City has been working on resiliency and climate response plans, with the work led by Ms. Hunt, and that he believed those plans were close to completion. He concluded by noting that Kady Dadlez has been involved in helping make sure staff are keeping the major goals and strategies of those plans as a focus or lens for development of the Comprehensive Plan chapters.

Commissioner Edgerton stated the content of the Water Resources Chapter is good and that it checks off all the boxes with regard to what typically goes into these plans. He continued by saying that although he is on the [Comprehensive Planning] committee, he didn't previously raise but felt that equity and especially equitable access is important, and suggested that it would be worth discussing again at the committee level. He noted that, worldwide, access to clean water and sanitation is a huge issue. He continued that while he hopes that it is not a huge issue in Saint Paul, he does know that access to showers is an issue for the homeless population, and that is something that should be considered, at least, on a policy level. He added that another issue is access to surface water as an amenity for recreation or even just enjoying as a natural resource, and that may warrant more consideration at a policy level as well.

Mr. Williams agreed that there are some real equity issues that can be address in the chapter. He suggested that one way to do so would be in regard to infrastructure, noting that the City takes care of what's in the public right-of-way, but that from the property line it is the property owner's responsibility. He noted that when streets are reconstructed under the Saint Paul Vitality Program, a property owner can have a lead water supply line replaced with some assistance from the City. It is not free, but the cost is can be paid for over 20 years as an add-on to the regular assessment and fees for service.
Commissioner Risberg asked if there were any specific elements in terms of required training or operators for applying salt/chloride, or an effort to conduct outreach to private applicators. He said that private businesses have safety concerns and so spreading salt on parking lots and walkways for stores, and a lot of it goes down the storm drain.

Mr. Williams stated that he could not say for sure but that he believes that operator training is part of what Public Works does so that their staff know how to properly apply road salt. With regard to private property, he stated that he believed it was addressed under the general education language in the Local Surface Water Management Plan (LSWMP), but that perhaps this is another case where the City might want to call it out more specifically in the Water Resources Chapter policy language, and gave an example of potential policy direction.

Commissioner Risberg said that it is also a residential issue and commercial issue. Although nothing is required by the City, we should do anything we can to encourage some of these private applicators to do salt application training. He added that what has happened at the CHS Field is a great case story of the new model for how to do that, and he would like to see that transferred to other new development opportunities, such as the Ford site and the Snelling Midway soccer stadium.

Mr. Williams said that there is a comprehensive storm water system being put in at the new soccer stadium, and that water will be reused for field and park irrigation. It is not a more comprehensive reuse so they are not going to be using storm water for toilet flushing and so forth. He added that City staff is continuing to try to advance those ideas when big opportunities come up. He noted that a central feature of the design of the Ford site is a storm water feature that essentially mimics what was a natural stream that flowed across that site, with a more urban, hardscape at the top and opening into an organic natural feel at the lower end. He stated that he was not sure where discussions on that site are in terms of how additional properties will connect to it, but that it takes a lot of water to feed a feature like that, and one of the challenges is that development of such large sites takes place over time, and you have to build out the system at the front end then figure out how to recapture costs. Figuring out the operation and maintenance costs are going to be is a challenge, and the Department of Public Works has been burned before on things that ended up putting a greater cost on them then they planned for and for which they didn’t have the cost recovery tools in place. But, he added, he believes the solutions are out there.

Ms. Drummond added that for the Snelling Midway site, the City Council did approve additional funding for the storm water system and that it’s a district system that will serve all of the future development on the super block in addition to the soccer stadium. She noted that it is very complicated because the future users are not there yet, but the plan is that those future users will tie into the system and then pay back the City for the upfront investment.

Commissioner Risberg asked if the individual sewage treatment systems (ISTS) are found in the Highwood area, and noted that there is a compliance issue there, with monitoring finding a bacteria problem.

Mr. Williams said, yes, ISTSs are primarily in the Highwood area. But, he noted, the City is in a much better situation than we were at the time the last Comprehensive Plan was done. We’ve reduced by over half the amount of systems that are out there, the state has increased the requirements around maintenance and pumping and the things that help maintain those systems in good working order and in terms of compliance we’re in a lot better shape than we were.
general those systems are going to be there for a while and the City will do its best to make sure that people maintain them.

VI. Transportation Committee

Commissioner Lindeke announced that at the last meeting there were three items on the agenda, including the Hamline-Midway Soccer Stadium traffic study update, a pedestrian safety project on Grand Avenue between Snelling and Downtown, and a study about updating the City’s permit parking system. The next Transportation Committee meeting is on Monday, December 4, 2017 and there are two items on the agenda.

VII. Communications Committee

No report.

VIII. Task Force/Liaison Reports

No reports.

IX. Old Business

None.

X. New Business

None.

XI. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

Recorded and prepared by
Sonja Butler, Planning Commission Secretary
Planning and Economic Development Department,
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Respectfully submitted,

Donna Drummond
Planning Director

Approved January 12, 2018 (Date)

Cedrick Baker
Secretary of the Planning Commission