

MINUTES OF THE ZONING COMMITTEE
Thursday, September 7, 2023 - 3:30 p.m.
City Council Chambers, 3rd Floor
City Hall and Court House
15 West Kellogg Boulevard

PRESENT: Grill, Hood, Reilly, Syed, and Taghioff
EXCUSED: Hackney, Ochoa, and Rangel Morales
STAFF: Anton Jerve, Samantha Langer, and Yasmine Robinson

The meeting was chaired by Commissioner Reilly.

2285 Hampden Rezoning - 23-075-366 - Rezone from I1 light industrial to IT transitional industrial, 2281 Hampden Avenue, between Hersey St. and Bradford St.

Anton Jerve presented the staff report with a recommendation of approval for the rezoning. He said District 12 submitted a letter recommending approval, and there were no letters in support and 1 letter in opposition.

Commissioner Taghioff questioned the policy direction on how we typically regard the transition from I2 general industrial directly into IT transitional industrial and how comfortable are we policy wise putting multi-family directly next to an I2 district.

Mr. Jerve said staff had initiated a look into our zoning for industrial districts citywide. There has been changes in recent years with the IT districts in terms of adding more design requirements that IT would have. I1 and IT have very similar use categories so there wouldn't be much difference. Housing is allowed in either I1, IT or I2, so this is a broader question. In this case, it is a policy question for the Planning Commission to decide the appropriateness to forward to the City Council for action.

Commissioner Grill asked about the discussion with staff and if there were any concerns about more loss of industrial space within the city.

Mr. Jerve said that has been a discussion of this site. We have seen many proposals and some have explored rezoning this to residential and staff did not believe there was policy support in any of our adopted plans for residential zoning. There is policy support identified in the staff report for rezoning to IT. This property is located close to a LRT station and it is proposed to be high density housing. Also, part of the consideration is that the underlying zoning would remain industrial. There also needs to be a market to be able to provide industrial uses and this property has been vacant for a long time.

Commissioner Taghioff had referred to the West Midway Industrial Area Plan and the 2040 Future Land Use Area Map and questioned if the policy intent was to increase buffering along vulnerable land use edges. He asked what the distinction was between buffering things across the street and including this site in the definition of buffering given that residential housing seems to be the primary proposed use for this site.

Mr. Jerve confirmed the site is on the boundary of the Future Land Use Map and the boundary identified in the Area Plan. The small area plans tend to get more fine grained than the future land use map and each of those land use definitions in the Future Land Use Map, such as

industrial, there is a mix of housing and other uses not related to industrial. The goal is to have a higher percent of industrial uses within that category. This property is right on the edge so it will be influenced by the economic changes in the neighborhood. The Green Line and the desirability of this area as a residential neighborhood is very strong. The way this area is changing starts to make some of boundaries listed in the plans more of a gray area than a fixed line down Hampden Avenue.

Thomas Nelson, Exeter Management, said they are a 30+ year commercial real estate development firm primarily in Saint Paul. Since 2010 they have been doing a lot of work in the South Saint Anthony Park neighborhood. They have built 450 apartment units and renovated a 2,000 square foot old office building a block to the north of this site. They purchased this site in 2017 to continue to try and add value to the neighborhood and meet the demands of the neighbors and the city. They have procured some of the environmental cleanup grants and did some work there, but during Covid the marketplace to repurpose this for either industrial or mixed use commercial has not been doable. They have been working to try and put this to a better use and that is the reason for transitioning to this rezoning effort. Industrial Transition reflects what it is they are trying to do here which is acknowledge the transitioning neighborhood and meet the demands of the neighborhood group, the Councilmember and what the city has been asking for which is affordable housing.

In response to Commissioner Syed, Mr. Nelson confirmed that all of the units are affordable housing.

Thomas Kellen, 2295 Long Avenue, Saint Paul, spoke in opposition. He said when Exeter purchased the property they had originally set out to rehab the current buildings that are still on the site. After receiving environmental cleanup funds and putting over \$300,000.00 worth of permitted improvements on the buildings it would strike him as odd to demolish them. It's on a vulnerable land edge and it does run right down the road. Putting what should be a R3 development in any industrial space seems to be ill-advised. He referenced the West Midway Industrial Area Plan, "Vulnerable Land Use Edges Because of the proximity between residential and industrial along certain edges, improved buffering is appropriate. In particular, the ICIC Report emphasizes such buffering as being a "key tool" in reducing residential/industrial conflicts. Such buffers may include stormwater management systems, dense landscaping, street design elements and setbacks." It seems to him if their original plan didn't work out and the value of the property has still increased from \$775,000.00 to \$1,000,000.00 the developer could sell the property and turn a slight profit, but instead they want to maximize their investment. Putting a R3 style housing in an industrial area would be counter to the West Midway Industrial Area Plan and would set a precedent to further erode the industrial area.

Jill Peuranen, 2301 Long Avenue, Saint Paul, spoke in opposition. Ms. Peuranen submitted a letter about the rezoning and separate variance application and highlighted concerns listed in the letter (attached).

Charlotte Pellett, 2295 Long Avenue, Saint Paul, spoke in opposition. She said this is an active industrial traffic zone. The traffic is dangerous and it is a bad location to put 150 units. There were artists in the buildings when they purchased and they kicked the artist out. The buildings

have broken windows and if they were trying to rent out to a commercial space no one would be interested. They have let the property disintegrate.

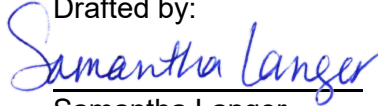
Mr. Nelson responded to the testimony. He said the \$300,000.00 of permitted improvements were for environmental remediation in 2018. In 2019 they abated the asbestos and lead based paint in the property apart from the east building roof and windows which they will wait to do until demolition or construction. The project is not within the Raymond Avenue Station Area it is directly across the street. As part of a separate application, they are requesting a variance from the 25' setback only for 50% of street frontage and where they are requesting the setback if from 25' to 9'. It is consistent with the property to the west that also has a 9' setback. They need the setback to achieve the housing density that is desired by the Comprehensive Plan. The Saint Anthony Park Community Council has submitted letters in favor of the project and they did say that they wanted to see more greenspace on the property. On the proposed project they have a parking lot in one of the setback areas and a playground and greenspace in the other. The neighborhood would also like to see more commercial in the project so they are trying to balance greenspace and amenities for the housing with the need for parking for the 5,700 square feet of commercial space. Mr. Nelson said they are current with their taxes. He said the area has a lot of people around this area. It is within ¼ mile of one park and ½ mile from another park and within 1,000 feet of Raymond Avenue which has bike and bus lanes. There is also a popular brewery and event space nearby. He said the last user of the property was the Minnesota Chemical Company and they had never had artists at the property.


No one spoke in support. The public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Syed moved approval of the rezoning. Commissioner Hood seconded the motion.

The motion passed by a vote of 4-1-0.

Adopted Yeas - 4 Nays - 1 (Reilly) Abstained - 0

Drafted by:

Samantha Langer
Recording Secretary

Submitted by:

[Anton Jerve \(Sep 22, 2023 09:20 CDT\)](#)
Anton Jerve
City Planner

Approved by:

[Jacob Reilly \(Sep 22, 2023 09:26 CDT\)](#)
Jake Reilly
Chair







23-075-366 2285 Hampden rezoning minutes-aj

Final Audit Report

2023-09-22

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Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAA0lyTETybC3Byq47iSp8q9krnhunjGrah

"23-075-366 2285 Hampden rezoning minutes-aj" History

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