From: Simon Taghioff
To: *CI-StPaul_Contact-Council; CouncilHearing (CI-StPaul)
Cc: Yasmine Robinson
Subject: Public Comment for Ord. 25-79, for City Council 12/17/25
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Dear CP Noecker and Members of the City Council,

I am writing in strong support of the proposed changes to the Planning Commission structure proposed under Ord. 25-79. By way of background, I have served as a Planning Commissioner since 2021 and am currently Chair of the Zoning Committee. Before that, I interacted with the Commission through my work with the District 16 District Council.

The current commission structure has outlived its usefulness. The model of doing most of the work in subcommittees has a number of undesirable effects:

1. Requiring multiple meetings (before layovers) of the relevant committee and the full Commission is an inefficient use of time for everyone involved – staff, Commissioners, and members of the public. For uncontroversial items, Zoning Committee meetings have sometimes consisted of one item and lasted under 10 minutes.
2. It lengthens the timeline, decreasing flexibility under Minn. Stat. §15.99 to lay over an item to allow for queries to be answered, public meetings to take place, or legally defensible denial language to be drafted.
3. It means only a handful of Commissioners participate in shaping major studies, or are present to hear nuanced public testimony on zoning matters. This in turn creates randomness and uncertainty for applicants and the public when matters are re-considered by the full Commission without the relevant prior context.
4. It discourages the Commission from making fully informed decisions, so as not to ask basic questions or reopen topics that may have already been settled in committee.
5. It's challenging for the public, District Councils, and other groups to navigate; to understand what happens, where, and when public testimony is welcome, and to attend multiple meetings just to follow along.
6. It complicates City Council review of the record, both in case of appeals from zoning decisions and when the Commission serves in an advisory capacity to a City Council decision.

We have seen all of these effects play out in practice multiple times. Reducing the number of Commissioners and folding most of the committees back into the main body would create a much simpler, more streamlined Commission that would ultimately make higher quality decisions and better serve the public, applicants, PED, and the City Council.

Thank you for your consideration,

Simon Taghioff
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