

**Saint Paul Planning Commission  
City Hall Conference Center  
15 Kellogg Boulevard West**

**Minutes July 24, 2015**

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, July 24, 2015, at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

**Commissioners Present:** Mmes. DeJoy, Noecker, Padilla, Reveal, Thao, Underwood, Wang, Wencil; and Messrs. Gelgelu, Lindeke, Makarios, Nelson, Ochs, and Oliver.

**Commissioners Absent:** Mmes. \*McMahon, Merrigan, \*Shively, and Messrs. Connolly, \*Edgerton, Ward, and Wickiser.

\*Excused

**Also Present:** Donna Drummond, Planning Director; Bill Dermody, Jamie Radel, Hilary Lovelace, Vincent Ferguson, and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

**I. Approval of minutes June 19, 2015.**

**MOTION:** *Commissioner Reveal moved approval of the minutes of June 19, 2015. Commissioner Thao seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

**II. Chair's Announcements**

Chair Wencil had no announcements.

**III. Planning Director's Announcements**

Donna Drummond announced that City Council acted on a number of zoning studies that were recommended by the Planning Commission. The Residential Standards Zoning Study was approved by City Council last Wednesday along with a package of minor text. The public hearing was held on the Parkland Dedication Amendments and the City Council laid that over until August 12<sup>th</sup> to get more information on the potential impact on future revenue among several other questions.

**IV. PUBLIC HEARING: Gold Line Station Area Plans – Item from the Neighborhood Planning Committee. (Bill Dermody, 651/266-6617)**

Chair Wencil announced that the Saint Paul Planning Commission was holding a public hearing on the Gold Line Station Area Plans. Notices of the public hearings were published in the Saint Paul Pioneer Press on July 20, 2015, July 27, 2015 and August 3, 2015, and were published in the Legal Ledger on July 13, 2015, and were sent to the citywide Early Notification System list of recipients and other interested parties.

Bill Dermody, PED staff gave a brief power point presentation giving some background which can be viewed on the web page at: <http://www.stpaul.gov/planningcommission>. As of today two letters had been received. One was from Christine Eid with Stinson, Leonard and Street, representing Brixmor Property Group, Inc. owner and operator of the Sun Ray Shopping Center and the other from Cheryl Schmura, Board Chair and Tracine Asberry, Executive Director of Saint Paul Youth Services.

Chair Wencl read the rules of procedure for the public hearing.

The following people spoke.

1. Cheryl Schmura, 6255 Keswick Avenue, Stillwater, representing Saint Paul Youth Services, stated that their building is directly impacted by the station location. The Saint Paul Youth Services learned only two weeks ago that the site plan for the Sun Ray Station includes their office and the adjoining property. They have not been engaged in any discussions on the project, in fact they have talked with neighboring businesses that only became aware of it when they were asked what they knew about the project. This raises concerns about how the site plan will affect their organization location both in the short and long term, how their clients will be serviced while the project is underway, will their agency be viable given the potential disruption to their services and the resulting loss in clientele. If they are to continue the vital services that they provide they need to be involved in plans such as the Gold Line. They are requesting to be included step by step in the planning process of the Gold Line as it pertains to the Sun Ray Station. Only through this engagement can they hope to avoid serious negative impacts to their organization and the population that they serve. (letter submitted with literature)
2. Christine Eid, Attorney with Stinson, Leonard, Street, 1881 Munster Avenue, representing the Brixmor Property Group. Brixmor generally supports the Gold Line Station Area Plans and the expansion of the BRT at Sun Ray; they also support the higher density vision of the City of Saint Paul. However they have concerns, with the station area plan at Sun Ray and the proposed rezoning from the existing B2 District to the T4 District. Sun Ray is a thriving shopping center that has been in the area for over 50 years contributing to the community, the local economy and the Saint Paul and Ramsey County property tax base. It is a historically successful shopping center, with a current occupancy rate of 92%. Brixmor is concerned with the current configuration of the Sun Ray Station in the existing plan, and their concern is with the short and long term configuration. Short term there is a pedestrian and bikeway path that bisects an existing building located within the shopping center and would result in the re-configuration of the parking area. Both of these would have the potential to negatively impact existing leases and future leases by displacing at least one tenant in addition to visibility, access and stability of the overall shopping center. The long term plan contemplates the existence of a street grid and the realization of that street grid is possible if the shopping center is demolished. Brixmor encourages the station's existence at Sun Ray; they have ideas about how to accomplish the higher density transit oriented vision of the city and county and also allow the existing thriving shopping center to continue. Regarding the rezoning they are concerned with the higher density design and development standards that may come along with the fact that the Sun Ray Shopping Center is in close proximity to a station. They would like the zoning amendments to allow for more organic and gradual growth of the shopping center in conformance to the higher density standards. Brixmor is

opposed to any zoning amendments that would result in nonconformity. And they request the City take a thoughtful economical and practical approach to moving forward with both the station area and the rezoning. They look forward to working with City staff in order to accomplish the City's higher density vision while allowing Sun Ray to continue to be a thriving and successful community shopping center. (a letter with their concerns was received)

3. Liz De La Torre, 2215 5<sup>th</sup> Street East, was a participant in the Sun Ray Design Workshop. Sun Ray Shopping Center is a good tax base, but it is somewhat of an eye sore, the two biggest tenants are Cub Foods and TJ Maxx. The group did a thoughtful process and they wanted to create a sense of community, they wanted to address a lot of the public safety concerns that are in that area. There is no easy access for anyone south of 94 to get to the bus. And one of the things that they wanted to improve was how to make that more pedestrian friendly, more bike friendly considering all modes of transportation. She knows that there is not a single solution that is going to solve everything but there was a lot of thought in this process and they really came together as a group after hours of designing with the city planners, Bill Dermody was very helpful. And they want to have a long term plan for their community to address all of the issues. She understands some of the concerns that Brixmor brings forward, but they should take into consideration that they did not do this on a whim, they want to make this a place that thrives on the east side, a place that connects the eastside to the rest of the metro area and that is exactly what this plan does as well as create some community space and open space.

**MOTION:** *Commissioner Oliver moved to continue the public hearing to Friday, August 7, 2015, leaving the record open for additional written testimony received by 4:30 p.m. on Monday, August 10, 2015. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

## **V. Zoning Committee**

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

One item to come before the Site Plan Review Committee on Tuesday, July 28, 2015:

- Gloria Dei Lutheran Church – Repave existing parking lot and other site work at 700 Snelling Avenue South.

Three items to come before the Site Plan Review Committee

- Saint Paul Seminary – Repave existing parking lot and driveway at 2260 Summit Avenue.
- Saint Paul Parks – Expand existing parking lots at Como Park and associated site improvements located at 1225 Estabrook Drive.
- Keg and Case Market – Renovate existing building for commercial use and build a parking lot at Schmidt Brewery site. *(Preliminary meeting)*

## **NEW BUSINESS**