

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

Minutes April 10, 2015

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, April 10, 2015, at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

Commissioners Present: Mmes. DeJoy, Merrigan, Padilla, Reveal, Shively, Thao; and Messrs. Gelgelu, Lindeke, Makarios, Nelson, Ochs, Ward, and Wickiser.

Commissioners Absent: Mmes. *McMahon, *Noecker, *Underwood, *Wang, *Wencl, and Messrs. *Connolly, *Edgerton, and Oliver.

Absent: *Excused

Also Present: Donna Drummond, Planning Director; Jake Reilly, Nora Riemenschneider, and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

I. Approval of minutes March 27, 2015.

MOTION: *Commissioner Nelson moved approval of the minutes of March 27, 2015. Commissioner DeJoy seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

II. Chair's Announcements

Commissioner Reveal, the Commission's First Vice-Chair, chaired the meeting, she had no announcements.

III. Planning Director's Announcements

Donna Drummond reminded the Commissioners about the May 14th Great River Gathering Dinner and to let her know if anyone has registered so that the Planning Commissioners can be seated together. The Commissioners packets also includes a list of Neighborhood STAR applications and the Comprehensive Planning Committee will be reviewing those as to Comprehensive Plan conformance at their first meeting in May.

IV. Zoning Committee

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

Six items to come before the Site Plan Review Committee on Tuesday, April 14, 2015:

- Highland Ice Arena (addition to existing arena) at 800 South Snelling Avenue.
- Well Street parking lot (new 31 space parking lot) at 619 Wells Street.

- Prior Avenue parking lot expansion (add 25 spaces to existing parking lot) at 635 Prior Avenue.
- LaSalle office building (new 3-story, 25,000 square foot office building) at 661 LaSalle Avenue.
- Twin Cities Contractor Supply (ready mix concrete manufacturing plant) at 1 Ridder Circle.
- Hampton Hotel (new hotel with 160 guest rooms, part of Seven Corners Hardware development) at 200 7th Street West.

Three items to come before the Site Plan Review Committee on Tuesday, April 21, 2015:

- Twin City Wrecker – 60 X 60 ft. addition and storm water grading corrections at 1301 Jackson Street.
- Joy of the People – ball field improvements at 890 Cromwell Avenue.
- Dickerman Park Phase I – parking lot redevelopment at 540 Fairview Avenue North, 1821 University Avenue West, 1753 University Avenue West.

NEW BUSINESS

#15-017-145 East 7th and Bates Senior Apartments – Rezone the southeasterly 13 ft. of the southwesterly 71 ft. of Lot 15 Auditors Subdivision No. 72 area being split off from the parcel from T2 Traditional Neighborhood to RT1 Two-Family Residential to match the parcel to which it will be attached. 720 7th Street East, SE corner at Bates. (*Jake Reilly, 651/266-6618*)

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

#15-018-581 Carlson DRE Group – Conditional use permit for assisted living facility with 170 units (30 units dedicated to memory care). 1554 Midway Parkway, SE corner at Snelling. (*Josh Williams, 651/266-6659*)

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

#15-018-147 Hawkins Inc. – Conditional use permit for construction of 8 new tank and tank containment area, truck containment area, and rail containment area structures not elevated on fill in the Flood Fringe District. (*Josh Williams, 651/266-6659*)

Commissioner Padilla reported that this case has been laid over to the April 16, 2015 Zoning Committee meeting.

Commissioner Nelson announced the items on the agenda at the next Zoning Committee meeting on Thursday, April 16, 2015.

V. **Saint Paul 8-80 Vitality Fund** – Informational presentation by Nora Riemenschneider, Program Coordinator, PED. (*Nora Riemenschneider, 651/266-6638*)

Nora Riemenschneider, PED staff gave a presentation that can be viewed on the web page at: <http://stpaul.gov/index.aspx?NID=3430>

Commissioner Ward asked how the 8-80 program will track improvements resulting from these projects. For example: information from the Indianapolis bike loop showed an increase in the number of businesses along the loop. Is there information to tell businesses how much their business might benefit from this type of investment in terms of new customers and the bottom line? How will the City track this kind of data? Is there a way of measuring the number of people that visited before and then after the bike loop is there to determine the direct effect? Or information that city residents can receive to know the impact of how their taxes are being spent?

Ms. Riemenschneider said that given her role as a program coordinator and also being able to bring on the 8-80Vitality Fellow with foundation funding, there will be more staff resources to do this kind of analysis. Metrics are important and we really want to measure success and try to figure out what kind of results we're seeing. Commissioner Ward mentioned the types of measures we want to look at. Is there more traffic, are there more people biking, walking, are there more shoppers and visitors to the businesses? Are there new businesses opening, what kind of private development investments are being made, and is this a result of the public investment being made?

Commissioner Ward said he hopes the money being spent on a public relations firm for this effort will help get the word out about these projects, such as Dickerman Park, which is supposed to help TOD development along that corridor. Is there a way to figure out whether that investment is something that encouraged new development? And if so, by how much? We need to track this and see how we are doing. We need to have a report card.

Ms. Riemenschneider agreed and said she will come back on a regular basis to track the progress and share those results. One of the reasons this overall initiative is headed by PED rather than Parks or Public Works is because we have the expertise to track those things especially related to economic development.

Commissioner Ochs asked if Nora is the sole staff person or part of a team, and when did this program begin?

Ms. Riemenschneider said she has been with the City for 2 ½ months and since that time she is the main person devoting a significant amount of time to the initiative. However there are 14 different projects that are part of the initiative and each have a project manager. Most of those projects involve several other staff members, especially the downtown bike loop and the Grand Round projects, which both have technical advisory committees that are made up of about 10 or 12 staff from Public Works, Parks, DSI and PED as an interdepartmental team. Her job is to coordinate all those pieces and making sure she has a good understanding and can be a feedback loop on learning, measuring and things like that.

Commissioner Padilla said her focus is on the downtown area, so how are we going to get people out of the skyway level to create the vibrant streetscape that we want it to be?

Ms. Riemenschneider said that is a major goal of the loop and this challenge came up quickly in meetings with the staff technical committee and consultants. Starting on Jackson it is going to be a real challenge because it is very skyway oriented street.

Commissioner Padilla asked as redevelopment and development occurs is the City working on siting more active uses on the street level in downtown to help with that? Because if all of the restaurants are on the second floor then people are going to stay on the second floor, so we need to draw people down somehow.

Commissioner Thao encouraged thinking about evaluation. From a non-profit perspective they evaluate like crazy. It would be helpful to evaluate the framework and the impacts are going to be really important. She urged the City to consider how they evaluate resident input on a lot of this. Because we often fail to acknowledge who is already living in these neighborhoods, who really wants to come and live here and go to the area and walk on the street too. There are a lot of great technological tools that they can employ as they do this work; it doesn't always have to be surveys, but there are on the spot technological tools they can use.

Commissioner DeJoy asked whether the 8-80 projects were already projects in the pipeline and then became 8-80 projects within the initiative because they fit the criteria or did these projects bubble up as a result of Gil Penalosa who was here last year for the Great River Gathering and people were inspired by him and that is where these projects came from? The reason she asked is because when Invest Saint Paul became an initiative there were projects already in the pipeline that were counted as part of that initiative.

Ms. Drummond said that these are all new projects and they resulted from a series of staff discussions, including consideration of projects that would implement things in our adopted plans. They also resulted from Councilmembers being familiar with what neighborhoods have identified as needs in the past.

Commissioner DeJoy asked if more projects will surface as a result of this initiative.

Ms. Riemenschneider replied that they do want to have these principles infused in future projects. So we will see how that works out - it's a focus.

Commissioner Ward asked whether the consultants being hired for these projects could help develop ways to measure success. If they are getting paid a fee why not require as part of that fee that they somehow measure people's experiences, perhaps with a kiosk somewhere so people can have direct input as to how they're experiencing the space in real time rather than an after the fact email survey? He also noted that some people may not access to a computer or be computer literate, so we need to make providing input easy as they are walking through the space. Do you like this space? Hit yes or no, and how do you feel while you're here to be able to capture that data. It's real data rather than data that can be somewhat skewed by people that have an interest in the project or an interest in the area but it is supposed to be for everybody.

Ms. Riemenschneider said that it is definitely one of the things they are going to try. They are partnering with Amanda Lovelee, one of the City's artists in residence, for her ideas on how to best understand what 8-80 is and how people are responding and interacting.

Commissioner Lindeke said that Amanda Lovelee is one of the two artists in residence for the City and her idea is kind of the kiosk that is this mobile truck or cart.

Ms. Riemenschneider said that it is a truck, an electric vehicle called Pop Up Meeting. It is being wrapped right now so they will partner with her and get that truck on the street all summer long. It will be connected to the 8-80 initiative when it's out there and because it's a pop up meeting you get a popsicle for visiting.

Commissioner Lindeke added that it sounds whimsical but there is really a lot of work going on regarding innovative community engagement.

Commissioner Ward thinks that the mobile kiosk is a great hook, especially giving out treats because that will draw in the kids and parents.

Ms. Riemenschneider said that she is currently trying to figure out what kinds of questions they want to ask when they go out in this Pop Up Meeting truck for the Bike Loop and Grand Round. She welcomes ideas.

Commissioner Ochs said to ask "does Saint Paul work for you?"

Commissioner Thao said that whatever questions there are they should be translated in any language, so that it works in all languages.

Commissioner Gelgelu added that this is a great initiative for the city. This is really great idea to attract more people not only downtown but along the Green Line. With the Green Line now you don't have to drive, just get on the train for lunch in about 10 minutes.

VI. Comprehensive Planning Committee

Commissioner Merrigan reported that at their last meeting they has two items on the agenda, amendments to Parkland Dedication and CIB grant review for compliance with the Comprehensive Plan. The Parkland Dedication will be on the agenda at the next Planning Commission meeting in the form of a resolution for approval and the CIB projects will be reviewed on Monday at the Transportation Committee, then back to Comp. Plan and then to the Planning Commission. The next Comprehensive Planning Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, April 21st.

VII. Neighborhood Planning Committee

The Neighborhood Planning Committee meeting on Wednesday, April 15, 2015 has been cancelled.

VIII. Transportation Committee

Commissioner Lindeke reported that at their last meeting they heard from Carol Swenson, District Councils Collaborative, who talked about their efforts to redesign the Snelling and University area as part of a project that had a lot of community input. At the next meeting on Monday, April 13th they will talk about the Bike Plan implementation process with mill and overlay projects and review comprehensive plan conformance for the streets and utilities CIB

proposals.

IX. Communications Committee

No report.

X. Task Force/Liaison Reports

Commissioner Makarios announced that the Ford Site Planning Task Force will have a meeting on Friday, April 30, 2015 at the Gloria Dei Lutheran Church.

XI. Old Business

None.

XII. New Business

None.

XIII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:36 a.m.

Recorded and prepared by
Sonja Butler, Planning Commission Secretary
Planning and Economic Development Department,
City of Saint Paul

Respectfully submitted,



Donna Drummond
Planning Director

Approved April 24, 2015
(Date)



for Daniel Ward II
Secretary of the Planning Commission