

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

**Minutes December 15, 2017**

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, December 15, 2017 at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

**Commissioners Present:** Mmes. DeJoy, Eckman, Lee, Reveal, Thao; and Messrs. Baker, Edgerton, Fredson, Khaled, Lindeke, Oliver, Perryman, Reich, Risberg, and Wojchik.

**Commissioners Absent:** Mmes. \*Anderson, \*Mouacheupao, \*Underwood, and Messrs. \*Ochs, \*Rangel Morales, \*Vang.

\*Excused

**Also Present:** Donna Drummond, Planning Director; Hannah Burchill, Jake Reilly, Josh Williams, Kady Dadlez, Lucy Thompson, and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

**I. Approval of minutes December 1, 2017.**

Chair Reveal announced that the minutes are not available at this time. They will be ready for approval at the next Planning Commission meeting.

**II. Chair's Announcements**

Chair Reveal announced that she asked Commissioner Thao to chair a nominating committee for the annual meeting at the end of January, and will ask two others to join her on the committee. The slate we have to fill is the First Vice Chair, Second Vice Chair and the Secretary. If anyone is interested in any of those positions let Commissioner Thao know.

**III. Planning Director's Announcements**

Donna Drummond announced that the Steering Committee met this morning and looked at the tally of commissioners who had weighed in on combining the Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committees, which will be permanent. The combined committee will be called the Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee, and will meet on Wednesdays at 4:30 p.m. on the weeks of Planning Commission meetings.

The City Council approved reappointments to the Planning Commission for Commissioners Anderson, Baker, Edgerton, Lindeke, Mouacheupao, and Reich. The City Council also took action on a couple of appeals of Planning Commission decisions. The Listening House case was heard two weeks ago and this Wednesday the Council upheld the Planning Commission's decision to allow Listening House to remain at the church with a lot of additional conditions.

Another Planning Commission decision was recently appealed by the Dayton's Bluff Community Council. It was an approval of a change of nonconforming use from a bar to a tobacco shop. The appeal was denied and the Planning Commission decision was upheld.

There will be a Planning Commission meeting on December 29 because there are three zoning cases that need decisions, so a quorum will be needed.

Ms. Drummond announced that Jake Reilly, who has two items on today's agenda, is leaving to become a sector representative with the Metropolitan Council. Today is his last day. We thank him for all his work with the City for the past 9 ½ years and wish him well in his new position.

Lastly Ms. Drummond announced her retirement, which will be at the end of April 2018. Her position will be posted in January for applicants.

#### **IV. Zoning Committee**

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

One item to come before the Site Plan Review Committee on Tuesday December 19, 2017:

- Weyerhaeuser apartments – new multi-family residential at 700 Emerald Street East. Neal Route-Dominium SPR #17-213701

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

#17-215-822 CP Railway Radio Shop – Conditional use permit for elevation of a building on piles rather than fill to be above the regulatory flood protection elevation. 1000 Shop Road. (*Josh Williams, 651/266-6659*)

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

#17-215-889 PDMC LLC Senior Living – Rezone from B2 Community Business to T2 Traditional Neighborhood. 739 Selby Avenue, between Grotto and St. Albans. (*Tony Johnson, 651/266-6620*)

***Commissioner Edgerton announced that the Zoning Committee recommended that this case be continued to the December 21, 2017 Zoning Committee meeting.***

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

Sustainable Power (Wind and Solar) Zoning Code Amendments – Approve resolution recommending zoning code amendments to the Mayor and City Council for adoption. (*Jake Reilly, 651/266-6618*)

Jake Reilly, PED staff, discussed the addition of language and changes to the use tables for community solar energy generation facilities in response to public testimony. The new language

is based on a model ordinance produced for the State of Minnesota by the Great Plains Institute with U.S. Department of Energy funding.

***MOTION: Commissioner Thao moved to approve the resolution recommending that the zoning code amendments be adopted by the Mayor and City Council. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.***

Union Park Community Plan – Release draft amendments for public review and set a public hearing for January 26, 2018. (Kady Dadlez, 651/266-6619)

Commissioner Perryman asked whether there is any threshold or a standard for the amount of people needed to make a recommendation on a proposed amendment regarding future land use and zoning along this stretch of Selby Avenue. He said this was raised at the committee meeting. It appears that 55 people weighed in on the issue during the community process undertaken to arrive at the proposed amendment based on the information provided by the Lexington-Hamline Community Council. Is there a standard number or percentage of people from the neighborhood weighing in on the issue before a recommendation can be made?

Donna Drummond, Planning Director, said that the future of land use and zoning along this stretch of Selby was something that was identified in the Union Park Community Plan as an issue since the Lexington-Hamline Community Council was not supportive of the recommendation for Selby Avenue east of Snelling in the draft plan. Instead of deciding what to do about this issue at the time that they submitted their plan for adoption, it was decided there should be a community process to understand what the people in that part of Selby wanted to see for the future of that street. The neighborhood did engage in a process to determine that and came back with recommended language to replace the strategy in the plan now that recommends undertaking a community process.

Kady Dadlez, PED staff, added that she does not know much more about the extent of the community process than what was provided in today's packet. The information in the packet is what the Joint Comprehensive Neighborhood Planning Committee asked for from the Lexington-Hamline Community Council. The Lexington-Hamline Community Council representative who attended the committee meeting and spoke pointed out that while that the Union Park Community Plan represents the entire neighborhood, the Lexington-Hamline Community Council is a smaller area of the entire neighborhood and the item that the proposed land use strategy relates to is about a 5 or 6 block stretch of Selby Avenue. The community outreach and process included a number of different events and between Union Park and Lexington-Hamline both groups felt like that was an adequate outreach to get input.

Chair Reveal asked whether both of the district councils approved the proposed amendment.

Ms. Dadlez replied that both district councils approved the proposed amendment, adding that there were quite a few iterations of the language before there was an agreement between both parties on what should go in the plan.

Commissioner Edgerton confirmed that the district councils are only changing one policy in the plan, adding that this is a lot of process to go through for a pretty minor change to one policy.

***MOTION: Commissioner Thao moved on behalf of the Joint Comprehensive Neighborhood***

***Planning Committee to release the draft for public review and set a public hearing on January 26, 2018. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.***

Heritage and Cultural Preservation Chapter – Overview and Key Themes. (Jake Reilly, 651/266-6618)

Jake Reilly, PED staff, gave a Power Point presentation highlighting the key ideas and directions of the draft Heritage and Cultural Preservation chapter of the draft 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The presentation is available here: <http://www.stpaul.gov/planningcommission>

Commissioner DeJoy asked if there were conversations about how the new ADA rules are affecting historic structures and their integrity. This has especially been a concern along Payne Avenue.

Mr. Reilly said that this specific issue has not been discussed. The work group talked more generally about the economic benefits of preservation and how regulatory requirements can impact those benefits. They talked about how, in other places like the United Kingdom, accessibility is more incorporated into the fabric of the physical building. The draft plan does not contain specific actions, but Policies #15 and #16 attempt to strike a balance between preservation and new development.

Chair Reveal asked Commissioner DeJoy if there have been projects that had to stop because of inability to comply.

Commissioner DeJoy said that the issue is if handicapped access can be achieved without compromising the historic nature of the building, given the proximity to adjacent structures.

Mr. Reilly said there is definitely awareness, concern and an attempt to help.

Commissioner Lindeke said that the preservation of modern (1970s) buildings could conflict with the broader values of urban design and urbanism, especially in downtown. He asked whether this issue has been discussed in the context of the Plan.

Mr. Reilly said that this specific issue had not been discussed. Goal #3, which speaks to considering heritage and cultural preservation goals and priorities in all City initiatives and departments, gets at it a bit.

Ms. Drummond added that what Commissioner Lindeke is referring to is the Downtown Urban Renewal Historic District, which has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Generally, buildings built during the late 1960s/early 1970s are very pedestrian unfriendly and do not address the street; this creates a potential conflict when trying to preserve an important city-building era but create vibrancy at the same time.

Ms. Thompson added that it often comes down to balancing various public objectives. For example, staff is working on a “refresh” of Ecolab Plaza in light of new tenants in the buildings facing the plaza. In this case, it is a matter of taking advantage of the large plaza characteristic of 1970s buildings for use as an active public space (the plaza is a City park). Policies #15 and #16 attempt to guide this balancing act.

Commissioner Edgerton asked for clarification on the meaning of cultural preservation.

Commissioner Eckman said she really appreciates the question, because some communities have not been here 50 years so they don't really benefit from this. The question becomes whose culture and heritage is being preserved, especially in terms of new immigrants. She appreciates this section because it takes into account preservation of spaces that express the identity and sense of place of many cultures.

Mr. Reilly responded by reviewing Policy #8 specifically, which speaks to the need to continually expand historic themes and contexts so that they respond to community changes and needs.

Ms. Thompson added that we don't wait for cultures to be 50 years old; that's a benchmark for buildings. She encouraged the Commission to closely read the Introduction chapter, which contains a list of core values. One of these core values is that we recognize and celebrate our shared, complex, inter-related histories.

Commissioner Lindeke said that understanding that complexity and the multiple histories is really important. There are recently several examples where new development and unique histories have bumped up against each other: Listening House in Swede Hollow (a neighborhood that historically housed the homeless); the proposed modern streetcar along W. 7<sup>th</sup>, which was a historic streetcar route; and affordable housing on the West Side Flats.

Commissioner Lee said that she knows people in the Hmong community who are working on very interesting things, and she could connect them with Mr. Reilly. It would be interesting and authentic to connect with community groups who are looking to do something like this and how to leverage that work.

Mr. Reilly said that he will make sure that information is passed on to George Gause, lead HPC staff. He pointed out Policies #18 and 19 that support consulting with all communities, and prioritizing the recognition of historically under-represented communities and their histories.

Commissioner Khaled said this work reminds him of the type of work nationally that Julie Nelson and Glen Harris are doing in conjunction with their roles at the Center for Social Inclusion, as well as the Government Alliance on Race and Equity. He encouraged staff to connect with them.

**VI. Great River Passage Initiative** – Informational presentation by Mary deLaittre, Manager, Parks and Recreation Department.

Mary deLaittre, Manager, Parks and Recreation Department, gave a power point presentation which can be seen on the web page at: <http://www.stpaul.gov/planningcommission>

Commissioner Lee expressed interest in what this great initiative will do for young people in the city. Not only to those that are aware or have adult people in their lives that do this kind of work with their children but also to the children who don't have the opportunity. She recalled the opportunity to go on a school field trip to the Mississippi River that she did in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. She suggested that when creating program criteria and opening this to the community that the underserved populations in the city knows about it and can access such programs.

Mary deLaittre, with Parks and Recreation, said that is their goal to bring more people to the river in a whole variety of different ways as well as bring the river to the people so they know it is there. There are a lot of people that don't necessarily know it is there. That is a really big charge for them but they are working very hard both in cultivating partners and a variety of other ways to meet that.

Commissioner Khaled said commented on the founding board makeup and noted Ms. deLaittre spoke about the next generation of civic philanthropists. He encouraged her to reach out to the Twin Cities Chapter of American Practitioners of Philanthropy to make sure that when talking about the next generation of civic philanthropists you can deeply engage with what that population might look like in the Twin Cities as well as the Ron McKinley Philanthropy Fellowship program and advice from the Headwaters Foundation on ensuring that you can live up to that phrasing.

Ms. deLaittre said that she will follow up with Commissioner Khaled for the names of the people he mentioned.

Commissioner Lindeke said that he is obsessed with Pig's Eye Lake and he encouraged her to get people in boats as much as possible to see this area because it is so amazing with hundreds of birds flocking to this lake.

Ms. deLaittre said that they are looking into doing paddle share down there.

Commissioner Baker wanted to follow up on funding for the Eastside River District. It seems as if they had already solidified funding, public funding for the river balcony.

Ms. DeLaittre said that for the river balcony there was funding for the master planning and they have raised over half the funding for going into schematic design but they are waiting for additional private resources to come in. Regarding the Eastside, Ms. deLaittre said they are in the very first steps. For instance she spoke recently to the Saint Paul Port Authority not only to see if they were interested in being a partner with them to fund the schematic design side of things but they have also offered to make a full presentation to all the business owners down there to see if they would be interested in funding the private side of the schematic design expenses.

Commissioner Baker asked if there was public funding committed for the schematics for the Eastside River District.

Ms. deLaittre said that she does not know yet. It is so preliminary and the partners have said they are all interested in moving forward. Other than us at the Great River Passage they have not had dollar commitments yet. One of the things they are trying to sort out is whether this can be done with private dollars, and philanthropic dollars as well as what would be the source of the public funds. We're just not there yet.

Commissioner DeJoy said that in 1978 she worked in the Carousel Restaurant at the top of the Radisson on Kellogg Boulevard and looking out the window there were white oil tanks where the Westside Flats are now, there were mountains of coal from the old NSP plant and noted this has not been the first plan for the river. But over the years she has appreciated the planning, and implementation of the progress of cleaning up the river. It is a much different view now as the plans continue to progress and get implemented. This is great news for Saint Paul and everyone

uses the river.

Commissioner Fredson wanted to know what the relationship is with Lilydale Regional Park. He was surprised not to see that incorporated.

Ms. deLaitre said that Lilydale is a regional park along the river and it is within their purview of the 17 miles they don't have a capital project happening there right now. She noted that Lilydale had just undergone a whole renovation to bring it up to where it is today.

Commissioner Risberg asked about engaging our urban schools and have they done outreach to the school districts? He asked her to talk about programming and how that might work.

Ms. deLaitre said from a strategic perspective with the three capital projects they always have to start first and foremost with the land owners and the jurisdictional bodies to gauge their interest in doing things. They are slowly trying to cast the net wider and wider to gauge community support and to cultivate partnerships and all of that. So working with the schools, not only public schools but also the charter schools, is absolutely part of their priorities.

## **VII. Transportation Committee**

Commissioner Lindeke reported that at their last meeting they discussed the Phalen Regional Park Study and the Lexington-Montreal-West 7<sup>th</sup> intersection rearrangement plan. The next Transportation Committee meeting scheduled on Monday, December 18, 2017 has been cancelled.

## **VIII. Communications Committee**

Chair Reveal said that they will be meeting in January and they are not sure they have enough members on it so the two newest members are getting randomly assigned, Anderson and Lee. This involves only one meeting that Commissioner Underwood will organize.

## **IX. Task Force/Liaison Reports**

Commissioner Edgerton announced a citizen's advisory group meeting on the Rice-Larpenteur visioning plan scheduled for January 18, 2018. After that, Jamie Radel, planning staff, should update the Planning Commission on the plan. He also reported that he had been at a meeting on the Como, Front and Dale commercial vitality zone initiative, which might be of interest to other commissioners.

## **X. Old Business**

None.

## **XI. New Business**

None.

## **XII. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,



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Donna Drummond  
Planning Director

Approved January 12, 2018  
(Date)



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Cedrick Baker  
Secretary of the Planning Commission