

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

**Minutes January 26, 2018**

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, January 26, 2018, at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

**Commissioners Present:** Mmes. DeJoy, Eckman, Lee, Mouacheupao, Reveal, Thao, Underwood; and Messrs. Baker, Edgerton, Lindeke, Ochs, Oliver, Perryman, Rangel Morales, Reich, Risberg, Vang, and Wojchik.

**Commissioners Absent:** Ms. \*Anderson, and Messrs. \*Fredson, and \*Khaled.

\*Excused

**Also Present:** Donna Drummond, Planning Director; Dr. Bruce Corrie, Department of Planning & Economic Development Director, Mike Rogers, Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority, Kady Dadlez, Anton Jerve, Bill Dermody, and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

**I. Approval of minutes December 29, 2017.**

***MOTION:*** *Commissioner Thao moved approval of the minutes of December 29, 2017. Commissioner Eckman seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

**II. Chair's Announcements**

Report of the Nominating Committee and Election of Officers.

Commissioner Thao reported on behalf of the Nominating Committee. The committee offered the following slate of officers: Elizabeth Reveal for Chair, Anne DeJoy for First Vice-Chair, Cedrick Baker for Second Vice-Chair, and Louis Rangel Morales for Secretary.

Chair Reveal called for nominations from the floor. There were none.

***MOTION:*** *Chair Reveal moved to approve the slate of candidates. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

**III. Planning Director's Announcements**

Introduction of Dr. Bruce Corrie, new director of the City's Planning and Economic Development Department.

Donna Drummond, Planning Director, introduced Dr. Bruce Corrie, the new Director of the Department of Planning and Economic Development.

Dr. Bruce Corrie said that it is a great honor to serve Mayor Carter as he works to implement his vision around economic justice, which he interprets to be building community wealth in a broad sense across income groups, across neighborhoods, across business sizes. Because the African American proverb says "lift as you climb" so too will we build the economic base of the city to lift everybody. The City of Saint Paul has a very robust economy, with citizens engaged in building this economy. He is blessed with a great staff, like Donna Drummond and her team, and he is incredibly impressed with the way they are doing the business of helping create a modern city. He is also blessed with having community members engaged like members of the Planning Commission who are actively involved in helping build the city. He said it is great to be here and he looks forward to coming back again and sharing plans as they develop.

Chair Reveal said that they had a particularly good discussion at the last Planning Commission meeting about the treatment of equity in the new Comprehensive Plan. It was a very impressive presentation on the part of staff and how thoughtful they've been and also a very good conversation among and between the Planning Commission members. She commends him thinking with his staff about the Comprehensive Plan and how it reflects a philosophy and a way to implement that philosophy that we just have not had before in previous plans. The commissioners are very excited about the direction that it is taking and it is complementary to Mayor Carter's perspective on things.

Dr. Corrie said that he has been spending a lot of time with Ms. Drummond discussing the plan and there are some elements that he is really excited about. But Ms. Drummond has also shared with him how deeply engaged the process was with citizens to bring people to the table to share their opinions. That is reflective in the elements of the plan. He referenced his past duty as a Union Park District Council board member and the work on their district plan. He also spoke about the draft small area plan for the Frogtown neighborhood that is in a graphic novel style and feels it is a creative and effective way to communicate ideas about planning and zoning to community members who may not understand the power behind these ideas.

Chair Reveal said that it is really propitious time and she doesn't think there are many communities in the country that; a) can proudly state that they have become a non-white majority city for one and embrace that diversity at the same time that they are matching it with economic opportunity. People should take advantage of this moment to have every piece of what's happening in the city linked to that theme and demonstrated in that them, because it does work here and that diversity is a great benefit.

Commissioner Ochs asked if Dr. Corrie could talk a little about himself.

Dr. Corrie said that he is an economist and has been in Saint Paul for 30 years. One reason he accepted this job is that he loves the city because it has welcomed him. In his 30 years he has played various roles from being a columnist for the Pioneer Press newspaper to working with the Saint Paul Foundation to exploring concepts around cultural corridors to being working with the City Council and the Mayor's office over the years to being a professor and administrator at a local university. So he has had the honor of participating in various institutions and his intent in stepping forward in this role is to help make Saint Paul an intercultural oasis where everyone will be welcome. A place where there could be an economic revival that is broad based that touches the person on the street. How can we do that where everyone from a big developer to an ordinary person on the street would have the same access to the resources and the thinking of the city. His

work on the economic contribution of immigrants and minorities has been to show the asset approach. As Mayor Carter is saying so clearly over and over again is that there are untapped assets and we are entering into a period of economic and political change where there is increasing pressure on resources.

We have to look at all kinds of assets and the untapped assets that can play a very important role in the city and in the state. When light rail was emerging in 2005 he was influenced by a lady who adopted him as her grandson, and who died when she was 104. He got to know her through St. Peter Claver Church, an African American Church. Grandma Wilson would ask him to come and help her and they had a deal that she would fix him soul food and he would do some chores around the house. She would tell him how she was displeased with the freeway and came to live where she did and when the community came together they thought about how we can do something different this time. So the concept of the World Cultural Heritage District was developed with community input and out of that came Little Mekong and Little Africa.

Dr. Corrie also noted that he was at the Heritage Preservation Commission meeting and they adopted a context study documenting the history of African Americans in Saint Paul. The next step is to discover assets that were unrecorded and undocumented and lost, and celebrate those assets that in turn can be the basis for an economic framework around an African American district. There is another group that wants to put a lid over the freeway, Reconnect Rondo, which is another big vision, and the third is a revival that is happening in the Central Selby. He is seeing a lot of momentum happening that's tied to some of the work that people have talked about in the past and he is glad to be in this position at this time.

Commissioner Ochs added that his world experiences and his education has taught him that way finding is a valuable asset to the pathway of success. That means more than signs on the streets but it also means how we navigate our systems, and how to succeed, so we can have these different flavors in our community.

Ms. Drummond also announced that the City Council had approved the Chapter 65 Amendments that had been recommended by the Planning Commission. Also, the Mayor has identified three pillars for his administration, equity, innovation and resilience and has appointed chief officers for those three areas in his office. The most recent one announced is Russ Stark who will be stepping down from the City Council and becoming the Chief Resilience Officer. The two other positions appointed include Toni Newborn from the Human Resources Department as the Chief Equity Officer and Tarek Tomez, former head of the Office of Technology and Communications as the Chief Innovation Officer.

**IV. PUBLIC HEARING: Union Park Community Plan – Item from the Comprehensive Planning Committee. (*Kady Dadlez, 651/266-6619*)**

The Saint Paul Planning Commission held a public hearing on the Union Park Community Plan. Notice of the public hearing was published in the Legal Ledger on Thursday, January 11, 2018 and was mailed to the citywide Early Notification System list and other interested parties.

No one spoke.

***MOTION: Commissioner Thao moved to close the public hearing, leave the record open for written testimony until 4:30 p.m. on Monday, January 29, 2018 and to refer the matter back to***

*the Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee for review and recommendation. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

Commissioner Thao announced the items on the agenda at the next Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee meeting on Wednesday, February 7, 2018.

## **V. Zoning Committee**

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

Three items to come before the Site Plan Review Committee on Tuesday, January 30, 2018:

- 2044 Grand Apartments – New multi-family residential at 2044 Grand Avenue. Graham Merry-Cullen LLC SPR #18-018518
- Highland Park Community Center Play Area – Redeveloped play area at 1978 Ford Parkway. Bryan Murphy-St Paul Parks & Recreation SPR #18-019269
- CRWD Office - Building addition, stormwater management, parking lot at 595 Aldine & 1736 Thomas Avenue. Mark Doneux-CRWD SPR #18-018252

## **NO BUSINESS**

Commissioner Edgerton announced that the next Zoning Committee meeting on Thursday, February 1, 2018 has been canceled.

## **VI. Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee**

Commissioner Thao reported that they had met on Wednesday and recommended approval of the Southport Industrial District Study. They discussed the revised Housing Chapter and finished up on a couple of Land Use recommendations. The next meeting is on Wednesday, February 7, 2018.

## **VII. Transportation Committee**

Riverview Transit Corridor – Approve resolution recommending the Riverview Corridor Locally Preferred Alternative to the Mayor and City Council. (*Anton Jerve, 651/266-6567*)

Anton Jerve, PED staff, gave a power point presentation which can be seen on the web page at: <http://www.stpaul.gov/planningcommission>

Commissioner Mouacheupao said regarding the modern streetcar slide the capital cost is estimated at \$1.4 to \$2.0 billion and \$35 million for yearly operating cost, are there projections for revenue and what the actual fair will be for riders?

Anton Jerve, PED staff, said that it doesn't include revenue because that is not the model at this stage - it only includes the cost side.

Mike Rogers, Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority, added that from a fare standpoint it would be whatever the fare is for the system at the time of operation. As a whole their system seems to generate about 1/3 of its cost coming through fares.

Mr. Jerve noted that there are two resolutions before the Commission. One is for the Riverview Transit Corridor Locally Preferred Alternative and other is for the Ford Corridor Study. These were combined from three resolutions that came through the Policy Advisory Committee of the Riverview project. The next step is for these resolutions to go City Council for a public hearing and now we are looking at February 21, 2018.

Commissioner Edgerton said that this is a major investment and noted that in the years 2025 and 2040 referenced in the presentation the transportation system is going to be very different. It is really important that as we move forward that we are continuously looking at what is the transportation system of the future going to be and will investment in rail still make sense. It makes sense now under current assumptions, will it still make sense in five years or beyond, given that it's a major expenditure? We need to make sure that we don't end up building something that is out of date by the time it goes into operation.

Commissioner Thao asked if this is approved today where will it go in the queue?

Mr. Jerve said that in terms of process, the Policy Advisory Committee selected the LPA which is then forwarded to all the local municipalities involved including Metropolitan Airport Commission. Resolutions supporting the LPA from each government will be sent to Ramsey County Regional Rail which then passes them on to the Metropolitan Council to be reviewed and included in Transportation Policy Plan. At that point, Riverview would get into the queue with all the other regional transit projects that are in the queue and finding funding and prioritizing those will be a regional conversation and it is something that is in flux with the priorities of the different government administrations.

Commissioner Eckman said there are places around the world that have these really innovative and efficient transit systems. Is Riverview part of a larger transit system?

Mr. Jerve replied yes its part of a larger system. Metropolitan Council has a plan, the Transportation Policy Plan, for regional transit in the Twin Cities and this is a segment of that plan and the intent would be that the modern streetcar would be able to interline with the Green Line and the Blue Line at either end. Typically when a major transit line like this is developed, Metro Transit will look at the connecting transit service to develop a plan to tie everything together. So yes it's part of a larger network of transit but something that is continually updated and developed. But the long term plan looks out 20-30 years and is continually updated.

Commissioner Lee asked how will this project impact the community; especially the businesses along West 7<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Jerve replied the Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority was in charge of engagement and they talked with 4,600 people, had about 100 events, received over 650 comments related to this stage of the project and they used those comments to arrive at the preferred alternative. The concerns about business especially of access to parking and businesses and on-street parking, construction impacts have all been big issues that have been brought up by businesses up and down West 7<sup>th</sup> and that is something you see the language in the LPA resolution before the

Commission.

The language in the LPA Resolution was introduced at the last Policy Advisory Committee meeting by Councilmember Noecker as a separate resolution speaking to those concerns. This was incorporated into the resolutions before the Commission to make sure we are addressing those concerns and continuing the outreach and making sure that this project works for West 7<sup>th</sup> and doesn't create undo issues with the businesses.

Commissioner Lee wanted to know where to find public comments about this project.

Mr. Jerve said go to [riverviewcorridor.com](http://riverviewcorridor.com), the Riverview Project website, which is where all the documents and results from the open houses are collected. Also if you have follow-up questions you could talk to [Mike Rogers](#), project manager for Riverview.

Commissioner Edgerton wanted everyone to know that MnDOT is having a demonstration project today, tomorrow and Sunday in downtown Minneapolis on Nicollet Mall of a small autonomous bus that will be open to the public which you can see and maybe ride on. This is just to give you an idea that this technology is pretty far along.

Commissioner Mouacheupao said that there are going to be 20 stations, and how are those stations selected? Based on the experience with the Green Line using the tools that they used, they didn't consider all of the equity issues until pushed to by the community.

Mr. Jerve said since the Green Line there have been some guiding documents by Metro Transit that are built on lessons from the Green Line and help to guide spacing. When they selected the stations they looked at similar spacing to Green Line and the Route 54 stops. Looking at those nodes you see along West 7<sup>th</sup> many were built up around streetcar stations. At this point they are dots on a map and one of the next tasks of environmental planning will be to initiate station area planning for each of those areas, which will be a partnership with the county, city and the neighborhoods to figure out what policies we want to put into place around each station. It is pretty early in the process to do station area planning but that gives us the opportunity to guide the rest of the project and make sure we're capturing what the neighborhood wants there.

Commissioner Lindeke added that one of the big decision points for the process was deciding between crossing the river at the Ford site area or at Highway 5. The surprising thing was when they analyzed it, even though the Ford site routing would have had many more stations and reach more population, they found that the ridership would have been lower because there is a big demand for people in the Shepard Davern area to go to the airport and to the Mall of America where a lot of the jobs are. So cutting up through Highland would have left those people behind on a different transit mode. As a result there will be more riders here on this route and it will be also faster.

***MOTION: Commissioner Underwood moved to approve the resolution recommending that the Riverview Corridor Locally Preferred Alternative be adopted by the Mayor and City Council. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.***

**and**

**MOTION:** *Commissioner Underwood moved to approve a resolution to the Mayor and City Council in support of the Ford Corridor Study and Initiation to then be forwarded on to the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority and the Metropolitan Council for their consideration. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

Commissioner Underwood also announced that the next Transportation Committee meeting on Monday, January 29, 2018 has been canceled.

**VIII. Gold Line and Rush Line Transit Corridor Updates** – Informational presentation by Bill Dermody, PED. (*Bill Dermody, 651/266-6617*)

Bill Dermody, PED staff, gave a power point presentation which can be seen on the web page at: <http://www.stpaul.gov/planningcommission>.

Commissioner Lindeke wanted to know if the White Bear and Mounds stations were the only two Gold Line stations in Saint Paul.

Mr. Dermody said that there are 5 new stations in Saint Paul, plus existing stations being utilized in downtown.

Commissioner Baker asked who the Gold Line station area planning consultants are.

Mr. Dermody said the lead consultants are Crandall Arambula out of Portland, with WSB and Sambatek working with them locally.

Commissioner Edgerton wanted to know where the Rush Line goes to and from.

Mr. Dermody said downtown Saint Paul and downtown White Bear Lake are the end points via Maplewood Mall and St. John's Hospital in Maplewood.

Chair Reveal asked what is paying for the next phase of Rush Line planning.

Mike Rogers, Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority said it is funded through the Ramsey County Rail Authority Property Tax levy.

Commissioner Baker asked Mr. Dermody to explain Kimley-Horn's role with the upcoming Rush Line study.

Mr. Dermody said that Kimley-Horn is the lead consultant on the next phase of the Rush Line Study, including the environmental assessment, preliminary engineering and station area planning.

Commissioner Baker noted that Ramsey County is taking the lead on Rush Line station area planning, so what kind of involvement would the City have, what would be the City's involvement in that stage of the process.

Mr. Dermody said that the City's involvement would be just like any transit project, with staff representation on the Technical Advisory Committee and political representation on the Policy Advisory Committee.

Commissioner Rangel Morales asked why these two are going to be Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) as opposed to a streetcar.

Mr. Dermody said the short answer is ridership and cost. The potential ridership on the Rush Line and Gold Line is not strong enough to justify the cost so they are less cost competitive. Light rail and streetcar was looked at for both of these projects but it just did not come out as well as BRT.

Commissioner Risberg asked if there is a single place where you can see these projects overlaid with other existing and potential projects.

Mr. Dermody said yes, the Metropolitan Council's Transportation Policy Plan has a map of all existing and planned transitways. The Metropolitan Council is working on updating their Transportation Policy Plan and there will be an updated map soon.

Commissioner Lindeke added that if you open the Saint Paul Planning Commission Annual Report, it has a map in the middle.

## **IX. Communications Committee**

### 2017 Planning Commission Annual Report

Commissioner Underwood announced that the 2017 Planning Commission Annual Report has been completed. This annual report provides a summary of the Planning Commission's major activities and accomplishments in 2017. Also, the Committee had asked staff to add to the map in the report the zoning cases that came before the Planning Commission throughout the year.

Chair Reveal said that she does not see all of the economic data that they have been gathering.

Donna Drummond, Planning Director, said that Chair Reveal must be referring to the Market Watch report. That is a report that the Planning Team produces and the last version of it is what Chair Reveal saw. They have been doing an update every 6 months and the lead planning staff for that would come to the Planning Commission and present that. It is not really a project or activity of the Planning Commission.

Chair Reveal said that it is available online to the public and she would like to highlight in the annual report the places where people can readily access that information.

Commissioner Underwood said in a document like this we can embed the links to where there is all of that great information. It's not on the Planning Commission site but it definitely exists.

Chair Reveal said that there is nothing about communications outreach for the Planning Commission that has to only happen once a year. Since there has been a lot of interest in issues of how do we get community engagement, how we inform the community, maybe the Committee could do more thinking about whether there are other vehicles, or updates that says where this



information can be found. Perhaps the Communications Committee should have that conversation.

Ms. Drummond added that typically there is a cover letter from the chair that is prepared and we do send it out via the early notification system list that the city has which people can subscribe to receive notices. We also send out a paper mailing to select people who may not subscribe to that such as federal elected officials to make sure that they are aware of the planning activities of the City and the Planning Commission.

#### Planning Director's Report on 2017 Achievements and 2018 Projects

Donna Drummond, Planning Director, briefly discussed 2017 achievements, which are highlighted in the annual report, and major projects coming up for 2018. With a new administration in place and a new department director we are going to be open to looking at possibly new initiatives that are coming out of this administration. So the list that will be provided will be tentative for now and there will be some flexibility in the future.

There are some major projects underway that we will not be pulling back from including the transit corridor projects we heard about today. Those are the three major transit corridors under study that affect Saint Paul. This is very important work that we continue to be involved with. As we enter into 2018 we anticipate starting Riverview station area planning sometime this year. Regarding redevelopment planning, last year the Planning Commission recommended approval of the Ford site master plan and zoning. Ford listed the site for sale in late December 2017 and we are coordinating with Ford in getting updates. Ford site work in 2018 will include developing design standards and beginning to work with the master developer selected by Ford.

The work on the Rice/Larpenteur area plan is nearing completion. However, the City will not be adopting the whole plan into the Comprehensive Plan because it includes areas that are dealing with Roseville and Maplewood. The next step will be looking at the parts that affect Saint Paul and considering adopting those to the Comprehensive Plan. The soccer stadium site is well under construction and is slated to open March 2019 for the first season. At some point we'll see development proposals on the balance of the superblock probably focused on Snelling. And finishing up the Comprehensive Plan is another big activity for this year; we anticipate having the Planning Commission okay a draft to go out for a 6 month adjacent community review and additional discussion with the community about what is in the draft. The Planning Commission is targeted to have a public hearing in September and eventually to City Council to be adopted.

We are also looking at the citywide parking standards to see if there are additional tweaks we can make that would make it easier for small commercial space to be used. Regarding tiny houses, ESNDNC had received a Metropolitan Council grant and hired Larry Soderholm, the former Planning Administrator, to look at possible changes to the zoning code to facilitate smaller houses and clusters of smaller houses that could be providing more affordable housing for people. Planning staff will be evaluating these recommendations for possible amendments to the Zoning Code.

There is a moratorium on west Marshall Avenue that the City Council put in place, initiated by Councilmember Stark. The study will be looking at the most appropriate zoning along Marshall between Hamline Ave. and the river, although the moratorium area is focused on the Marshall and Moore area where the apartment project there just went through the Planning Commission.

That proposal came in right before the moratorium went into effect. There will also be a small zoning study on Stryker Avenue on the West side.

**X. Task Force/Liaison Reports**

No report.

**XI. Old Business**

None.

**XII. New Business**

None.

**XIII. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 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 \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Luis Rangel Morales  
Secretary of the Planning Commission