Commission Noecker thanked the commissioners and said that they are a great group to work with and this is where she really got her feet wet in terms of an interest in serving the city and that's when she realized how much everything we do at the city really matters.

MOTION: ***Commissioner Reveal moved approval of the resolution honoring Commissioner Noecker. Commissioner Ward seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.***

V. PUBLIC HEARING: University Avenue Parking Study – Item from the Transportation Committee. *(Bill Dermody, 651/266-6617)*

Chair Wencl announced that the Saint Paul Planning Commission was holding a public hearing on the University Avenue Parking Study. Notice of the public hearing was published in the Legal Ledger on December 17, 2015, and was mailed to the citywide Early Notification System list and other interested parties.

Donna Drummond, Planning Director announced that Chris Ferguson will give a brief overview to remind the commissioners what this is about.

Chris Ferguson said he was originally involved in this work as the chair of the Business Resources Collaborative which was started to help the businesses along University Avenue survive the construction. One piece of work that they looked at was the parking on University Avenue. The decision was made to go with the design that is out there now with two lanes of traffic, primarily because if there was a decision to have one lane of traffic and one lane of parking and that didn't work than there would be an extremely expensive project to go and remove all of the curb lines and all of the gutter to put it back to two lanes of traffic. After the project was done after the train was running we would go back and look at what the actual traffic on the corridor was, and whether or not it would be possible at certain times of the day or all times of the day to remove one of those lanes of traffic and bring parking back to University Avenue. The initial assessment from an engineering perspective was the vast majority of the corridor could have one lane of traffic all day and it would function in an acceptable fashion. There is a stretch of the corridor around Snelling, between Snelling and Hamline a little further than that, that has very high traffic volumes because of the big box stores that are located there and all of the retail that is there – it didn't make sense to reduce any of those lanes of traffic in that area because the traffic volumes there. It did make sense for most of the corridor to have one lane of traffic and one lane of parking. They also went through a community feedback process, and the feedback from the community was that they didn't want to have all day parking on University Avenue yet. A lot of it was people feeling that traffic was slower on University then it use to be, which is more to do with the train and lights but there was a sense that let's not make it any slower. So both the technical and advisory committees looked at the engineering results as well as the community feedback and decided that the best solution would be to look at bringing parking back to University Avenue in the evenings. There is a significant drop in traffic volumes around the 6 o'clock time in most of the corridor and that would allow in essence free flowing traffic throughout the corridor in the evenings and not bringing traffic back during the day. Leaving it open at some point for this body or another group to review that day time traffic piece after a few more years of operation of the train. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee and the Technical Committee was to bring parking back from 6 p.m. to 2 a.m. along the corridor, there are still stretches which are detailed in the plan that they recommend not putting parking back even in the evenings. One of the considerations was public safety, the two fire halls where

they would not have parking brought back so that they would have clear access to the out to go where they needed to go. They are looking at bringing back over 400 spaces of parking at a low cost. Also they are not changing any curb or gutter lines for this project the idea would be to change the signage to allow parking in the evening it would be free parking in the evening, because most of the city has free parking in the evening so it would be consistent with the rest of the city.

Commissioner Reveal asked if there was a parking study being done with the soccer stadium planning as well.

Donna Drummond, Planning Director, replied yes there is a parking and transportation consultant that will be developing an analysis of that.

Commissioner Reveal said was that something that Mr. Ferguson's group discussed with the possible impact of what that was.

Mr. Ferguson said that their work was done before the soccer stadium was announced. So the answer to that is no, they did not factor in the soccer stadium.

Commissioner Ward said that part of this study, if it doesn't work is there a time table that is set for when the Public Works Department will reevaluate whether or not it is working? And who makes the decision and how will that be determined if it's not working that the signs will be removed and how would the public be notified?

Mr. Ferguson said that he is not an expert on the city's process, but he thinks that would be something for the council or for this group to figure out with Public Works. They did not specify a particular time or process for that. Their role is not to mandate to the city how they are going to operate the road, their role is to make a recommendation and the city would have to handle operations and function of that road. Actually there are two bodies that operate that road, it is a County road maintained by the City.

Commissioner Underwood said all throughout the materials it explains that 64 businesses responded to the survey about 1,200 residents. She asked how many businesses are on University Avenue, because it seems like a low number.

Mr. Ferguson said that in total when they looked at their work from Minneapolis to the end of Saint Paul on the corridor there were about 700 businesses in total. On the Saint Paul side he could not say exactly the number that is on University Avenue, but generally speaking from a split perspective it's about 70/30 so you're looking at around 500 on the Saint Paul side and 200 on the Minneapolis side. They did the Green Line project, and when you do a survey if they would have put a requirement in that said they had to get 10% of the feedback or else you can't do this project we probably would not have a Green line project today. It is very difficult to get in particular a lot of the retail businesses to come out of their operations. Because many people don't have time to leave and go to a public meeting or don't have time to be here at Planning Commission.

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

The following person spoke.

1. Ms. JooHee Pomplin works with the Asian Economic Development Association at 377 University Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55103. They work with Asian owned businesses and other businesses along University Avenue in the Little Mekong district between Mackubin and Galtier on University Avenue, which is included in the parking study as a recommendation to add parking. She expresses their support to add parking to the avenue in that area because a lot of the businesses were not set up in a way to have parking nearby. When you are centrally located on the block, it is very difficult for people to access the business especially when weather makes it challenging to walk around the block. Also, people are already parking around the block because of the lost parking on University Avenue. They would also support not putting in parking meters, but support having it be free, time limited parking. During the day another challenge is parking for employees and also people parking to access the train, so we want to make sure that it is made available to people who want to patronize the businesses. Finally, they support time limited parking but would like to see it be free.

MOTION: ***Commissioner Lindeke moved to close the public hearing, leave the record open for written testimony until 4:30 p.m. on Monday, January 11, 2016, and to refer the matter back to the Neighborhood Planning Committee for review and recommendation. Commissioner Thao seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.***

Commissioner Merrigan asked if during the discussions of this proposal, did the Transportation Committee have any strong opinions either way?

Commissioner Lindeke said that they had a good discussion, and he personally was impressed by the thoroughness of the research in the document. It's really well done for a traffic and parking study and the committee looked at it favorably. There was a discussion about how it would affect pedestrian safety along University Avenue, which is an issue especially when you think about light rail and the recent accidents that have been happening. In the interest of experimentation and trying to be creative about Saint Paul they supported the plan.

VI. Zoning Committee

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

OLD BUSINESS

#15-180-427 CVS Pharmacy – Conditional use permit for drive through service with modification of special conditions requiring drive through lanes and service windows to be at least 60 feet from residential property and requiring drive through lanes not to be between the principal structure and a public street. 30 Fairview Avenue South, NE corner at Grand Avenue. *(Mike Richardson, 651/266-6621)*

Commissioner Padilla gave Commissioner Merrigan permission to speak on her behalf, regarding her comments at the Zoning Committee meeting. Commissioner Merrigan said that at the time Commissioner Padilla made her vote, the representative for the applicant, Attorney Brian Alton, had put forward four precedents, which Commissioner Padilla felt was significant and should be considered. However, following the vote Commissioner Nelson brought up a Google aerial of the BMO Harris Bank, which he felt was the closest precedent. Upon seeing the example,