

City of North St. Paul
June 21, 2022
Approved City Council Workshop Meeting Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Furlong called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. The meeting was conducted at City Hall in the Council Chambers, and also via Zoom.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Council Member Thorsen
Council Member Petersen
Council Member Wong
Council Member Cole
Mayor Furlong

Staff: Interim City Manager Brian Frandle, Deputy Clerk Jennie Kloos, Public Works Director Ron Ritchie, Communications Consultant Kari Erpenbach, City Planner Brandy Howe, City Attorney Soren Mattick, Consultant Dr. Craig Waldron

III. ADOPT AGENDA

On motion by Council Member Wong, seconded by Council Member Cole, with all present voting aye (5-0), motion carried to approve the agenda as presented.

IV. TOPIC(S)

A. Redevelopment Master Plan Review Presentation

Brandy Howe, City Planner stated the initial Redevelopment Master Plan was originally drafted in 2012 as a joint effort by the city council and the Economic Development Authority (EDA). The project was funded through the Metropolitan Council's Livable Communities program to identify barriers to redevelopment and position projects within the downtown area for implementation. The plan focused on the downtown area, which is the traditional commercial hub of North St. Paul. Many projects and initiatives have been completed under the guidance of the 2012 plan. In 2021, the EDA and Planning Commission determined that an update to the Redevelopment Master Plan would be prudent to ensure that previously expressed goals and objectives are still applicable and to identify areas for continued investment.

The Redevelopment Master Plan lies with creating a downtown and economic environment that realizes the vision: identity, image, enduring development and quality of life. The guiding principals from the original plan have been brought forward with a new focus being placed on high density and enhancing the bike and pedestrian environment.

Ms. Howe reviewed the redevelopment districts goals, proposed uses, character and site design, strategies and projects for McKnight, Schifsky's, West End Mixed Use, Downtown Core, Core Employment/Reinvestment District and Commerce Park Districts.

Transportation Improvements were brought forward from earlier planning efforts such as the comp plan and urban design plan and DOT projects, which include roundabouts, continuing reconstruction efforts on 7th Ave and Margaret ST and multi corridor connections and expanding the sidewalk network.

Next steps include hosting one more public meeting, a final Task Force meeting to discuss the public comments, with the Planning Commission to review it again on July 7th before making recommendations to the City Council and EDA.

B. Community Center Discussion

Interim City Manager Brian Frandle introduced Dr. Craig Waldron as a consultant with the City to help with upcoming City projects. Dr. Waldron offered his help with various projects throughout the interim and to the next level of stability. In the short term, Dr. Waldron will be focusing on a couple of projects, that include the Community Center and Lillie building. To begin, Dr. Waldron asked each council member what their opinion and vision is for the Community Center moving forward and if cost impacts the vision.

All council members agreed that they would like to resolve the future of the Community Center and that the deferred maintenance has been an issue and some items need to be resolved immediately.

Council Member Thorsen stated that he would like to see the building sold, with parties having already expressed interest in purchasing the building.

Council Member Cole stated the library and building are an asset to the city. He is not in favor of selling the property as the City continues to undergo the redevelopment of downtown. He also stated that he is unsure if the city council is the right steward for the building and recommended that the EDA takeover ownership and responsibility of the building.

Council Member Wong referenced the Comprehensive Plan where it states to “preserve and invest existing spaces parks and lakes. Suggesting residents want a community center or type of building to recreate in. Ms. Wong agrees with Council Member Cole’s statements

Mayor Furlong stated the Community Center is an asset to the City, we own it and it has value to the City and our downtown. Mayor Furlong would like to have input from the public and to form a focus group.

Dr. Waldron thanked the council for their input and the importance for him to hear from all of the council as to what their vision and perspectives are. He stated some maintenance issues will need to be addressed immediately. Dr. Waldron will continue working with staff and the community and will follow up with city council on various options.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, on motion by Council Member Petersen, seconded by Council Member Cole, with all present voting aye (5-0), Mayor Furlong adjourned the workshop meeting at 5:45 p.m.

/s/ Terrence J. Furlong, Mayor

Attest:

/s/ Brian Frandle, Interim City Manager/ Clerk