

**CITY OF NORTH ST. PAUL  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES  
THURSDAY, August 4, 2022  
6:30 P.M.**

North St. Paul City Hall – Council Chambers  
2400 Margaret Street

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Barton called the workshop meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**II. ROLL CALL**

COMMISSION

Elaine Barton, Commission Co-Chair

John Monge, Commission Co-Chair

Patrick Bles, Commissioner

Eric Brenna, Commissioner                      EXCUSED ABSENCE

Rick Gelbmann, Commissioner

Andrew Wise, Commissioner

Cameron Muhic, Commissioner

Lisa Wong, City Council Liaison

STAFF

Brandy Howe, City Planner

Lisa Ritchie, Planning Secretary

**III. ADOPT AGENDA**

Motion to adopt agenda by Commissioner Gelbmann, and seconded by Commissioner Monge, with all present voting aye (7-0). Motion carried to adopt the August 4, 2022 Agenda.

**IV. TOPICS**

A. 2023 Project Priority Finalization

Ms. Howe introduced the master list of projects that are included in the Redevelopment Master Plan. She explained it is more of a prioritization of projects than a finalization.

Co-Chair Barton inquired when will it fit into the budget. Ms. Howe stated she does not know and believes they are currently working on it. City Council Liaison stated City Council is working on the budget and each Commission will have an opportunity to state their priorities for 2023.

Ms. Howe explained the major headers are the projects and studies conducted, activities and programs that will regularly occur, and staff and infrastructure projects. Co-Chair Barton inquired

about on-going projects or priorities currently on the City's list. City Council Liaison Wong will find the priority list. Commissioner Bles questioned how to identify the priorities. Co-Chair Barton suggested a 1,2,3 system. Planning Secretary Lisa Ritchie and the Planning Commission suggested a numbering system. Number 1 = 1-3 years, Number 2 = 4-6 years and a Number 3 = 7+ years. Co-Chair Monge suggested it be organized by the headers already provided and from the perspective of the Planning Commission. Commissioner Gelbmann questioned if City Council receives recommendations from other commissions. Co-Chair Barton stated yes and Commissioner Muhic suggested combining some topics.

Ms. Howe shared her screen and made edits as the Commission went through the priority list. The Commission discussed each topic and marked them with a ranking of 1,2,3 as it relates to the Planning Commission. Other topics were deferred to other commissions or committees.

The Commission agreed that parking is an issue and should be a high priority. Ms. Howe noted the Redevelopment Master Plan has been completed.

Commissioner Muhic questioned if any part of the Comprehensive Plan was taken from other cities. Ms. Howe stated no.

The Planning Commission discussed the transit and park trails study and agreed to defer them to their appropriate commissions. They also discussed the possibility including the parks and trails in the road reconstruction plan going forward. Commissioner Muhic suggested checking with MnDOT on trails to make sure projects are not duplicated. Co-Chair Barton noted the engineering department looks at that.

City Council Liaison Wong defined the Dining Ordinance which allows for outdoor dining and how it would be regulated. Ms. Howe explained it will allow for sidewalk cafés and she is working with City Attorney Mattick and Interim City Manager Frandle to move it to another plan.

Co-Chair Barton questioned how the ordinance applies to non-downtown areas. Ms. Howe noted this ordinance only applies if it is in the right-of-way. Chair Barton stated it is difficult to determine appropriate information until further data is received. Ms. Howe encouraged an increase in data and suggested developers provide reasons for the quantity of parking needed.

Ms. Howe summarized the number one priority list for the Planning Commission as follows:

1. Construct Downtown Pedestrian Links
2. Construct Proposed Trails from Parks, Open Spaces and Trails Plan
3. Develop a Downtown Park/Square Feature
4. Design and Implement Seppala Blvd. Conversion Project
5. Roundabouts at Highway 120 and 5-Point (with sculptures/gateway features)
6. Enact Highway 36/Century Ave. Improvements
7. Install Public EV Charging Stations and the Relevant Power Infrastructure
8. Review Living Street Plan
9. Perform Off-Street Parking Study
10. Update Downtown Design Manual

The Commission discussed the off-street parking study and minimum parking requirements. Commissioner Wise inquired if the minimum parking requirement was part of the study. Planning Commission discovered it was not part of the study and the priority was changed to evaluate the quantity and necessity of off-street parking downtown.

Ms. Howe defined the housing maintenance program and will defer it to the HRA, City Manager, and Community Development Director. The Planning Commission had a robust discussion on the housing maintenance program and provided updates, solutions, and suggestions. Commissioner Wise inquired if this program is part of the marketing plan.

Commissioner Blees emphasized the construction of downtown pedestrian lanes and proposed trails stay a number one priority. City Council Liaison Wong noted the EDA is working on developing a downtown park/square feature and suggested a conversation with EDA at the next joint meeting. Commission discussion continued around green space and making the downtown park/square a permanent feature.

Commissioner Blees suggested the design and implementation of Seppala Boulevard and Highway 36/Century Avenue improvements be a high priority and to include discussions on EV charging stations, roundabouts, and the removal of power poles on Seppala Boulevard.

The Commission discussed traffic safety as it relates to statues and murals and how to fund and construct the downtown public parking ramp.

Ms. Howe questioned if an agreement is reached on prioritization of projects tonight, what is the next step in the process. Ms. Ritchie stated the City Finance Manager will need an itemized list of priorities and will send the same list to all other commissions. Ms. Ritchie also requested the Planning Commission Work Plan that includes the status of certain projects.

## **V. REPORTS FROM STAFF**

Ms. Ritchie reported the Public Works Department installed 6 new bike racks and thanked Commissioner Gelbmann for this recommendation. She also noted future bike rack orders will be of a more modern design.

Ms. Howe noted the Sign Ordinance passed at the last City Council meeting.

## **VI. COMMISSION REPORTS**

Commissioner Wise inquired about adding a member of the Planning Commission to the Housing Redevelopment Authority to bridge the gap. Ms. Ritchie indicated she will forward the by-laws to the appropriate people.

City Council Liaison Wong suggested researching comparable cities that contain a joint member of the Planning Commission and the Housing Redevelopment Authority.

Co-Chair Monge stated he is running for Mayor and was impressed with the citizen turnout at National Night Out.

Commissioner Muhic questioned what HRA stood for. Co-Chair Barton suggested using the long name for each group or Commission instead of the acronyms.

Co-Chair Barton stated all staff made it to Mac's soft opening.

Ms. Ritchie noted the August 16, 2022 City Council workshop will include both chairs from the Planning Commission and Economic Development Authority to discuss the Lillie Building.

City Council Liaison Wong provided an update on the City Manager position stating they have 12 applicants and will determine who will continue to the interviews. A final decision should be made by the end of the month and hopes to have a City Manager by September.

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, motion to adjourn by Commissioner Blees, and seconded by Commissioner Monge, with all present voting aye (7-0). Motion carried to adjourn the workshop meeting at 8:18 p.m.

**The next regularly scheduled Planning Commission Meeting is Thursday, September 1, 2022 at 6:15 p.m.**

Members, please notify any planned absences to: Lisa Ritchie  
Planning Commission Secretary  
651-747-2400  
lisa.ritchie@northstpaul.org