

**CITY OF NORTH ST. PAUL
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2022
6:30 P.M.**

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

I. CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Monge called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

COMMISSION

Elaine Barton, Commission Co-Chair
John Monge, Commission Co-Chair
Patrick Blees, Commissioner
Eric Brenna, Commissioner
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 Co-Chair Barton, and seconded by Commissioner Blees, with all present voting aye (7-0). Motion carried to adopt the August 1, 2022 Agenda.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve minutes by Commissioner Wise, and seconded by Commissioner Gelbmann, with all present voting aye (7-0). Motion carried to approve the July 7, 2022 regular meeting minutes as submitted.

Commissioner Muhic requested his last name be spelled correctly for the July 22nd meeting minutes.

Motion to approve Minutes by Commissioner Gelbmann, and seconded by Co-Chair Barton, with all present voting aye (7-0). Motion carried to approve the July 22, 2022 regular meeting minutes as amended.

Motion to approve Minutes by Commissioner Muhic, and seconded by Commissioner Brenna, with all present voting aye (7-0). Motion carried to approve the August 4th regular meeting minutes as submitted.

V. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

John Schmahl expressed his concern over the lack of response to residents who spoke at a previous Planning Commission meeting regarding the poor air quality of Schifsky's. Co-Chair Monge noted this concern and stated it will be discussed later and Ms. Ritchie did follow up with those residents.

VI. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Public Hearing to Consider a Planned Unit Development at 2503-2517 7th Ave. (FKA: Lillie Building)

City Planner Brandy Howe presented this item. TJL Development proposed a redevelopment of four sites to include a 93-unit structure that will contain 75 dwellings, 5 live/work units, and 10 commercial units. Staff reviewed proposals and land uses within the proposed PUD. Ms. Howe briefed the Planning Commission on the proposed changes such as decreased lot size, maximum building height, open green space, underground parking, and the architectural design of downtown. She also noted this project would not overburden the transportation system and a landscape plan has been submitted.

Jim Lavalley, applicant, stated he has built 2,200 units like these and is excited to create this building.

Commissioner Muhic questioned the choice of landscaping trees and suggested the development team discuss it with the City Forester because female Ginkgo trees are dangerous to pets and people's allergies. Mr. LaValle stated he was not aware of this and will change the species of trees.

Mr. LaValle mentioned the small modification to the first floor in order to create a pedestrian connection and engage the community.

Commissioner Wise expressed his appreciation for the design and attention to detail. Mr. LaValle noted that added amenities will include a fitness center, bike racks, and possible underground bike room.

Co-Chair Monge opened the public hearing

George Sinn, 2411 11th Ave. E., is concerned with building height and water run-off and suggested the building be built closer to the 50-foot requirement.

Chris Monge, 2596 Poplar Ave., expressed her concern with the current undesirable look of the building and is looking forward to seeing the new proposed building.

Kari Brees, 2887 Lake Blvd., stated her support of this development.

Co- Chair Monge closed the public hearing.

Civil Engineer Morgan Dawley was absent but Ms. Howe stated they have been working with the developer's engineer, Mr. Dawley's report is included in the packet, and the project is contingent upon approval of the City Engineer.

Patrick Starver, 4231 Abbot Ave., professional landscape architect, explained the project will maintain drainage patterns.

Co-Chair Monge noted some areas around the development site are wet and residents are concerned about potential flooding.

Commissioners Gelbmann and Wise both suggested a diagonal property line curving west, creating more property, safety features, and variety to the roadway.

The Planning Commission discussed parking lot locations, the City pumphouse on the northwest corner, and burial of power lines. City Manager Frandle will address the power line issue.

Co-Chair Barton inquired about one single location for deliveries and a handicap accessible entrance. Mr. LaValle stated there will be various areas of the building to accommodate deliveries and yes, there will be a handicap accessible entrance and designated handicap parking spots, if needed.

Co-Chair Barton also questioned the structure of the live/work units. Ms. Howe stated the PUD will allow for flexibility maintaining residential or commercial units. Ms. Howe noted she will use that language as part of the PUD. Co-Chair Barton also suggested keeping a portion of the development solely commercial. Mr. LaValle stated he would engage a retail specific real estate broker with Upland Real Estate and will market the first-floor space as commercial.

Commissioner Muhic inquired about the venting and exhaust in the live/work units. Mr. LaValle stated there is opportunity for venting and exhaust and he has experience using shafts to create venting.

Commissioner Blees appreciated the set back and the masking detail on 7th Ave. and questioned whether or not all types of live/work options would be available. Co-Chair Barton noted the one parking space per dwelling unit is not a requirement but a recommendation and suggested a bonus bike lot if possible.

Motion by Commissioner Muhic, and seconded by Commissioner Wise, with all present voting aye (7-0). Motion carried to recommend approval to City Council of the Planned Unit Development at 2503, 2509, 2515, and 2517 7th Avenue E., subject to the approval conditions in the draft Resolution, with additional 6th condition incorporating the modified first floor plan, building elevations, and associated changes to pedestrian access to the exterior.

Co-Chair Barton inquired about when this would come before City Council and if it would allow enough time for the developer to make the proposed changes. Ms. Howe stated it would be discussed at the September 20, 2022 City Council meeting and would be contingent about approval by City Engineer.

B. Public Hearing to Consider a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to Create a Density Bonus for Certain Land in the Downtown

Ms. Howe presented this item and explained the anticipated density as 110 dwelling units per acre. Ms. Howe discussed this with a regional liaison from Metropolitan Council and Mr. Dawley and concluded it would not warrant a change to the comprehensive plan but will update the map as part of the resolution.

Co-Chair Barton clarified more changes to the map may require a broader Metropolitan Council review.

Commissioner Brenna questioned whether to apply this same process for future applications or take them as they come. Co-Chair Barton suggested being upfront with developers and create written language to assist in approval or denial of such applications. Commissioner Muhic stated concern with the 110-unit cap for this building and suggested a scientific approach for future projects. Commissioner Wise suggested making language broader so each property has the same rules and would apply to everyone.

Co-Chair Monge opened the public hearing.

Co-Chair Monge closed the public hearing.

Co-Chair Barton clarified the discussion is only about the downtown mixed-use area. Ms. Howe stated yes, it is only the pink shaded part of the map.

Motion by Commissioner Barton, and seconded by Commissioner Gelbmann, with all present voting aye (7-0). Motion carried to recommend approval to City Council of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment to create a density bonus for certain land in the Downtown Mixed Use subject to the approval conditions in the draft Resolution.

C. Public Hearing to Consider a Zoning Text Amendment to Add Building Height to the Flexibility from Ordinance Requirements in the Planned Unit Development District

Ms. Howe presented this item and explained the current language regarding building height flexibility, noting that increasing density in the downtown area will require flexibility in order to be consistent with the comprehensive goals.

Co-Chair Monge opened the public hearing.

Co-Chair Monge closed the public hearing.

Motion by Commissioner Barton, and seconded by Commissioner Brenna, with all present voting aye (7-0). Motion carried to recommend approval to City Council of Ordinance 2022-___ a Zoning Text Amendment to add building height to the flexibility from Ordinance requirements in the Planned Unit Development District.

VII. COMMISSION BUSINESS ACTION ITEMS & RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Review Amendment to Chapter 32: Boards and Commissions

City Planner Brandy Howe stated Co-Chair Barton proposed the review of Chapter 32 to clean up the language and clarify the powers and duties of the Planning Commission.

The Planning Commission discussed the disbandment of the Environmental Advisory Commission. Council Liaison Wong explained they are on hiatus. City Manager Frandle has not heard any update on this Commission but will look into it further.

Ms. Howe suggested the specific language be pulled from the Ordinance and then staff will bring it to City Council for review.

Motion by Commissioner Blees, and seconded by Commissioner Barton, with all present voting aye (7-0). Motion carried to recommend approval to City Council of Ordinance Amending Chapter 32: Boards and Commissions of the City of North Saint Paul City Code of Ordinances to keep the Environmental Advisory Commission.

VIII. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL LIAISON

Council Liaison Wong noted City Council chose Interim Brian Frandle as City Manager. She noted the fall parade is on September 15th and still needs volunteers, and that the City Council has been busy with budget workshops.

IX. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Co-Chair Barton reported the work on the student-built house on Eldridge has begun with exterior removal and encouraged applicants to follow the process in City code prior to doing design work for Planning Commission input.

Commissioner Blees referenced the public comments regarding the Schifsky property and noticed the fencing was finished and equipment lights were mounted. He encouraged City staff to review for any violations. Ms. Ritchie will discuss with Mr. Frandle on how to proceed. Commissioner Gelbmann noted the landscaping was missing from the property and a follow up letter regarding code enforcement has been sent.

Co-Chair Monge inquired about the follow up process when citizens voice a concern to the Planning Commission. Commissioner Muhic suggested creating a policy or procedure that allows for a 30- or 60-day communication follow-up. Commissioner Brenna questioned who handles the air qualities agreements. Ms. Howe stated a code enforcement officer within the City or MNPCHA would be the group to speak with.

Commissioner Brenna also noted registration for the MN Water Resources Conference goes through October 18-19, 2022.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, motion to adjourn by Co-Chair Barton, and seconded by Commissioner Brenna, with all present voting aye (7-0). Motion carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled Planning Commission Meeting is Thursday, October 6, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.

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