

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

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

I. CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Barton 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 Bles, Commissioner EXCUSED ABSENCE

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 Commissioner Gelbmann, and seconded by Co-Chair Monge, with all present voting aye (6-0). Motion carried to adopt the October 6, 2022 Agenda.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Co-Chair Barton noted Co-Chair Monge called the meeting to order instead of Co-Chair Barton.

Co-Chair Barton noted the wording of each motion should read “motion carried to recommend approval to City Council.”

Motion to approve minutes by Co-Chair Monge, and seconded by Commissioner Brenna, with all present voting aye (6-0). Motion carried to approve the September 1, 2022 regular meeting minutes as amended.

V. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

There was no one from the public to speak.

Co-Chair Barton requested that Commission Business Action Items and Recommendations Item A. be moved up on the agenda and considered before the Public Hearings.

VI. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. 2170 Eldridge Avenue Minor Subdivision Plat

This item was considered after Item VII.A.

VII. COMMISSION BUSINESS ACTION ITEMS & RECOMMENDATIONS

A. 2395 Margaret Street – Development Concept Review

City Planner Brandy Howe stated the City has been in contact with JB Vang. They are looking to redevelop 5 parcels that are located at Margaret Street and Seppala Boulevard. The development would contain 61 apartments, commercial space, and parking. The proposal will require a PUD and a Comprehensive Plan amendment. The draft schedule would have the proposal tonight, City Council consideration on October 18th and submittal of the proposal sometime after that with changes, if needed. Commissioner Gelbmann stated his appreciation for the presentation.

Jackson Cruikshank, development manager with JB Vang, detailed the plan and requested feedback from the Planning Commission. David Holland from Urban Works Architecture gave specifics on the current design plan. The current plan states there will be enclosed parking on the first level, amenity space on the second level, with apartments on the third and fourth levels. There will also be 2,200 feet of retail space. He also noted levels two and three may contain overhang on Seppala Boulevard.

After questions from the Planning Commission, Mr. Cruikshank provided this information:

- Balconies would not be over the street
- Retail space would be on the corner adjacent to the plaza
- They are looking to create an aesthetically pleasing side where the enclosed parking would be camouflaged
- Multiple options for the parking façade
- Possible bike parking and lane
- Based on a market analysis, development would contain a majority of studio apartments with 1-2-bedroom units as well

Co-Chair Barton suggested connectivity to the Gateway trail. Commissioner Gelbmann mentioned tree grouping to create green space and deter possible noise.

Mr. Cruikshank inquired if the Planning Commission noticed any potential problems. The Planning Commission noted a few details that could be discussed further. They mentioned incorporating a gathering space with minor landscaping to give it a more park like feel.

Commissioner Muhic mentioned transportation funding that may be available.

Council Liaison Wong stated she appreciated the affordability of this project.

VI. PUBLIC HEARINGS (continued)

A. 2170 Eldridge Avenue Minor Subdivision Plat

Ms. Howe provided the report on this property. The City and Housing Redevelopment Authority came to an agreement in June and acquired the property. Then the property was demolished because it was deemed to be in substandard condition. This property has met all the requirements dimensionally for 2 lots and will require the new lots to be connected to City water and sewer but will not require street work. City Engineer Morgan Dawley reviewed the plat and has requested drainage and utility easements be drawn on the draft.

Co-Chair Barton opened the public hearing at 7:12 p.m.

Co- Chair Barton closed the public hearing at 7:12 p.m.

Co-Chair Barton clarified certain language regarding the park dedication fee. Ms. Howe will discuss this with the finance department and clean up that language in the resolution.

Motion by Co-Chair Barton, and seconded by Co-Chair Monge, with all present voting aye (6-0). Motion carried to recommend approval to the City Council of the Proposed Minor Subdivision Plat of 2170 E. Eldridge Avenue Subject to the Approval Conditions as Listed in the Draft Resolution.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Sign Ordinance Enforcement

Ms. Howe addressed possible exceptions to the Sign Ordinance and offered various options the Planning Commission could take.

Commissioner Gelbmann inquired if the sign in question was on City property or private property which would determine the setback requirement. The Commission held a robust discussion on setbacks, sign size, land use requirements, and possibly educating the public on the Sign Ordinance when it is complete. Co-Chair Barton suggested keeping the Sign Ordinance as simple as possible in order for residents to be able to abide by the guidelines.

Ms. Howe noted another Sign Ordinance concern regarding a multi-tenant site. She suggested it be based on a percentage rather than square footage. Co-Chair Barton noted the new ordinance increases the amount of signage. Ms. Howe added the City chose to interpret this particular piece of the Sign Ordinance using square footage of tenant size versus building size. Co-Chair Monge questioned if using the tenant size instead of building size could be a permanent change. Ms. Howe made note of this.

Co-Chair Barton also added Commissioner Bles, who is not in attendance tonight, would have some good insight into this. The Commission discussed this further and agreed to take more time to research this topic and will continue this discussion at the November meeting.

IX. REPORTS FROM STAFF

Ms. Howe noted she is working on a variance for a cell tower and will have more to share at the next meeting.

Planning Secretary Lisa Ritchie stated her last day as Planning Secretary will be October 25, 2022. The Planning Commission congratulated her and wished her luck in her new position.

X. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL LIAISON

Council Liaison Wong provided a brief review of the housing needs assessment and noted young family and senior housing as the top priorities. She added the public forum regarding the future of the Community Center yielded many different options but was largely focused around youth and senior activities. She stated the City extended their contract with the volleyball tenant through June. Co-Chair Barton inquired if the housing study is available online. Council Liaison Wong stated it should be in the packet from the previous City Council workshop meeting and added the City is also looking into partnerships for the Community Center.

XI. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Brenna thanked Ms. Ritchie for her work with the Planning Commission.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, motion to adjourn by Commissioner Gelbmann, and seconded by Co-Chair Monge, with all present voting aye (6-0). Motion carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled Planning Commission Meeting is Thursday, November 3, 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