CITY OF NORTH ST. PAUL
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 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	absent
Rick Gelbmann, Commissioner	arrived at 6:35 p.m.
Andrew Wise, Commissioner	
Cameron Muhic, Commissioner	
Lisa Wong, City Council Liaison	

STAFF
Brandy Howe, Consultant City Planner

III. ADOPT AGENDA

Motion to adopt agenda by Co-Chair Barton, and seconded by Commissioner Blees, with all present voting aye (5-0). Motion carried to adopt the November 3, 2022 Agenda.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approve October 6th Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Co-Chair Barton noted all the motions should state the vote count as 6-0 not 7-0 because one Commissioner was absent.

Motion to approve minutes by Co-Chair Barton, and seconded by Commissioner Muhic, with all present voting aye (5-0). Motion carried to approve the October 6, 2022 regular meeting minutes as amended.

Commissioner Gelbmann arrived at 6:35 p.m.

V. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

There was no one from the public to speak.

VI. PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were no scheduled public hearings.

VII. COMMISSION BUSINESS ACTION ITEMS & RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Review of the 2023 to 2032 Capital Improvement Plan

City Engineer Morgan Dawley who worked closely with Finance Director Dan Winek and the Public Works Department provided the annual review of the Capital Improvement Plan. He noted this plan is not meant to be written in stone but intended to be a guideline and a look into future projects.

Mr. Dawley provided a street and utility map that detailed the timeline and current, completed and future projects. He noted over the next ten years the focus will shift to above ground maintenance. He stated the Capital Improvement Plan had a few priority changes putting the McKnight water main pipes in 2023 and the Casey Lake project in 2025 and 2027.

Co-Chair Barton clarified the Planning Commission does not need to make a formal recommendation to City Council but Mr. Dawley will bring their concerns to City Council. The Commission discussed funding of future projects that are 5-10 years down the road. Commissioner Wise questioned how cost estimates are populated. Mr. Dawley stated rough estimates are there for place holders and when it comes time to fund them, City staff will provide a clearer estimate.

Co-Chair Barton inquired about the Wayfinding Plan, the Community Center and the downtown beautification project. Mr. Dawley stated a dollar amount has not been identified for future projects but the downtown beautification is expected to be mostly paid for in 2022 and there may be a little carryover in 2023. Mr. Dawley also stated the Capital Improvement Plan encompasses many different projects and stated the importance of keeping the bigger projects relevant and on staff's radar going forward. It was also noted that the Comprehensive Plan includes a master park plan and an ADA transition plan as action items.

Council Liaison Wong mentioned the "Snowy Project" was not partnering with the Business Association on funding, but they're looking for alternative funding sources.

The Planning Commission agreed the Capital Improvement Plan is generally consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and they feel comfortable with it. Commissioner Blees questioned if this will be an annual process that will allow for changes each year. Mr. Dawley stated yes, the Capital Improvement Plan is a working document.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Sign Ordinance Modifications, continued

City Planner Brandy Howe discussed curb setbacks for non-permanent free-standing signs and multi-tenant sign sizes.

After discussion with the Planning Commission, Ms. Howe provided the following information:

- Planning Commission agreed with a 3-to-4-foot setback from curb
- The main goal is to gain compliance and maintain safety
- The change would read if smaller than 4 sq. feet the sign shall be setback no more than 2 feet from the curb.

Ms. Howe noted she will make the necessary amendment changes regarding sign setback and will bring it back to the Planning Commission for review.

The other area of concern is the sign size of multi-tenant buildings. Co-Chair Barton requested clarification on the definition of total surface area. There was discussion around street frontage, sign size and sign quantity and agreement that the proposed Option 1 would work the best.

Ms. Howe did clarify the wording should be street frontage or building façade not street facing. It was also clarified that a building facing a parking lot is not considered street frontage. Ms. Howe noted it is impossible to guess what buildings will and will not want/need in the future and clarified the possible need for a variance or an amendment to this Ordinance.

Commissioner Muhic suggested running it by the City Attorney. Ms. Howe noted she will pass it along when the revisions are completed. Council Liaison Wong mentioned the level of restrictiveness of the Ordinance may have an economic impact and could potentially impact small business owners.

Co-Chair Monge thanked Ms. Howe for her continued work with the Sign Ordinance.

IX. REPORTS FROM STAFF

Ms. Howe stated she begins her new role as Community Development Director on Monday.

X. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL LIAISON

Council Liaison Wong noted City Council approved the lot split and the text amendment to the Comprehensive Plan regarding building height. She noted the Wold Group will be working with Council Member Cole on the Community Center on next steps and mentioned the first meeting of the working group will take place on the November 15th.

XI. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Gelbmann drove by Schifsky's property and noted the planting of trees to create a buffer and encouraged that the old fencing on the east side of Gateway be removed.

Co-Chair Barton mentioned the Environmental Conservation Rotary Day on Friday, Dec. 2nd at 7:00 a.m. and wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Commissioner Blees encouraged everyone to participate in the Veterans Day event on the Nov. 11th.

Commissioner Muhic reminded everyone to vote next Tuesday.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, motion to adjourn by Co-Chair Barton, and seconded by Commissioner Blees, 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 December 1, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.