



**Planning Commission  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
April 3, 2025  
6:30 PM**

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

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Blee called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

**II. ROLL CALL**

COMMISSION

Patrick Blee, Chair  
Andrew Wise, Vice-Chair  
Arthur Alvarez, Jr., Commissioner  
Stephanie Kane-Burback, Commissioner  
Elizabeth Gadbois, Commissioner  
Cameron Muhic, Commissioner  
Jim Rathe, Commissioner

STAFF/LIAISONS

Jason Nordby, City Council Liaison

**III. ADOPT AGENDA**

Blee asked for a motion to adopt the April 3, 2025 meeting agenda.  
M/Wise, S/Rathe.  
Motion carried 7-0.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. Approval of January 2, 2025 Meeting Minutes  
Blee asked for a motion to approve the January 2, 2025 meeting minutes.  
M/Rathe, S/Alvarez.  
Motion carried 7-0.

**V. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

There were no public comments.

**VI. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

There were no public hearings.

**VII. COMMISSION BUSINESS, ACTION ITEMS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

- A. Review of Parks and Open Space Master Plan  
Wise commended the Parks and Recreation Commission for all their work on the Parks and Open Space Master Plan. He stated the plan has everything he would like to see, is very thorough, and he has no recommended additions.

Blees stated that there is mention in the plan of community interest in having lifeguards at Silver Lake Park. He asked if this is a cost decision that the city must make. Laura Greenlee-Karp and David Andren from the Parks and Recreation Commission approached the dais to answer questions. Greenlee-Karp stated historically, the city had to fundraise to have lifeguards at the beach. Wise asked what amount it would cost to fund lifeguards during the summer season. Greenlee-Karp stated that she would request information to get that number. Blees recommended they do some projections based on previous years adjusted for inflation.

Muhic recommended the Parks and Recreation Commission reread the plan to make sure it is up to date. Muhic stated that there are references to an apartment building being constructed that is already completed, such as on page 15 of the Parks and Open Space Plan. Greenlee-Karp stated she will share that information.

Blees asked the Parks and Recreation representatives if there is anything that stands out to them, being that they were involved in the planning. Greenlee-Karp stated bringing McKnight Fields, especially the tennis court area, back to life is something she would be most excited about. Andren stated at McKnight Fields there would be an opportunity for skateboarding or BMX. Andren stated he is also excited about the proposed natural play area on 3rd St N. Wise stated he likes the downtown triangle park. It is small but is an important landmark entering the downtown area. Gadbois stated that Southwood Nature Preserve is not an accessible park, and it would be nice to make it accessible especially since it is used as an educational space. Andren stated Southwood is set up for wood chip trails and the goal is to keep it as close to nature as possible. Greenlee-Karp stated that historically Southwood Nature Preserve has been managed by a task force; more recently, the city has taken over the maintenance of the park. The future of Southwood is something they are talking about. Moving forward with any new park development, the city is required to make it accessible.

Muhic recommended staff provide the plans to any new commissioners or council members. Rathe asked how the Parks and Recreation Commission plans to use this information long term. Greenlee-Karp stated the goal is to move forward with all aspects of the plan, one park at a time.

Chair Blees asked for a motion to recommend approval to City Council of the Parks and Open Space Masters Plan.  
M/Rathe, S/Muhic.  
Motion carried 7-0.

**B. Discussion: Downtown Design Manual**

Blees stated the Downtown Design Manual item is anticipated to be a multi-meeting discussion. The most notable thing is the question of whether the Downtown Design Manual is needed today and whether the zoning ordinance adequately covers what is demonstrated in the Downtown Design Manual. What the Downtown Design Manual does that the zoning ordinance does not is that it brings forward subjectivity recommendations, aesthetics, etc. That is what is of value to the Downtown Design Manual. Muhic agreed and indicated this project is worth pursuing.

Wise stated that the Downtown Design Manual is worth having now, but in a slightly pared down form. It is great to have imagery showing what we would hope developers present to the city. For a downtown like North St. Paul's, it is so unique and a huge part of the city that it is good to have some form of recommended imagery. Blees stated it would be good to have an opportunity to review the Downtown Design Manual in greater detail and bring suggestions to the upcoming Planning Commission meeting. Nordby stated one of the things he would suggest is to look at North St. Paul Comprehensive Plan and perhaps include this manual as a section of the Comprehensive Plan when it gets updated in the future. Wise agreed it would be beneficial to



have all the information in the same space. Blees stated there should be some focus on inconsistencies between the Downtown Design Manual and other official documents. This item will be discussed further at future Planning Commission meetings.

#### **VIII. REPORTS**

Blees stated that there will be a new Community Development Director starting within the next month.

#### **IX. ADJOURNMENT**

Blees asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:21 PM.

M/Rathe, S/Gadbois.

Motion carried 7-0.

**The next regularly scheduled Planning Commission Meeting is Thursday, May 1, 2025 at 6:30 PM.**

Members, please notify any planned absences to:

Chris Cherne  
Planning Commission Secretary  
651-747-2440  
[chris.cherne@northstpaul.org](mailto:chris.cherne@northstpaul.org)