

**CITY OF NORTH ST. PAUL
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2020
6:15 P.M.**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Barton called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. The meeting was conducted via Zoom.

II. ROLL CALL

COMMISSION

Elaine Barton, Commission Chair

Patrick Blees, Commissioner

Rick Gelbmann, Commissioner

John Monge, Commission Vice Chair EXCUSED ABSENT

Tom Sonnek, Commission City Council Liaison

Michael Stahlmann, Commissioner

Allan Worm, Commissioner

STAFF

Erin Perdu, City Planner

III. ADOPT AGENDA

Motion to adopt agenda by Commissioner Gelbmann, and seconded by Commissioner Blees, with all present voting aye (5-0). Motion carried to adopt the September 3, 2020 Agenda.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

August 6 meeting minutes

Chair Barton requested the following correction to the August 6, 2020 meeting minutes:

-page 5, 5th paragraph, last word, replace “structure” with “street”

Motion to approve Minutes by Commissioner Worm, and seconded by Commissioner Gelbmann, with all present voting aye (5-0). Motion carried to approve the August 6, 2020 regular meeting minutes as amended.

Commissioner Blees requested the following corrections to the August 13, 2020 meeting minutes:

-page 2 of the packet, 1st paragraph, 2nd line, replace “it” with “the deadline”

-page 2, last paragraph, 2nd line - remove “is”

Chair Barton requested the following correction to the August 13, 2020 meeting minutes:

-Page 8, first sentence - should reflect that she referenced discussions with the developer, and Commissioner Stahlmann mentioned it was a good spot for a gazebo.

Motion to approve Minutes by Commissioner Blees, and seconded by Commissioner Stahlmann, with all present voting aye (5-0). Motion carried to approve the August 13, 2020 regular meeting minutes as amended.

V. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

There were no comments.

VI. PUBLIC HEARINGS

-None.

VII. COMMISSION BUSINESS ACTION ITEMS & RECOMMENDATIONS

-None.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

A. 2020 Zoning Updates Discussion

Ms. Perdu stated the Planning Commission's last meeting was a discussion of the 2020 Zoning Update, and there are a few items to wrap up from that meeting. She added a new item to discuss is the parking of various vehicles.

Ms. Perdu stated page 26 of the meeting packet is a review of recommended corrections and additions, as well as edits to the "purpose and objectives". She added she had included a section requiring that single-family residential parcels are not eligible for Planned Unit Development (PUD), and additional criteria was added under "General Requirements". The PUD must meet one of two criteria: 2 or more principle uses or structures on a single parcel, which could include a mixture of residential types and could include non-residential buildings; or a mixed-use structure must be included.

Chair Barton asked whether the criteria would be required to be included in the proposal. Ms. Perdu confirmed this.

Commissioner Blees requested the following correction: under Item K, replace "it" with "the proposal".

Chair Barton stated, with regard to flexibility from Ordinance standards, whether these are the only standards from which flexibility can be required. Ms. Perdu confirmed this.

Ms. Perdu stated she added "Street Width and Parking" to the list, based on the discussion at the Planning Commission's last meeting.

Ms. Perdu stated flexibility for parking requirements is addressed on page 30 of 64. She added the Planning Commission expressed concern that the only way you could get flexibility from the

parking requirements is if there were staggered demand. She noted the addition of peak parking demands, shared parking, proximity to mass transit and car ownership as characteristics of the targeted residential population, which should provide flexibility.

Chair Barton asked whether 600 feet is standard. Ms. Perdu stated that requirement was taken from a similar community's Ordinance, but that can be reduced.

Chair Barton stated 600 feet is inconsistent with the next requirement for 300 feet from transit. Ms. Perdu stated the general distance from a transit stop is ¼ mile.

Commissioner Blees stated he would support having both requirements at 600 feet. Chair Barton stated that would be a consideration but not a requirement.

Ms. Perdu stated, on page 33 of 64, neighborhood meetings are “strongly encouraged”.

Ms. Perdu stated a review criteria was added that the PUD must be consistent with the Purpose and Objectives.

Chair Barton requested that “consistent with” be replaced with “achieves”.

Commissioner Gelbmann stated he is fine with leaving C1 and C2 to specify the objectives.

Ms. Perdu stated the Planning Commission requested clarification regarding what would constitute a minor change. She added a 10% threshold was added on page 40 for the separation of buildings, setbacks, design changes, elevation, changes in height, and modification of parking lots as long as there is no reduction in number of stalls.

Chair Barton stated, with regard to 10% change in building height, the change in height must not exceed the maximum buildable height for the district.

Ms. Perdu stated “single family dwelling” was replaced with to “principle dwelling”.

Chair Barton stated standards for exterior appearance should be included, similar to standards for detached garages. She asked whether it would make sense to have standards for these and other exterior aspects the Commission talked about.

Ms. Perdu stated the Minneapolis Ordinance covered balconies and decks, which cannot face an interior side yard, and prohibits rooftop decks.

Chair Barton stated exterior requirements apply to single-family homes, so they should also apply to an ADU. Ms. Perdu stated language can be added similar to the language for accessory structures.

Chair Barton stated she has concerns about front yard stairways. She added rear yard stairways are not of concern. Commissioner Gelbmann agreed. Ms. Perdu stated a prohibition can be added for exterior stairways in the front yard.

Chair Barton stated the requirement should limit stairways to the rear and side yards.

Chair Barton asked whether the 10% window requirement on exterior walls facing a public street is necessary.

Commissioner Gelbmann stated the setback is 10 feet, and there may be situations where homes are close together. He added high windows are an option.

Ms. Perdu stated a lot with both public street and alley access would need to have some windows on the wall that faces the alley. Chair Barton stated she is more concerned about the public street side.

Commissioner Gelbmann stated existing requirements for egress windows would take care of that. Ms. Perdu agreed.

Commissioner Gelbmann stated he is not sure what purpose this requirement would service, as people would want to add windows to make their homes more livable and desirable.

Two family dwellings – page 51

Chair Barton requested the following correction: bottom of the page, 2nd paragraph, “Planned Unit Development” should be capitalized.

Chair Barton requested clarification regarding tree requirements on page 52. She asked why the minimum is 1 tree per parcel and not per dwelling unit. Ms. Perdu agreed that requirement can be changed to 2 trees per parcel for a duplex. She added that is not onerous. She noted each family use would require 1 tree.

Chair Barton stated that would be a townhome. Commissioner Gelbmann stated that would be more consistent.

Ms. Perdu stated she would provide a clean draft of PUD and all housing sections in the next Planning Commission meeting packet.

Ms. Perdu stated, with regard to street parking, Commissioners had mixed responses about what should be allowed. She added one Commissioner felt that no street parking should be allowed, but a few Commissioners felt that the type of vehicle should be considered. She noted some Commissioners felt that commercial vehicles should be allowed.

Chair Barton stated the Zoning Code regulates commercial activity within the residential district.

Mr. Gelbmann stated parking of large vehicles could restrict traffic on some streets, especially if the parking is consistent.

Commissioner Worm stated only small and medium vehicles should be allowed to be parked on the street, as long as they do not have commercial signage.

Ms. Perdu stated there was consensus on commercial vehicles and equipment. She added there was some discussion last year about State regulations for vehicle size.

Commissioner Gelbmann asked whether semi-trucks are allowed. Chair Barton stated that would be considered a large vehicle. She added they have been parked in side yards in the past, which creates issues with neighbors.

Ms. Perdu stated there is consensus that semi-trucks should be prohibited from parking in residential neighborhoods.

Commissioner Blees stated the term “long-term basis” is used. He added he does not believe it is objectionable to park a semi-truck in the side yard once in a while. He noted perhaps it would be helpful to define “long-term”.

Chair Barton stated one of the difficult things about this issue is that the City does not do proactive Code enforcement. She stressed the importance of making sure that requirements are clear and reasonable.

Commissioner Worm stated there are several homes in North St. Paul that do not have a driveway at all. He asked where small commercial vehicles would be parked in that case.

Ms. Perdu stated she would review the City Code for language about what is allowed to be parked on the street and provide draft changes for the Planning Commission’s review.

Commissioner Blees stated restricting commercial vans with logos could severely restrict people from being able to do their business.

Chair Barton stated vehicles that are being operated for commercial purposes over a certain weight are required to have commercial signage. She added signage is not a problem in the small vehicle category, as many people drive them for personal use as well. She added her only question is how many would be allowed.

Commissioner Blees stated two vehicles would be acceptable.

Chair Barton stated she mentioned to Ms. Perdu the importance of not encouraging residents to add more impervious surface for parking. She added she is thinking about quantity of vehicles and what will happen to residential streets from an aesthetic perspective. She noted consideration should also be given to safety concerns related to larger vehicles and trailers.

Commissioner Gelbmann stated screening and landscaping could be used to address the aesthetic of large vehicles in side and rear yards. Ms. Perdu stated that is a good idea.

Chair Barton stated she does not support routine parking on the street.

Ms. Perdu stated there is some disagreement about whether recreational vehicles should be allowed to be parked in driveways. Commissioner Gelbmann stated some residents may have

visitors who come and stay in a recreational vehicle in their driveway. He asked what impact that would have on where the vehicle can be parked.

Ms. Perdu stated the number of recreational vehicles that are allowed to be parked in a driveway can be limited. She added, however, some parcels are very large and regulation may not be necessary.

City Council Liaison Sonnek stated he has reviewed similar Ordinances from other local communities, and they are not very specific about these issues that are being discussed. He added this could be opening up a Pandora's box, in terms of being too specific. He noted there may be more general statements that could be made.

Commissioner Blees stated his biggest issue is with street parking, and issues with views, safety and visibility. He added restrictions on parking in the side and rear yards should be lessened dramatically.

Ms. Perdu stated she can draft some language related to safety related to street parking.

City Council Liaison Sonnek stated the main focus is to limit the impact on neighboring properties.

Chair Barton stated there could be a limit on the number of recreational vehicles per household. She added that might be considered unreasonable. Ms. Perdu stated the number of vehicles in the side yard and rear yard could be regulated.

Ms. Perdu stated she would draft a parking Ordinance. She added the photos and grid were very helpful and might be used at City Hall as an exhibit for residents.

Commissioner Worm requested that a draft document be sent out to the Commissioners for review before it is finalized.

REPORTS FROM STAFF

-None.

IX. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

a. Update from City Council Liaison

City Council Liaison Sonnek stated construction continues on all projects, and there is a lot happening in the downtown area. He added the live video stream from the rooftop of Polar Lounge is now available for viewing on the City website. He added construction on the storage facility at Anchor Block is coming along, and the apartment complex should be starting soon.

City Council Liaison Sonnek stated the City Council has been discussing the 2021 budget at recent budget workshops. He added the City Council's guidance was to keep the City operating levy at a 0% increase. He noted this has resulted in the elimination of 5 City Staff positions, which is having some affect throughout the City, and at City Hall.

Chair Barton stated video recordings of City Council budget workshops have been added to the City's website. She added she has watched the more recent meetings, and the City Council has been discussing budget impacts and layoffs. She expressed appreciation for City Staff and the City Council for their hard work and efforts.

Commissioners Worm and Stahlmann did not receive their meeting packets. Ms. Perdu agreed to let Ms. Boerschinger know about that.

Commissioner Gelbmann stated the Lake Association has been working with Ramsey County and other organizations to eradicate purple loosestrife in the lake.

Chair Barton asked whether the signal at McKnight Road will be activated soon. She added she noticed the road between 8th and 9th Avenues was closed. City Council Liaison Sonnek stated he did not see a notice on that.

Chair Barton stated the annual MIA March is scheduled for September 10, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. from City Hall to the Veteran's Memorial.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, motion to adjourn by Commissioner Worm, and seconded by Commissioner Gelbmann, with all present voting aye (5-0). Motion carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:57 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled Planning Commission Meeting is Thursday, October 1, 2020 at 6:15 p.m.

Members, please notify any planned absences to: Olivia Boerschinger
Planning Commission Secretary
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Olivia.boerschinger@northstpaul.org