

**CITY OF NORTH ST. PAUL
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, APRIL 5, 2018
6:15 P.M.**

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

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Barton called the meeting to order at 6:18 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

COMMISSION

Elaine Barton, Commission Chair

Trisha Hamm, Commission Vice-Chair

Tom Sonnek, Commission City Council Liaison

Chris Bathurst, Commissioner

ABSENT

Michael Stahlmann, Commissioner

Rick Gelbmann, Commissioner

John Wahl, Commissioner

Allan Worm, Commissioner

STAFF

Erin Perdu, City Planner

Karin Derauf, Commission Secretary

III. ADOPT AGENDA

Motion to adopt agenda by Commissioner Stahlmann, and seconded by Commissioner Gelbmann, with all present voting aye (6-0). Motion carried to adopt the April 5, 2018 Agenda.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve March 1, 2018 Minutes by Commissioner Worm, and seconded by Vice Chair Hamm, with all present voting aye (6-0). Motion carried to approve the April 5, 2018 regular meeting minutes with the following changes: at the top of page 2, from, "...it is conducive to have the Planning Commission review the next CIP as there will be some changes for THE 2019 CIP that may impact the Comprehensive Plan", to, "...it is conducive to have the Planning Commission review the next CIP as there will be some changes for the 2019 CIP that may be impacted by the Comprehensive Plan".

V. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

None

VI. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

VII. COMMISSION BUSINESS ACTION ITEMS & RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Draft Comprehensive Plan Review

City Planner, Erin Perdu, introduced the 4 chapters for review, which included Chapter 6 - Economic Development, Chapter 7 - Downtown, Chapter 9 – Resiliency, and Chapter 15 – Implementation. Thorough review of these chapters was followed by brief review of the additional chapters for final commentary and changes prior to the City Council Workshop meeting and the Public Hearing. The Steering Committee reviewed the Comprehensive Plan as a whole and gave their final comments and suggestions that were incorporated into the document. This version of the document will be reviewed by the City Council at their workshop on Tuesday, April 10th as well. The draft will be completed by next month and there will be a Public Hearing on May 3, 2018 at the Planning Commission meeting.

Chapter 6 – Economic Development

Planner Perdu gave an introduction about the Economic Development chapter and stated that the chapter has been reviewed and vetted by the EDA. Their comments have already been incorporated into this chapter. The chapter begins with an economic snapshot of North St. Paul and gives comparisons of North St. Paul versus the surrounding area and to the state as a whole. Starting on page 16 of the chapter, the specifics of redevelopment begin and that becomes the primary focus of the goals and implementations regarding economic development.

Chair Barton inquired about the table on page 13 in relation to the graph on page 14. They seem to be providing the same information. Planner Perdu indicated that they are providing the same general information, however, it is being displayed in a different form. Council Liaison Sonnek stated he appreciates the representation of both of these forms as it helps to show any major changes or trends. Planner Perdu will try to get both graphic displays on the same page.

Commissioner Worm raised a question regarding table 6-2 on page 2 of the chapter regarding the final column of the Total Tax Rate. This appears to be just the total rates across the table added together. Planner Perdu will follow-up with the economic development specialist that prepared this chapter to find out what the reasoning of the final column is for and whether or not it is necessary. The paragraph following the table will also be reviewed and rewritten for better comprehension of what the table is trying to convey.

Attention was brought back to the redevelopment districts and Planner Perdu discussed the Funding Assistance tables on pages 18 and 19, indicating that the City already uses many of these tools. She also referenced the four primary economic goals at the end of the chapter and how these tools and tasks that will aim to accomplish the goals.

Commissioner Gelbmann asked a question regarding page 13 and the final sentence in the paragraph and the projection of permits that will be issued annually. Commissioner Gelbmann wanted to know if the difference between the average new permits in the past matches the expectation for additional household permits in the future.

Commissioner Worm inquired as to whether or not there was an expected time frame that older homes will be torn down and new builds will begin happening in the City to account for the projection of permits. Planner Perdu stated that there was some discussion at the Steering Committee regarding this and speculation on the idea of North St. Paul becoming a “tear down and rebuild” community, and whether or not it would be a threat to the existing affordable housing. The thought is that perhaps in the distant future this may become an issue; however, there has not been any specific evidence forthcoming. Planner Perdu stated this type of thing generally comes into play when there is a higher demand on any particular area due to the desirable location. This is recognized and accounted for in the Housing chapter of the Comprehensive Plan, should this arise in North St. Paul.

Chair Barton would like the final paragraph of the text on page 13 eliminated rather than trying to project the number of per new dwelling permits annually. Planner Perdu agreed that this needs to either be eliminated or clarified and will follow up with the economic development specialist for that portion of the text.

Council Liaison Sonnek inquired about the Goals and Tasks section of the chapter, goal number one, task three, regarding marketing and branding strategies. He indicated that the City has already rebranded everything with the new Snowman logo, so he would like to see this goal more heavily focused on marketing.

Chair Barton made comment regarding page 17 and the descriptions of each district in terms of the unique “characteristics” of each section. A better definition of this page would include “opportunities” of each district rather than the characteristics.

Chapter 7 – Downtown

Planner Perdu indicated that this is a smaller chapter as there is also a Downtown Master Plan that is being written. This particular chapter looks at the highlights of the public engagement meetings that were held. The middle section of the chapter is not necessarily new information but comes from the Living Streets Plan, the Redevelopment Master Plan, the Downtown Design Manual, etc., and is a compilation of all these documents. Finally, the final part of the chapter includes some concept design graphics indicating a depiction of what the City could potentially look like.

Commissioner Worm noted figure 7-3 and inquired as to whether or not we would have curb bump-outs as shown in the graphic. Planner Perdu stated that it is part of the design, however, not necessary. This design accomplishes a couple objectives, for example, slows traffic, directs traffic, narrows the areas for pedestrian crossing, and extends the angle parking closer to the intersection. She also pointed out that this is not the end design, just a concept for ideas.

There was a discussion on parking and Planner Perdu pointed out that the Downtown Master Plan will be the key document for the Downtown area. Council Liaison Sonnek indicated that the consensus is for keeping the angled parking in this area because approximately 30-40% of the Downtown parking would have to be forfeited if parallel parking was put in its place. This diminishes state funding for redevelopment, however, North St. Paul business owners and residents have expressed great concern over losing the angled parking and are not willing to give it up. It is also noted that it adds to the “charm” of Downtown North St. Paul.

Commissioner Gelbmann referenced page eight under the Policies section, Transportation bullet. He commented on barriers from Polar Ridge to the Library and would like something more than the general statement given in this section. He would like to see more specific examples of pedestrian and bike links for transportation and recreational use added to the text.

Chapter 9 – Resiliency

Planner Perdu opened the topic of resiliency by stating that the text of this chapter is indicating resilience to climate change. The topic is regarding environmental and climate resilience. This chapter has four themes pertaining to a healthy community theme, energy and renewables theme, environmental assets and infrastructure theme (natural features), and a brief theme of economy and society in regards to the climate change resiliency and how to protect communities, policy decisions, etc. This chapter has been reviewed by the EAC, staff, and the Steering Committee.

Chair Barton asked about the table 9-1 on page 5 and questioned the term “low-income households” in the Residential description of the table. She feels it should just state “households”. Erin will follow up with this term and make necessary changes. Education campaigns in this section should be targeted at “all” households.

In the same table, Chair Barton indicated that the Renewable Energy description use the term “explore” and should be changed to “review”, as the term “explore” makes it seem like there is not a solar ordinance in place.

Chair Barton also indicated that the addition of the EAC’s importance to the implementation and strategies of the goals in this chapter should be noted and added to the text in the Goals and Strategies section on page(s) 12 and 13.

Chapter 15 – Implementation

Planner Perdu introduced this chapter and indicated that the culmination of all the chapters shows up in the final Implementation chapter in the form of a matrix as shown on pages 3 through 12. She also indicated that all the text in the matrix is directly from the chapters. Chair Barton pointed out that Economic Development and Parks are not showing in the matrix. Planner Perdu will make sure the pages are reformatted and those two chapters are added.

Commissioner Gelbmann also indicated that some definition of the time-frames indicated by the length of goals. For example, an X in any given location on the matrix indicates an endpoint or a completion date, eg., an X in the short term goal column means an ending point of 5 years from commencement of the particular project. This needs to be defined in the text prior to the matrix. Also, it would be helpful to show breaks or separate tables for each chapter. Commissioner Stahlmann would like to see this in the form of a bar graph rather than using X’s in a matrix format.

Commissioner Gelbmann referred to page 9 in the Resiliency section and would like to see a change on the 14th item in the list regarding the prioritization of the removal of invasive plant species. It indicates removal of these from “open spaces” and he would like the addition of “waters” included in this goal.

He also referred the Surface Water section on page 11. Item number 9 also needs to include “inflows” as well as outflows. This should include any water flowing into Silver Lake as well.

He indicated that in the Water Supply section on page 10, there should be some form a goal regarding distribution water in the event of an emergency, for example, connection to an adjacent city like Oakdale. Perhaps a goal/plan like this would eliminate the need for distribution of water bottles. What would the cost be for connection to Oakdale, etc? This would need to be evaluated or if it appears in another chapter, than it should be referenced to that chapter.

Review of other chapters

Chair Barton pointed out Chapter 2, page 1, final sentence of the page it states “easy transit to both Downtowns is desired”. There is only one Downtown. This is an addition from one of the Community Café meetings. Planner Perdu will get clarification as to what the text should read.

Commissioner Stahlmann commented on the Park map in Chapter 10. He would like the school locations to be included on the map. Chair Barton pointed out that there is another map in the Transportation Chapter, Chapter 8, page 28; it includes schools so the information can be readily transferred to the Park map in Chapter 10.

Commissioner Worm commented on Housing Chapter 5, table 5-1 that shows the total housing units which are vacant. His question was, “does North St. Paul really have 208 vacant houses”? Planner Perdu clarified that this number is total housing units, which also includes apartments, duplexes, etc.

Chair Barton mentioned that the Transportation Chapter 8, among other chapters, should have a direct reference to ADA compliance. She stated that she will send her comments to Planner Perdu via email directly.

Chair Barton referenced the Parks chapters and noted that there is no information or text relating to programs or activities that are available at the parks. Planner Perdu stated she would talk to Debra Gustafson regarding more discussion in the text about various offerings at the North St. Paul parks.

Commissioner Gelbmann mentioned the Transportation Chapter 8, page 8, paragraph 2, sentence 1; He commented that Highway 36 also intersects Century Avenue. This paragraph only indicates that McKnight Road intersection with Highway 36. Century Avenue should be added to the text as an intersection as well.

Also in Chapter 8, page 19, the last section of the page, first bullet, second sub-bullet, where it references a “south bound left-turn lane at 17th Avenue”. Commissioner Gelbmann asked if the City looking to add a left turn lane into Oakdale at this intersection. Planner Perdu will follow up on this.

Commissioner Gelbmann next referenced the Transportation Chapter 8, page 24, Table 5 regarding TAZ (Transportation Analysis Zone). According to the table it appears as though there is no employment change in section 1826 from 2010 to 2040. The question Commissioner Gelbmann asked is, “where do the figures in the table come from”? He also asked, “is or has consideration of these figures captured the very recent current development thereby altering the employment figures; for example has Window World or Suite Living been account for”?

Planner Perdu referenced the employment figures shown in the Future Land Use Map in Chapter 4, and stated that numbers are not likely to change as there is not a significant change in land use in North St. Paul in terms of development.

Commissioner Gelbmann also commented on page 25 regarding the roadway capacities. There is no mention of the Stillwater Bridge and its impact on the roadway capacity thresholds. Planner Perdu referred to the map on page 23 indicating that the forecasted traffic count is expected to increase from 38,000 to 51,650. Planner Perdu will further verify these numbers.

On page 36, in terms of freight, Commissioner Gelbmann pointed out that there is a FedEx facility and wonders how much freight traffic will increase on 36. Is this worthy of mention in the Freight section in the Transportation Chapter? Planner Perdue will also look into this in terms of traffic impact on Highway 36.

Commissioner Gelbmann next commented on the goals in Chapter 2 in regards to the Transportation Chapter and the Intersection of Highway 36 and Highway 120 as discussed on page 46 of Chapter 8. There needs to be more information regarding the improvements of this intersection, not just for safety of the intersection, but also for accessibility to the City.

Chair Barton mentioned that in the Transportation Chapter 8, page 40, at the corner of Charles St. N., and 17th Ave. E., the map indicates that there is a bus stop at this location, however, there is no bus route shown on the map through here. Planner Perdu will follow up on this map and review the routes and bus stop locations.

Chair Barton next discussed Community Profile Chapter 3, first paragraph, and that this seems to have conflicting information regarding the percentage of English speakers in 2009 versus today. Planner Perdu indicated that the information comes from the Census Bureau and that the final sentence appears incorrect and should say “decrease” in diversity rather than “increase”. Planner Perdu will follow up with this information and change and/or remove the final sentence in this paragraph.

Commissioner Gelbmann referenced Parks Chapter 10, page 10, number 1 and he would like to see another bullet point in this section regarding chloride infiltration in relation to road salts as it is degrading water bodies. Planner Perdu will follow up with a sentence regarding road salts in this section.

Chair Barton moved on to Land Use Chapter 4, page 23, at the very bottom at bullet point titled connections. The last sentence of this paragraph seems to be missing language as it is not a complete thought with what is being connected in terms of land uses, amenities, etc. Planner Perdu will review this paragraph and complete the information.

Commissioner Stahlmann mentioned Economic Development Chapter 6, page 9, table 6-8 would be more helpful if there was a total column included in the table.

Chair Barton commented on Parks Chapter 10, the table on page 3 listing acreage doesn't match the same acreage in the narrative. Planner Perdu indicated that the parks table comes from the Metropolitan Council; however, she will have the information checked to ensure accuracy.

Also in Parks Chapter 10, page 3, table 8-1, in the City Wide section and the Neighborhood and City Wide section, there was discussion on the Urban Ecology Center as “special purpose” and the Environmental Learning Center as “open spaces”. Chair Barton wanted to know what the

distinction between these two facilities is? Chair Barton stated that these also appear in the Resiliency Chapter 9, page 2, under “Lakes, Streams, and Wetlands” and indicates that both the Urban Ecology Center and the Environmental Learning Center are described as wetlands in this chapter. Planner Perdu will follow up and get better clarification as they are described in the table. Her current interpretation is that they are described this way because they were determined to have different functions, thus the different classifications. However, she cannot speak directly to the classifications and that the table was taken from the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, prior to her work with the City of North St. Paul.

Chair Barton referenced the Water Supply Chapter 12, page 16, number 2, bullet 2, at the end of the paragraph where it states “...consider applying for a MCES Water Efficiency Grant in 2017...”. Planner Perdu indicated that language can be included in the text that reflects the information was taken directly from an approved document prior to 2017, however, this information is being included in the Comprehensive Plan overall as part of the planning process.

A discussion revolved around the Map in Chapter 10, page 9. Planner Perdu indicated that she will follow up and ensure the Map in Chapter 10 is the same as figure 7 on page 28 in Chapter 8 as it pertains to the status of Margaret Street and existing sidewalks.

Commissioner Gelbmann, mentioned the Water Supply Chapter 12, page 12, Table 3 regarding the top users of water. There is nothing regarding reduction of use in the narrative portion of the text. This should be included perhaps indicating some education for high volume users. Planner Perdu made note of this and will review the table.

VIII. REPORTS FROM STAFF

None

IX. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Update from City Council Liaison Tom Sonnek

City Council Liaison, Tom Sonnek, gave an update on the status of Window World’s zoning applications in regards to City Council approval. The City Council approved their applications with the condition that the owners of Window World work in conjunction with the City regarding water run-off mitigation on the west side of the Window World property.

There have been audio issues in the Council Chambers room in regards to the Planning Commission transcription recordings where the overhead speakers “buzz” loudly for a short varied length of time and then stop. This transfers to the microphone jack in the recorder. The audio issue has been identified as cell phone interference.

Council Liaison Sonnek gave an update on the status of the White Bear Lake Ruling. The Judge will not stay the ruling after appeal from the DNR. This may have a potentially large impact on the City of North St. Paul. Many cities in the area have appealed to the DNR regarding permitting pertaining to the ruling. There are three things that North St. Paul has appealed to the DNR, which include an irrigation ban, plan for surface water runoff, and residential water usage at a cap of 75 gallons a day. The DNR came back with their ruling and denied a portion of the appeal concerning a plan for surface water runoff. This means that the City will need to move

