

**City of West St. Paul
Economic Development Authority Work Session Minutes
March 9, 2020**

1. Open Work Session

President Napier called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present: President Dave Napier
Commissioners Wendy Berry, Lisa Eng-Sarne,
Anthony Fernandez, John Justen, Bob Pace and Dick Vitelli

Absent: None

Also Present: City Manager Ryan Schroeder
City Attorney Kori Land
Fire Chief Mark Juelfs
Police Chief Brian Sturgeon
EDA Executive Director Jim Hartshorn
EDA Assistant Treasurer Char Stark
Human Resources Director Debra Gieseke
City Clerk/EDA Secretary Shirley Buecksler

Kari Gill, Deputy Executive Director & Director of Housing and
Development, Dakota County Community Development Agency
Andy Mattson, Project Architect, LHB

Motion was made by Councilmember Berry, seconded by Councilmember Justen to approve the agenda, as presented.

All members present voted aye. Motion carried.

3. Agenda Items

A. North Gateway Project Discussion

Community Development Director Hartshorn said we have reviewed a plan that may make the project more favorable, including exterior parking, the exterior, and more greenspace. Kari Gill from Dakota County CDA and Andy Mattson of LHB are here tonight.

Ms. Gill provided the Council with photographs of what the property looked like previously. There was a lot of different retail. They considered Council's suggestion to add retail but the site is challenging with the changes in topography. Accommodating parking and retail is difficult. When there was commercial on this

site, there was parking on Robert Street, which is not there now. There is not enough parking for both commercial and housing. To proceed, the CDA will not be including retail. They have made some changes with the architect.

Mr. Mattson said they took some of the feedback and made significant changes:

- There were 60 units and they removed 6 from the building; now there are 33 one bedroom and 21 efficiencies.
- The 18 lineal feet of frontage along Robert Street freed up a lot more greenspace.
- If phase 2 goes forward as designed, it has the same footprint as phase 1 but creates more greenspace.
- Previously, there was a garage door on the north elevation. We were able to move it to the northwest side, which is much better from an urban design standpoint. That caused us to pull the building out of the ground about 20 inches. We need required clearances for the garage door. This also puts the accessible entrance on the south side.

Some lesser changes done to help improvement:

- Incorporated retaining walls along Robert Street, as well as Annapolis to try to reduce the feel of the building height. This helps reduce the visual verticality of the building.
- Started looking bookending the building with the two brick forms and using a hip roof on both elements; the majority of the roof is flat
- Added brick and cast stone detailing for visual interest

Mayor Napier asked if there is any chance that the greenspace on the north end could be built up, with a berm to the top of the retaining walls. Mr. Mattson agreed that there could be an opportunity for that. He said anything could be done on the back side. It could be flush with grade on the back side. He said they are trying to deter people hanging out there. Some up-lighting on the trees will keep the space well lit and safe. We could use the retaining wall aspect to slope it back down.

Mayor Napier said if we bring the elevation up, it gives it that much more screening. He said he likes the way it looks, as well as the feel of it.

Councilmember Vitelli agreed and said he likes this a lot. He asked if the City is participating in the cost of the corner sign.

Councilmember Eng-Sarne said the Environmental Committee looked at it on Wednesday but that they didn't have this image. They had the tree count and the plant experts on the Committee oohed and awed at the list. They were very appreciative of the work that has been done on this.

Councilmember Justen asked what retention garden means. Mr. Mattson said it is basically a rain garden. The majority of stormwater storage will be under the paved areas in phase 1.

Councilmember Vitelli asked if the lower windows on the north end will be day lighted into the parking garage. Mr. Mattson said they will be a translucent glass. The use of the corner space is bike storage.

Councilmember Vitelli asked if there will be a limited common area or any kind of common area for tenants. Ms. Gill said there will be a small community room that residents can use and one management office. They are also trying to incorporate a space in the lobby for package delivery so they are not left in an unlocked vestibule. She said this will be incorporated into the building somewhere.

Mr. Mattson said the only images Council does not have here are the exterior elevations. The two brick forms bookended. The bays will be stucco. There will be fiber cement panels between the bays. The base will be brick. The retaining walls will be segmental. The hip roof will be asphalt shingles. The flat roof will be some kind of flat roof system. The west side base will be burnished concrete masonry look. Again, stucco in the bays, fiber cement panel and fiber cement lap siding.

Councilmember Justen asked about the height of the decorative fence. Mr. Mattson said it is a six foot fence. Ms. Gill said they have a neighborhood meeting tomorrow at 6:00 p.m. at the Dakota Building to get some feedback and if there is a preference from people who live immediately behind it.

Councilmember Vitelli asked if they are rebuilding the alley. Ms. Gill said yes, at our cost, and we hope it will be a positive. Part of the reason we did those photos, and we will have them at the neighborhood meeting, is people have become used to having a nice green parcel there. It's harder to envision development again when it's been green for a long time. We are trying to be a good neighbor and we think it will be really nice in the end.

Hartshorn said this will go to the Planning Commission on March 17th.

Mayor Napier and Council thanked them for a great job.

4. Adjourn

Motion was made by Commissioner Justen and seconded by Commissioner Berry to adjourn the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

All members present voted aye. Motion carried.

David J. Napier
President
City of West St. Paul