

MEETING MINUTES WEST ST. PAUL PLANNING COMMISSION

The regular meeting of the West St. Paul Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Franzmeier on Tuesday, May 16th, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. in the Municipal Center Council Chambers at 1616 Humboldt Avenue, West St. Paul, Minnesota 55118.

Roll Call: Commissioners: Nathan Gallus, Liz Gillen, Kyle Hoff, Lance LaRue, Dan McPhillips, Lisa Stevens, and Chair Franzmeier
Absent: Alex Dahlquist (e), Tim Haubrich (e)

Also present: Community Development Director, Ben Boike; City Planner, Melissa Houtsma; City Council Liaison, John Justen; City Attorney, Pam Whitmore

Adopt Minutes: The minutes from the April 18th, 2023 regular Planning Commission meeting were approved as written.

Public Hearings:

PC Case 23-07 – Conditional Use Permit to Allow a Mixed-use Residential/Commercial Building in a B3 – General Business District at 120 Butler Avenue East (EK Equities)

City Planner Houtsma introduced the item and summarized the staff report to the commission. The applicant representative, Matt Kuntz was present to answer questions from the commission.

The public hearing was opened at 6:40 pm, and the following persons came forward to speak:

- James Wallner, 140 Butler Avenue East

As there was no further comment from the audience and no one called in through the phone line, the public hearing was closed at 6:43 pm.

A motion was made by Stevens to recommend the City Council approve the application as recommended by City Staff.

The motion was seconded by Hoff.

Votes: 6 Ayes, 0 Nays.

The motion carried.

Commissioner McPhillips arrived at the meeting at 6:44pm.

PC Case 23-08 – An Ordinance Amending Multiple Sections of Chapters 150 and 153 of the West St. Paul City Code Regarding Regulations for Signs and Murals

Houtsma summarized the proposed changes to the code as they were formulated through various recent meetings. Many of the changes required working closely with the city's legal counsel, Pam Whitmore, who was present to speak on legal items.

Attorney Whitmore summarized and responded to concerns and recommendations detailed in the letter the commission had received via email from resident Andrew Olson.

The commission held initial discussions before opening the item up to the public at 7:22 pm.

The following persons came forward to speak:

- Wilson Webb, 238 Annapolis Street West
- Andrew Olson, 32 Amelia Avenue
- Kevin Hendricks, 988 Seminole Avenue

As there was no further comment from the audience and no one called in through the phone line, the public hearing was then closed at 7:41pm.

Discussion amongst the commission resumed.

A motion was made by LaRue at 8:55pm for a five minute recess.
All commissioners agreed. The meeting was resumed at 9:00pm

A motion was made by Stevens to include the school board as a special election in terms of the rules of signage.

The motion was seconded by Gillen.

Whitmore requested that the motion direct counsel and staff to define the term “special election” for purposes of the ordinance.

The motion amendment was accepted by Stevens and Gillen.

Votes: 7 Ayes, 0 Nays

The motion carried.

A motion was made by Stevens to increase the maximum height allowable for temporary signs in residential zoning districts from 36 inches above grade to 60 inches (five feet).

The motion was seconded by LaRue.

Votes: 5 Aye, 2 Nays (*Gillen and Franzmeier as the nay votes*)

The motion carried.

A motion was made by LaRue to eliminate section 150.110(B)(2), which includes language that allows for additional signage for properties over one acre in size and located in the residential district. Discussion followed.

Hoff seconded the motion.

Votes: 3 Ayes, 4 Nays (*McPhillips, Franzmeier, Gallus, Stevens as the nay votes*)

The motion failed.

A motion was made by LaRue to strike any harmony of color related restrictions from any and all mural regulations.

The motion was seconded by Hoff.

Votes: 3 Ayes, 4 Nays (Gillen, Franzmeier, Gallus, McPhillips as the nay votes)

The motion failed.

A motion was made by Franzmeier to add the language “in business and industrial area” in section 150.110(C).

LaRue seconded the motion.

Votes: 7 Ayes, 0 Nays

The motion carried.

Hoff made a motion to replace the word “manufacturing” with “industrial areas” in section 153.002(C).

LaRue seconded the motion.

Votes: 7 Ayes, 0 Nays

The motion carried.

A motion was made by LaRue to ask the City Council to consider a method to grant each premises within a multifamily home their own allotment of signage.

Stevens seconded the motion.

Votes: 4 Ayes, 3 Nays (McPhillips, Franzmeier, Gallus as nay votes)

The motion carried.

Hoff made a motion to add “other maintenance free material” to the mural section regarding the requirement for oil-based paint.

The motion was seconded by Stevens.

Whitmore suggested, “other maintenance-free materials as recognized by industry standard.”

The amendment was accepted by Hoff and Stevens.

Votes: Ayes: 7 Nays: 0 Nays

The motion carried.

Gillen made a motion to remove the allowance of all signage on fences. Discussion followed.

Franzmeier suggested amending the motion to allow only smaller-sized signs on fences.

Gillen amended the motion to limit the size of signs on fences to three square feet.

Hoff seconded the motion.

Votes: 6 Ayes, 1 Nay (LaRue as the nay vote)

The motion carried.

LaRue made a motion to add a new category of businesses listed in section 150.110; the new category of businesses would have reopened due to significant upgrades or unfortunate circumstances; said business would be permitted to have a “grand re-opening sign”.

The motion died for lack of a second.

A motion was made by McPhillips to recommend the City Council approve the amendments to ordinance, with the additions or recommendations as noted by the Commission.

The motion was seconded by Hoff.

Votes: 7 Ayes, 0 Nays

The motion carried.

New Business: None

Old Business: None

Adjourn:

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 9:35pm

All ayes. The motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon G. Hatfield
Recording Secretary