

PAYNE PHALEN DISTRICT FIVE PLANNING COUNCIL

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506 Kenny Road Suite 130, St. Paul, MN 55130 651-774-5234
d5-director@visi.com www.paynephalen.org

Draft MINUTES

Community Planning & Economic Development Committee (CPED)

Tuesday, June 7, 2011

722 Payne Ave., Eastern District Police Station 6:30 PM

Chair: David Syers

Chair David Syers call the meeting to order and did a round of introductions. The Members Present: Chair Syers, Peterson, Rybin, Forsberg, Hecht, Wilson, Kapaun, Oertwig, Excused Absence: Davis
Staff: Leslie McMurray, Executive Director

Community Guests: Sean Sellers, Mark Voerding (Ramsey County Commissioner Rettman's Office) Roger and Marian Layer, Andy Gitzlaff, Jimmy Gerding, Brad Griffith,

The CPED Agenda was reviewed and approved with changes to the order in which issues are heard. The additional item of the Gateway Corridor presentation was placed second in order on the Agenda. Syers noted that the CPED roster would need to be finalized in July and that new Board members may wish to find out more about all District Five Committees prior to making Committee selections. He stressed the expectation of regular attendance at meetings.

The draft CPED minutes of April and May 2011 were approved. Peterson moved to approve April and June 2011 minutes. Kapaun second. Motion passed by vote.

Major Variance Application: 674 Hawthorne, Sean Sellers of Hart Sell, LLC (651-343-3457 represented the applicant. Staff noted that public hearing notices for the BZA meeting were mailed by the City to the prescribed area around the property. Two calls were received to question the issue but no opinions were offered or registered. District Five staff had not had opportunity to flyer the area regarding the CPED meeting. The D5 office number appears on the Public Hearing Postcard as well as city office information. It can be presumed that all immediate residents received the card, however a number of properties in this vicinity remain on the city lists as registered vacant properties. Member Ed Davis in absentia had e-mailed opinions to the CPED members.

Note: CPED member Buzz Wilson left the room and recused himself from all aspects of the following discussion.

Mr. Sellers spoke to CPED about the plans and the variance application. This major variance request calls for a variance of the side yard setback in order to construct a deck with a stairway to the second floor of the duplex on the

west side of the property. A nine (9) foot setback is required, three (3) feet is proposed for a six (6) foot side yard setback variance. Mr. Sellers stated that City Inspectors were not yet requiring this modification from the owner –but that the owner thought the interior stairway was not adequate and he was proactively enhancing the property by seeking to build a wider exterior stairway with landing deck for upstairs tenants. The owner wants to assure the building is fully code compliant. This property was a duplex and is intended to be a future rental property. Mr. Sellers noted that the interior staircase width was nonconforming and narrow enough to make it harder for tenants to move items up and down the stairway. Hence an exterior stairway is deemed to be an improvement to the property.

The new deck and stairway would leave a 3 foot, 3 inches clearance to the property line.

Restoration work has commenced on the property and possibly 30 days more work is required. The application for a building permit is contingent upon getting this major variance.

Comments from CPED Members:

Do not like the pre-treated wood appearance for an exterior stairway and feels that this will not fit the general appearance and character of the neighborhood.

Noted a deck on Maryland that snakes up a building 3 floors. Much local agreement that this is not a contributing enhancement to the area.

A new deck on the side of the house so close to the adjacent property will stand out in a negative way. Can a stairway be built onto the back of the structure?

Could the interior stairway be adapted to expand the width?

Response: The stairway is very narrow – about 34 inches – making it difficult for tenants to move in and out.

A back of building stairway might interfere with the buildings' main lower entrance.

The means and degree of community notification and level of neighborhood input was discussed.

Motion: Kapaun moved to deny support for this major variance application for 674 Hawthorne. Second: Peterson. Motion passed by vote.

Gateway Corridor Planning

Speakers noted interest in meeting with all Eastside District Councils regrading the Gateway Corridor, its significance and why it matters.

90,000 commuters cross the St. Croix Bridge.

2030 forecasts predict 30% population increase and possibly 30,000 jobs in the east metro or east of the metro area. Mobility will increasingly be an issue to address with this growth.

A joint powers commission was established with Washington and Ramsey County. Rafael Ortega sits on the commission as does St. Paul Councilmember Lantry.

The current work has focused on identifying best options for transit and enhanced transit solutions for this corridor. Work is in the planning phase.

Modal options included: Light Rail Transit, Commuter Rail, Bus Rapid Transit, Enhanced busing options, (routes, stops, costs, capacity, and potential to support regional revitalization and economic development impact. Strict federal guidelines are attached to potential funding which is a highly competitive process. Some public meetings have occurred in the outer metro areas. Open houses are planned for mid-July. Eight alternatives were examined with four being selected for further study. A study is to be completed by March 2012, followed by 2 years of environmental review, with final hearings preceding construction.

A handout was presented which outlined the four alternatives derived from the process to date. Of note to D5 area are plans for East 7th Street or 3rd Street and potential impact to White Bear Avenue.

Plans were distinguished from other planning efforts such as the Rush Corridor line and the Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority areas of study.

The Gateway Corridor impact is proposed to span the area from Eau Claire, WI to Mpls.

The guests were thanked for their presentation and CPED and the Board will await word of upcoming public meetings and hearings.

I-35 E Cayuga –

A Letter from Ramsey County Commissioner Janice Rettman was included in the CPED Packets for Committee review/and or comment. Several members and staff spoke highly of the letter's support for neighborhood voices and values in the planning process. Oertwig and Peterson represent CPED on the Visual Quality Committee. Oertwig commented that there was strong interest to make sure we have the best connection to the Phalen Boulevard and that this focus had been planned quite long ago. McMurray noted that the Board's interest as they heard input on this process at the May 2011 meeting - was indicative of the need for broader community awareness and input on the project. Ted Hecht raised the issues of an interchange Maryland and I35E that would dramatically change this gateway. He cited a recent article in the East Side Review. Hecht also passed out traffic accident information and questioned the traffic safety impact of increasing traffic capacity on Maryland.

Pending outcomes of state budget issues and impact on new MN DOT projects and timelines – District Five will work to assure that broad community awareness of the project occurs. CPED discussed hosting a broader community process –and giving feedback to give MN DOT planners.

Payne Maryland Partnership -letter attached from Chris Coleman for CPED awareness. Syers noted his continued concern that District Five is positioned to give an impression that D5 is responsible for community Outreach when in fact our good intentions have not yet been met with solid information or timelines. McMurray noted the City webpage had already been modified at our request, and that she could ask for the District Five name to be entirely removed from the project website.

There was some confusion at CPED about the timing of the Ramsey County Maryland left turn lane expansion. The ACE Hardware building was in immediate negotiations with the city while the properties on the other corners

will need to wait until 2014. This timeline was discussed at the Public Works meeting held with District Five in 2010.

In general, CPED members expressed some concerns that the Payne Maryland Partners are not doing enough to inform the local community and their neighborhood about the specific progress occurring with the project. When District Five is listed as responsible for "Community Outreach" this sets up expectations for District Five that it is not able to fulfill because D5 is not given the relevant input to pass on to the community.

Ted Hecht noted that he had heard that a groundbreaking was being planned for early Fall 2011 and this is a concern for District Five since no communication of any such event has been announced.

An early notification announcement of the nonconforming use as a duplex was received in the office on June 7th via electronic communication from City staff. McMurray had immediately forwarded this to CPED members, given that the deadline for response was imminent. Syers suggested the Committee did not have enough information yet to respond well.

Ryan Kapaun moved to support the nonconforming use permit that would allow a duplex at Geranium. Peterson Seconded. Mr. Kapaun had surveyed the parcel, felt that the house had always been a duplex, it was on a corner lot and that a vote of approval was reasonable. He noted that 8 surrounding neighbors had signed a petition stating approval. Motion was approved by vote. One opposed and Buzz Wilson abstaining.

The meeting was adjourned.
