

PAYNE PHALEN DISTRICT FIVE PLANNING COUNCIL

STRONG



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NEIGHBORHOODS

Payne Phalen District Five Planning Council – CPED Committee

Minutes from CPED Meeting – **Tuesday, January 6, 2009** at Eastern District Police Station (722 Payne).

NOTE – Attendance record should be verified monthly by CPED members. Sign in sheets are to be completed at each monthly meeting).

Present: David Syers (Chair), Al Oertwig, Sheldon Schwartz, Ed Davis, Cheryl Peterson, Ray Sammons, Buzz Wilson, Ted Hecht, Roy Evans, Jerry Livesay, Phil Sandro Staff: Leslie McMurray, Executive Director

Absent: EXCUSED (Ryan Kapaun, Daniel Garcia-Velez)

Community Participants: See attached list (THIRTY ONE PEOPLE ATTENDED THIS MEETING)

Chair, David Syers convened the meeting at the scheduled time of 6:30 p.m. He welcomed the community and issue presenters/applicants. He reviewed the draft agenda with the Committee. Item 2 was eliminated at the applicant's request. Three items were added to the agenda, including 3 CIB requests. Agenda approved by consensus.

- 1. Parks and Recreation Department CIB Proposal for Duluth and Case Recreation Center,** Jody Martinez. Ms. Martinez presented design concept plans from Parks and Recreation for a CIB proposal to redesign the Duluth Case Recreation Center. The proposal is for a public – private partnership with St. Paul Urban Tennis and would bring a year-round tennis facility to Duluth Case. Ms. Martinez noted that the current planning was merely a design concept and that area stakeholders would be part of a Design Advisory Task Force, if funding is secured. She asked for a demonstration of community consensus from the District Council to give the department direction and support for submission of the CIB proposal (due Jan 12). Ms. Martinez introduced leadership from the Saint Paul Urban Tennis Program. She noted that the concept necessitates eventual negotiation with Ramsey County as the Frank Sims yard waste site is relocated. Some partnership with the Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority may be required to facilitate access points. She indicated the plan calls for newly sited, upgraded playing fields, a walking path, some preservation of the Duluth woods and new interior facilities with adequate parking which is adjacent to Phalen Boulevard, to capitalize on that access. The park would become a showcase and destination point for many across Saint Paul.

Discussion Points raised by residents:

Observed tennis courts removed near new CUB and at other sites. Why the removal of existing courts and what indicators suggest tennis is a preferred sport use of public recreation space and facilities?

Tennis courts were removed near Cub. Poor condition and land designated in long range plans for wetland reclamation. Some tennis courts were in poor condition. Need for tennis clearly demonstrated by all ages. High School tennis program on East Side does not have adequate play space. Concept includes grouped courts which permit well

programmed use. McMurray added information that local teens in District Five had approached CPED begging for new tennis courts and well maintained court space (Wajoe Vu's son). Sandy Martin, St. Paul Urban Tennis noted they have over 2600 kids in summer programs. They need an indoor facility and are at capacity with waiting lists. They use the bubble courts at Ft. Snelling. St. Paul Urban Tennis has no doubts about the desire for new courts. Heavy interest in their program by diverse East Side youth. Costs are waived with scholarships for kids who cannot pay fees. Roughly \$65.00 for 7 weeks of tennis program.

Resident – of four courts torn out most were unusable. Even so, kids would try to play on courts that had no nets, cracked, and buckled surfaces.

Resident spoke of need for early community involvement. He noted Highland Park Library and Rec Center were able to survey over 1000 residents. He offered a survey he had taken of some local residents. He noted enjoying the woods, walking, soccer, and park users appreciated picnics. Some expressed concerns about park staffing capacity and ongoing operational funding and maintenance.

Community members expressed some concerns about how new facilities will be staffed effectively. (This concern anticipates increased park usage). Martinez noted that a benefit of public private partnership is that more staff are on site. No new city staff will be hired or anticipated – particularly with recent economic changes and cuts to Local Government Aid. She noted the investments brought to the table by the Urban Tennis program.

A number of community residents spoke in strong favor of the proposal. "It's beautiful". "We have been waiting for a change at this well used Rec Center". "Our youth deserve a safe, good place to play". "This is great – let's do it". The group discussed that CIB funding is highly competitive and that community input would be part of all phases of the design planning and implementation.

The suggestion was made to submit the same proposal in the name of District Five. The member cited concerns that District Five had worked with resident support submitted a planning grant for \$50,000 for planning. Parks and Recreation inadequately involved the community in subsequent phases of design work. Parks and Recreation moved forward with this District Five awarded funding – but dramatically changed the original request to include a library- park facility. The publicized possible loss of other East Side library facilities led to lowered support for the Duluth Case renovation – leaving the community without the opportunity to realistically advance broad interest in the improved facility. Ms. Martinez suggested that the District Council and community would be part of a funded design planning and implementation process. Other members suggested a split project proposal would indicate conflict and this would take away from the project merits and support in the CIB process. **Motion: Ray Sammons moved to submit the same proposal in the District Council's name. Motion seconded by Ed Davis. Motion failed.**

Chair Syers asked for a visual indication of community support for the motion. A well defined majority raised hands (approx 20-25) indicating support for the proposal as presented. Some 2-5 people indicated they were uncertain or opposed to the CIB request.

Motion by Ed Davis to support Parks and Recreation and the St. Paul Urban Tennis Program's CIB proposal to design and construct with ongoing community input, a joint Recreation and Tennis Center. The Center shall address the lifelong recreational, educational, and social needs of the rapidly growing diverse population of this part of Saint Paul. Seconded. Motion approved by vote.

2. Discussion of East Side Heritage Park's connectivity to Payne Avenue

McMurray introduced the issue at hand. Sarah Clark (Lower Phalen Creek), Buzz Wilson and McMurray sit on the East Side Heritage Park Design Advisory Board. Plans included community input in various forms and venues including several CPED meetings as well as at a D5 convened meeting at the John A. Johnson Elementary School. Federal funds are now coming in and construction will begin this spring. An unresolved issue that has surfaced several times is the connectivity and access of the park and BV Trail to the surrounding neighborhood. The park sits on the Bruce Vento Regional Trail and the park is a Trailhead access point off Neid Lane and Phalen Boulevard. From the east, the park is well accessed by pedestrians on Phalen Boulevard walkways off Payne. Aguirre Street (formerly Wadena) was on the previous month's CPED agenda because it is slated for RSVP improvements (street lighting and surfacing). Since the street dead ends and does not have a turnaround, CPED had asked staff to inquire about future connectivity, about possible delays or re-designs of the street to offer connections to the Bruce Vento Trail and the park. Mr. Dan Haack (Public Works) was present to speak to the RSVP project. Public Works is not opposed to postponing the street work. However D5 staff learned directly that the HRA interest in the land just south of Aguirre, slated for commercial development, was a driving force to beautify and clean up the appearance of the newly (re)named Aguirre Street. The hope is that an improved appearance of Aguirre will also help attract developers to the site. Residents also have noted the increased illegal parking on the land.

Issues Identified included:

Residents think a connection from Aguirre to the Park and the Bruce Vento Trail is desirable.

Expectations that the HRA will attract a key commercial developer to the HRA owned site (Payne and Phalen Blvd NE corner) is part of a community supported plan.

Trail connections are a key asset to the area. Pedestrian and bike traffic should be encouraged, safe and well advertised in relation to the Trail, Park and Payne Avenue.

City Parks' staff working on Park plans had several times pursued the question of creating access. It is critical that permission is secured from the Ramsey County Regional Railway Authority (Commissioner Jim McDonough). The RCRRA had authorized access on their right of way, but later withdrew this permission. Sarah Clark spoke of her meetings with decision makers and reasons for requesting this access. Mr. Haack noted he would follow the RSVP plans, now approved by City Council. He described options on the street and answered questions. A CIB request is going in to upgrade street appearance and lighting from Whitall to Cook.

Al Oertwig moved to send a communication, copying all stakeholders, noting the community's interest in a separate project to connect Payne to the Bruce Vento Trail, and to suggest a first discussion with Commissioner Jim McDonough and key stakeholders. Motion seconded by Phil Sandro. Motion passed by vote.

After discussion of 3 area businesses which received violation notices (see below), CPED determined that repeat offenses that jeopardize area health and the area's business reputation deserved a letter of concern from District Five.

Motion: Al Oertwig moved to direct CPED to submit a letter to the alleged offending business owners. Such letters should communicate the serious nature of repeat offenses that put in jeopardy the health of both individuals and the reputation and economic health of the area. Seconded Cheryl Peterson. Motion approved by vote.

The businesses receiving the violation letters include:

Serlin's Café- 1124 Payne Avenue. DSI has recommended adverse action against the Restaurant (3) 13-50 Seats license with a fine of \$400.00 for a violation and non-correction by deadline.

Cora's Best Chicken Wings-1143 Payne Avenue. DSI has recommended adverse action against the Restaurant (1) No Seats license with a fine of \$250.00 for a violation and non-correction by deadline.

Hoa Mei Supermarket-860 Maryland Avenue East. DSI has recommended adverse action against the Restaurant (1) No Seats and Retail Food-Grocery 1001-3000 sq. ft. licenses with a fine of \$375.00 for 2 violations and non-correction by deadline.

Chair Syers then led a brief discussion on how CPED might move forward with a discussion, first proposed by Ray Sammons at the December CPED meeting. He noted the CPED goal was to create a meaningful, set of criteria which results in a consistent checklist that helped CPED to dispose of issues related to the establishment, renewal or review or rejection of alcohol related licenses.

Proposed was that license holders in District Five be noticed of the discussion, that public schools may have useful input, and that Ward offices be encouraged to participate as well as city staff (licensing staff or the City Attorney staff or both). Local business associations should be invited. CPED concurred with this plan and the issue will appear on the February 3rd, CPED meeting.

Motion: Ray Sammons moved that the Payne Phalen District Five Planning Council submit a CIB request to reconfigure the Wheelock, Edgerton, Parkway Drive intersection. The current geometrics lead to reduced driver visibility and safety. Ed Davis second. Motion passed.

Chair Syers thanked the community and issue presenters. The meeting was adjourned.