

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE ST. CLOUD PLANNING COMMISSION

A meeting of the St. Cloud Planning Commission was held on December 14, 2010, at 6 p.m. in the St. Cloud City Hall Council Chambers. Members present were Anderson, Andzenge, Chirhart, Goerger, Holtberg, and Radaich. DeVine was absent. City Councilperson Gohman was present for City Council representative Pederson who was unable to attend.

**Approval of Minutes:** Andzenge moved to approve the minutes of October 12, 2010, Anderson seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

**Acceptance of Staff Reports:** Goerger moved to accept the staff reports for December 14, 2010, as part of the official record. The motion was seconded by Andzenge and carried unanimously.

**Open Forum:** No one was present to speak at the open forum.

**2012-2017 Capital Improvements Program:** Matt Glaesman, Planning Director, stated that the Capital Improvements Program (CUP) process kicks off with this public input meeting. City staff and the Planning Commission will debate merits of projects over the next few months followed by a public hearing in March. Glaesman stated that the CIP is a schedule of capital projects that identifies when those projects will be pursued, their funding source, and why certain projects are chosen vs. other projects. Capital projects involve an expenditure of at least \$250,000 or have an anticipated life of five years or more. The Planning Commission makes its recommendation to the Mayor in April. Glaesman stated that one of the unique features of the City's CIP that has made it an example of how cities should do CIPs is the analysis portion which offers a Planning Analysis, Financial Analysis and Project Analysis. Glaesman stated that this year a layer has been added to the City's GIS Internet site so that the public can turn on the CIP, click on a line on a map which will show what project is in that

area, and then links it to the project summary sheet. Glaesman then outlined some of the 2011 projects. Chairperson Radaich opened the public hearing. The following persons offered testimony:

Pat Morin  
917 13<sup>th</sup> Ave. SE

She would like new buildings to be more imaginative or unique. She showed pictures of unique architectural buildings in other cities.

Helen Ann Johnson  
1411 9<sup>th</sup> Ave. SE

She represents the Southeast St. Cloud Neighborhood Preservation Coalition, opposing the University Dr. Corridor project. The Coalition is actively working to preserve and protect the valuable historic, cultural and environmental resource for the City of St. Cloud and for the greater St. Cloud area. The Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act that assesses the effects of the proposed University Dr. Corridor project on historic properties and the environmental assessment process of the National Environmental Policy Act that assesses impacts to both natural and cultural resources are still underway and have not been completed. Until those are complete, the Planning Commission and City Council should table all discussions and postpone all decisions regarding the University Corridor project. If the Commission and Council take positive action on the project prior to knowing the outcomes of Section 106 and the environmental assessment, they make be construed as violating federal law requiring that the results of the two studies be very carefully considered with adequate treatment plans developed prior to undertaking a project.

Larry Klein  
3670 Plum Creek Dr.

He spoke regarding the timing of the Hwy. 15/33<sup>rd</sup> St. So. bridge project. He wanted to be sure that some of the sales tax dollars are targeted for that project.

Chairperson Radaich

He noted the written comments from Charlotte Stephens and Lowell Olson of 23 Pandolfo Pl.

There being no one else wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed. Chirhart stated that many of the takeoffs and landings at the airport are associated with the Aviation program at SCSU, and that program is slated to be cut by the University. Chirhart said it is his understanding that the City receives Federal funds based on the number of flights that are generated out of the airport. Therefore, he questioned how cutting of the Aviation program will impact the City. Glaesman stated that Bill Towle, Airport Director, stated at last night's City Council meeting that there are still over 100 flights that occur at the airport daily which include helicopters and small flights. The City still believes that St. Cloud Airport is still in the best position to be the reliever for the Minneapolis St. Paul Airport. Glaesman stated that now is the time to get air easements and buy parcels when property owners are willing to sell so that when flights do return, the crosswind runway can be constructed. He added that

the three-year environmental assessment process is just being completed. Chirhart commented that he believes it is vital for the City to continue to do the Neighborhood Revitalization projects in core neighborhoods for quality of life rather than taking on new initiatives. Councilperson Gohman stated that it was clear that long range planning is very important for the Airport's future development. Goerger asked for staff's response to Ms. Johnson's comments about possible violation of federal laws if the City proceeds with plans for the University Dr. Corridor project. Glaesman responded that the City is doing more research on questions that were brought up through the Section 106 and environmental assessment processes. Therefore, the CIP will reflect that nothing is proceeding until the City Council takes action on the environmental assessment and until the Federal Highway Administration and MnDOT take action on the environmental assessment. Glaesman stated that the City still wants to work with all affected parties on the southeast side and come up with a solution that addresses everyone's concerns. Goerger asked if there have been any changes to the Hwy. 15/33rd St. So. Interchange Plan. Glaesman answered that the environmental assessment has been completed and has been actively applying for every state and federal grant program available. Goerger commented that the CIP has evolved immensely in the last 15 years, and it has all been to the benefit of the community.

**Vacation Request/Opportunity Manor, Inc.:** Matt Glaesman, Planning Director, explained that the vacation application was received by a property owner at the end of Sun Circle (Opportunity Manor, Inc.), and the City initiated a related vacation. The original application related to a 10' walkway that was originally platted to allow pedestrian movements from the neighborhoods to the south and west through the cul-de-sac leading to what is currently Rotary Park. At the time of platting, the property was planned to be the neighborhood elementary school for the south side. The original plat provided walkways connecting Sun Circle and Moon Circle to what was to be the school property. . (Location: 16 & 17 Sun Circle and 14 & 19 Moon Circle) (VAC-2010-05) Glaesman stated that the question is whether the walkways are still needed to provide access to the park. The walkways are grass; they are not improved. Because there are utilities within the easements, staff recommends that

the public right-of-way be vacated, but that utility easements be retained for the private utilities that currently exist. Glaesman stated that that property owners within 500' of the proposed vacated property will be notified of the public hearing before the City Council. Chirhart moved to recommend to the City Council vacation of walkway rights-of-way located between Lots 6 and 7 and Lots 19 and 20, Block 1 of School District 742 Addition (location: 16 and 17 Sun Circle and 14 and 19 Moon Circle) but that utility easements be retained for private utilities that currently exist (VAC-2010-05). Andzenge seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

**Vacation Request/St. Cloud Hospital:** Matt Glaesman, Planning Director, stated that St. Cloud Hospital has requested vacation of two easements (Location: 1200, 1240, 1406, 1450, 1540, & 1554 6th Avenue North) (VAC-2010-06). The first is a 1926 flowage easement relating to construction of the dam downstream, and the second is a 1970s easement that originally accommodated a public sanitary sewer main that exists across the north portion of the site which has since been returned to private ownership of the St. Cloud Hospital. Goerger moved to recommend to the City Council approval of the two easements. The motion was seconded by Holtberg and carried unanimously.

**Recommendation Regarding Granite City Crossing Bridge Bridgehead Feature Concepts:** Matt Glaesman, Planning Director, stated that MnDOT wishes to add bridgehead features to both the east and west ends of the new Granite City Crossing Bridge. They have two proposed concepts for consideration. The first concept is a wrought iron theme which would span directional lanes overhead. He clarified that on the east end of the bridge, the feature would only span the westbound lanes; and on the west end of the bridge, the feature would only span the eastbound lanes. He explained that this concept is more historical in nature. The second concept builds on the granite theme and is in the form of a granite monolith with the word "Mississippi" placed vertically on one side. One comment that has been made is that the word "River" should be added and/or that "St. Cloud" should appear on the monolith. The monolith would be approximately 27' in height. Glaesman noted that the City Council and staff were both split in their concept preference. The argument for the wrought iron concept was that the gateway to the downtown should reflect its historic character. The

argument for the granite concept was that the Comprehensive Plan suggests that there be a consistent theme or image for all of the gateways and that the granite concept would be appropriate in all instances whereas an historic sign would not. Terry Humbert of MnDOT stated that the former bridge needed to be replaced very quickly. Granite was used on the bridge railing, and they made the bridge look as attractive as possible. That was followed by landscaping along Hwy. 23; however, no bridgehead feature has been installed. He stated that MnDOT would like the City's input on the bridgehead feature. Relative to the monolith, Humbert stated that the concept as presented should probably be reduced in size as it may be too large. Holtberg said he was surprised the overhead concept would meet safety requirements due to ice and snow hanging on it and falling on vehicles. Humbert responded that it is probably no different than any other overhead signs. Goerger voiced his preference for the monolith monument but questioned if it is, in fact, granite, and if any changes can be made to it. Humbert answered that it probably would be a granite veneer over concrete, but that some changes may be possible if it stayed within budget. Goerger suggested lighting within a glass pyramid at the top of the monolith. Anderson asked the height of the gateway sign. Humbert answered that it would be on a 30' pole. Anderson asked the cost difference between the two concepts. Humbert said a cost estimate has not been done yet. He added that he did get some prices for what the granite might cost, and then he added what the granite core may cost and came up with an approximate total of \$100,000 for the monolith. He assumed the wrought iron concept would be less. The light poles might be \$4,000-\$5,000 plus the wrought iron bridge. Chirhart commented that he really didn't have a preference. Goerger moved to support the monolith concept because he believes the wrought iron concept may have some maintenance issues. Holtberg seconded the motion. Anderson said the wrought iron concept reminded him of the study session discussion the Commission had about arbors and what would be allowed in yards, and he does not believe this would be allowed in people's yards; therefore, he supports the monolith concept. Radaich said he believes the wrought iron spanning the lanes of traffic looks more like a gateway and is more historic in appearance. Andzenge said he prefers the wrought iron concept because it is more visible

and is more appropriate for downtown. The motion to support the monolith failed by a vote of 2-4 (Goerger and Anderson in favor; Andzenge, Chirhart, Holtberg, and Radaich opposed). Andzenge then moved to support the wrought iron concept. The motion failed for lack of a second. Goerger pointed out that the granite monolith makes sense because it would be appropriate for all gateways to the city and would be consistent with the granite city theme.

**Discussion of Planning Commission Role in CBDG Administration and Process:** Matt Glaesman, Planning Director, explained that two new responsibilities will be added to the Community Development Department as part of its restructuring, i.e., economic development and the CBDG (Community Development Block Grant) program. Tammy Campion will no longer be staff for the Heritage Preservation Commission; Carla will take over those duties. Tammy will take over CBDG administration and Economic Development duties. The City Council makes the final decision on who receives the CBDG dollars. The City Council believes it is appropriate for the Planning Commission to make recommendations to the City Council on CDB funding. Tammy Campion, Senior Planner, stated that CBDG program year 2011 began with application notification on Dec. 1. Over 200 organizations in St. Cloud that offer services to low/moderate income persons were notified. To date, 17 pre-application meetings have been scheduled with various organizations to verify that their proposed activity is eligible for CBDG funding and meets one of three national objections required by HUD to use those funds. The pre-application meeting is required prior to submittal of a final application so that she and Matt can meet the service providers. The final application must be submitted by January 14. That will be followed by a citizen participation event to inform the public that the City is expecting to receive approximately \$500,000 in CBDG funds, how the City is recommending those funds be distributed to the various organizations, and how it will be brought to the Planning Commission in March and subsequently to the City Council in April. Glaesman stated that if the Planning Commission agrees to take on the responsibility of making recommendations on CBDG funding, there will be training for the Commission members. Chirhart asked why this responsibility would not stay with the HRA Board as their mission is to serve low and moderate

income persons. Gohman believed the HRA will still have contact with many of these organizations, but that question has not been posed to the Board. Glaesman started that CDBG funds not only can be spent on housing, but they can also be spent on capital facilities, economic development, and historic preservation. Holtberg asked if these would be standard agenda items. Glaesman responded that it would require a public hearing. The Commission members could sit in on a working session with the applicants. Goerger said he has no problem with the Planning Commission taking on the responsibility and thinks the training is very important. Anderson asked if this is considered at a federal level to be an earmark or if it is appropriated through HUD. Glaesman answered that it is appropriated through HUD and that St. Cloud is an entitlement community. Radaich inquired if the funds are awarded to one or a number of applicants. Glaesman answered that it can vary. Anderson said he noted that one of the categories in the CDBG application was "Evaluation" which was to describe the proposed activity's outcomes and the plan for measuring results. He asked if the Commission will be presented with those results the next year. Campion stated that HUD requires the City to do a year end report called a CAPER which states how many low/moderate income families have been helped or how many jobs have been created if it is an economic development project. The City would look at the application and when the project is closed out, look at the evaluation and determine if the project goals have been met. Anderson commented that it would be helpful from year to year to look at previous years' grants that were successful when presented with new requests in the same category. Chirhart stated that he knows there are strict reporting requirements and follow-up with CDBG funding as a result of his experience with the construction of the Boys & Girls Club on the Southside.

**Discussion of Proposed Revision of St. Cloud's Floodplain Regulations:** Matt Glaesman, Planning Director, stated that FEMA has made significant revisions to floodplain maps and text amendments which must be adopted by the City. Glaesman explained how the mapping has changed and can be imported into the City's GIS. Glaesman said there will be some impacts to

property owners with the new mapping; however, in most cases, it will be favorable to the property owner.

**Discussion of Minnesota State Supreme Court - Krummenacher v. City of Minnetonka**

**Decision:** Matt Glaesman, Planning Director, stated that this case makes communities take the position that to grant a variance, the applicant has no use of their property. In the past, municipalities have taken the position where they consider whether the impacts of the variance on the neighbors will be reasonable. This case puts the burden of reasonable use on the applicant.

**2011 Planning Commission Schedule:** The Commission was given the Planning Commission meeting schedule for 2011.

**Adjournment:** There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

---

Dick Andzenge, Secretary