

PPA Land Use meeting Minutes January 14, 2021

Attendees (via Zoom):

John Wicks (Chair), Eric Amel, Jeff Barnhart, David Frank, Dick Gilyard, Del Hampton, Lise Houlton, Susan Larson-Fleming, Gayla Lindt, Florence Littman, Brooke Magid-Hart, Lydia Morrell, Karen Murdock, Laura Preus, Donna Schneider, Helen Sahlin, Lynn Von Korff

The meeting was called to order at 9:03 pm. The minutes of the December meeting were approved.

There was a discussion of the design guidelines (which had been forwarded to members via email). Changes made:

1. Add to the preamble a section about the Mississippi River (from the 2040 plan)
2. Give the elevation at the base of the Witch's Hat Tower

Dick G. reported that the Project Design Guidelines have been approved by the board of the Saint Anthony Park neighborhood association. It was felt that Prospect Park and Saint Anthony Park should have the same set of guidelines for the Towerside Innovation District. The Metropolitan Design Center at the U of M worked with the task force which developed these guidelines. Florence asked what was the value of these guidelines if they did not have "teeth" (enforcement power) to them. Dick G. said that developers found the guidelines useful. He said that it would be ideal if developers had these guidelines "before they draw a line" (make architectural plans and begin work on a project). He said that some criteria might be of only marginal value but some would be critical to the developer. Ideally "the developer and the community can come together." Lynn said the guidelines were helpful to residents too.

Florence wondered if we could get Cam Gordon to champion the design guidelines. Dick G. said he thought there was "a vacuum" in city government at the moment (not just in the City Council).

John W. asked if Saint Anthony Park had used the guidelines for the recently-announced development at Raymond and University avenues. Dick G. said the guidelines were used, but had no effect on the project since the developer "brushed off" the guidelines.

Susan L-F moved to forward the guidelines to the Board of Directors of PPA. This motion passed unanimously.

John W. reported that he had talked to Ari Fleisher at Vermilion. The project might get underway in late spring or early summer. There have been no changes to the plan.

David F. said that the Vermilion project was approved by the city in December 2019. Vermilion is not subject to the requirement to provide low-income housing.

John W. said that a letter was submitted to Andrea Burke of the city of Minneapolis about the demolition of structures within the historical district. She responded but John W. thinks that she misinterpreted the question. John will send a follow-up letter.

Gayla said that the neighborhood should be ahead of the design of a project before the Historic Preservation Committee of the city does a review.

Florence asked whether Vermilion had purchased the site on which it plans to build. Jeff and Dick G. said they had not. Florence asked whether there was a time limit on when a developer could build after plans were approved. Gayla said the time limit is two years, but the city can extend that.

John W. reported that the Wells Fargo bank at Emerald and University will close. The bank will move onto the U of M campus. Florence reported that she and other neighbors who live near the bank had received a letter from Wells Fargo telling of the planned move.

It was proposed to form a committee to study the parcel which includes Well Fargo and the Lights On site. Dick G. said we should develop “a shared vision of what that site could be.” Susan L-F said that KSTP would also be interested in what might be built there, since a tall building might interfere with their transmission. Lynn said the parcel is all zoned Transit 10. People who volunteered to serve on this committee were David Frank, Florence Littman, Karen Murdock, Laura Preus, Donna Schneider, and Lynn Von Korff.

John W. said the distillery project is moving ahead but has no plans yet for an opening. He will send an email inquiring about this.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:10 pm.