

MINUTES OF MEETING
SOUTH ST. PAUL PLANNING COMMISISON
February 2, 2022

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY CHAIR ROSS AT 7:00 P.M.

Present: Angela DesMarais
 Geoff Fournier
 Jason Frankot
 Ruth Krueger
 Matthew Thompson
 John Ross
 Michael Healy, City Planner
 Monika Mann, Community Development Specialist

Absent: Tim Felton

- 1) APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Motion to approve as presented - DesMarais/ Thompson (6-0).
- 2) APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 5, 2022 – Motion to approve the minutes as presented – Frankot/Fournier (6-0).
- 3) NEW BUSINESS

None.

4) PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A. Ordinance Amending the Sign Code’s Standards for Residential District and the Signage Standards for Projecting Signs

Ms. Mann presented the staff report. The City is proposing an ordinance amendment that would update the signage standards for institutional uses in the city’s low density residential districts, update the signage allowance for multi-family buildings in low density residential districts, and clarify the standards for projecting signs. In recent years, the City has processed a large number of variance and conditional use permit (CUP) requests for institutional uses. While South St. Paul has very restrictive sign regulations “on the books,” the City frequently grants the variance requests. Staff is proposing to raise the signage allowance for institutional uses in all residential districts to allow one 32-square foot monument sign per property and up to 24 square feet of wall signage per street frontage. Small multi-family (4 or more units) buildings in the R-2 and R-3 districts would be allowed to have 6 square feet of non-illuminated area identification signage and multi-family buildings in the R-3 districts on lots that are at least half an acre would be allowed up to 24 square feet of non-illuminated area identification signage. The proposed ordinance would also update the existing standards for projecting signs to align the standards with the awning signs that exist today on Marie Avenue.

Commissioner Thompson asked if the ordinance being presented, in addition to the previous sign ordinances the Planning Commission had reviewed, would reduce the number of signage zoning requests the Planning Commission reviewed. Mr. Healy explained the application before the Planning Commission and the previous signage ordinance amendment were two of the four signage-related ordinances that staff would be bringing to

the Planning Commission. The next two updates would cover the rules for temporary signs and the total property signage allowances.

Chair Ross asked how often staff received requests for new projecting signs. Mr. Healy explained that the code for Southview and Marie does not currently allow for the type of development that would have projecting signs. Projecting signs are common in traditional downtown main street development where the buildings come up to the sidewalk. Mr. Healy noted that the comprehensive plan and small area plan for Southview Boulevard and Marie Avenue encourages more traditional downtown main street buildings and so he would be bringing forward an ordinance in the next few years to support this type of development.

Chair Ross opened the public hearing.

Staff had not received any correspondence on the item and no one was present to comment on the application.

Chair Ross closed the public hearing.

Motion to recommend approval of the proposed ordinance as presented- Frankot/Krueger (6-0).

B. Ordinance Amendment Fixing an Inconsistency in the Home Occupation Ordinance

Mr. Healy shared the staff report. The Planning Commission and City Council reviewed a comprehensive update to the City's rules for home occupations in 2021. The new rules allow home occupations as a permitted use as long as they meet a long list of performance standards. Home occupations that cannot meet this list require an Interim Use Permit. The code language in the R-2 district was accidentally missed when the ordinance was originally adopted and still states that all home occupations require a CUP. The proposed ordinance would correct this error.

Chair Ross asked if the ordinance would require two readings since the ordinance was correcting an error. Mr. Healy stated two readings were required unless the City Council were to waive one of the readings.

Chair Ross opened the public hearing.

Staff had not received any correspondence on the item and no one was present to comment on the application.

Chair Ross closed the public hearing.

Motion to recommend approval of the proposed ordinance as presented- DesMarais/ Fournier (6-0).

5) OTHER BUSINESS

A. City Hall Fire Department Vestibule Addition Site Plan Review

Mr. Healy presented the staff report. The applicant is the City of South St. Paul. The City is seeking site plan approval for a roughly 100 square foot vestibule addition as a component of the City Hall renovation project. The existing City Hall building was built in the 1950s and remained largely unchanged until 2006. In 2006, City Hall was recarpeted and painted, and a small addition was added onto the Police Department. Despite this

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expansion, the operations of City Hall in the last few years have outgrown the building's configuration and the existing configuration is not meeting departmental needs. The proposed renovations would address some deferred maintenance needs as well as the needs to reconfigure the existing space to address the increased levels of staffing. The proposed renovation project will include replacing the Fire Department roof; reformatting spaces in the Police and Fire Departments; reconfiguring the existing office spaces, adding improved customer service counters; improving the existing fitness center and adding a secured entrance to the Fire Department. The secured entrance/vestibule addition would be located on the south side of the city hall building. The proposed addition would be constructed of brick and glass and appears to fully comply with the City Code. Staff recommends approval with conditions.

Commissioner Frankot asked if the vestibule would be open to the public. Mr. Healy stated that it would be.

Motion to recommend approval of the site plan as presented- Krueger/ DesMarais (6-0).

B. 2021 Annual Planning Commission Report

Ms. Mann recapped the annual Planning Commission report from 2021.

Motion to approve the annual report- Krueger/ Thompson (6-0).

6) ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn- Frankot/Fournier (6-0).