



District 10 Community Council Board Meeting  
**Tuesday, January 19, 2021 7:00 PM via Zoom**  
MINUTES

**I. Call to order**

Chair Melissa Liu called the meeting to order at **7:03** pm.

**II. Introductions**

Board Present (online): Benjamin Kowalsky-Grahek, Debra Verber, Jenne Nelson, Jennifer Victor-Larsen, Maggie Zimmerman, Marika Staloch, Mike Ireland, Rachel Bowers, Rebecca Calvo, Sara Benzkofer, Melissa Liu, Sarah Reuter, Olivia Mulvey Morawiecki  
Board Absent: Jill Henriksen, Amanda Rohrer, Melissa Brannon, Dan Edgerton  
Staff Present (online): Michael Kuchta  
Community and Guests Present: Steve Tuckner, Athena Hollins

**III. Review, Amend agenda**

**MOTION:** Approve meeting agenda (*first/second*) **passes**

**IV. Community Section**

A. Community Concerns: None Stated

**V. Board Business Section**

**A. Financial Reports (Mike Ireland)**

December Notable Revenue

- Received \$1,800 reimbursement from the City for education and outreach recycling reimbursement
- Received \$825 in unrestricted General Fundraising and Donations. \$650 was a collection of Mighty Cause/Give MN donations and \$175 were 3 individual donations
- Received \$1,200 in Miscellaneous Income. \$400 was an unrestricted stipend from the Sanneh organization for our time distributing meals and \$800 were targeted donations toward our Thanksgiving meals

Notable Expenses

- Under Neighborhood Relations Committee Initiatives, the \$1,839.12 in Other Initiative expenses were \$1,779.94 to TST Catering for providing Thanksgiving meals and \$59.18 for two laminated sandwich board posters for the Sanneh food distribution

2020 Recap

- Michael Kuchta tracks earned revenue and actual expenses against the approved budget
- His tracking reflects grant reimbursements in the year the associated expenses were incurred. Anticipation of these reimbursements was built into the budget

- Mike Ireland's reporting is based on our accountant's monthly reporting, then is itemized in more detail to reflect how our organization operates. The accountant reports are our organization's official financial reporting and are included in our monthly board packets
- Our accountant reports grant reimbursements when the revenue is actually received without concern when the associated expenses were incurred
- A real-world example: We will be receiving in the next few months \$16,580 in reimbursements for the Community Engagement, Innovation and Capitol Region Watershed District grants for expenses incurred in 2020
  - Michael's reporting will reflect these grant reimbursements in 2020 to offset when the grant expenses actually incurred. Once the reimbursements are received, he forecasts a slight surplus of \$382
  - Our accountant will report these grant reimbursements in 2021 once the money is actually received
- As of December 31, our checking account balance was \$48,890.14, which does not reflect the anticipated reimbursements

## **B. Board and Committee Minutes**

**MOTION:** Approve December 2020 meeting minutes (*first/second*) *passes*

## **C. Board Chair and Officer's Report (Melissa Liu)**

Melissa was asked as chair of D10 to participate in the nationwide survey of non-profits. It helped Melissa realize how we've done throughout the year. Financially, we're doing well. As a board, we're taking strides in the right direction as terms of racial equity work, housing, and transportation.

When Melissa stepped into her role as chair, the neighborhood felt divided over the German Immersion expansion. Now, as a nation, we're feeling that division. We are looking for ways to bring the neighborhood together in ways that address racial equity.

Annual reviews for both Michael and Emily are in process. Please give feedback as you see needed.

## **D. Committee Updates**

### **A. Environment (Sara Benzkofer)**

Learned that CRWD approved some of our Partner Grant application. The lake cleanup was fully funded, but the educational mailing funding was significantly less than requested.

Michael will be meeting with the CRWD staff to determine what options may be possible.

MN Pollution Control Agency talked about the clean cars initiative that MN is considering to promote more electric cars in our market. The committee is interested in submitting comments or a letter during this comment period.

### **B. Land Use (Maggie Zimmerman)**

Heard from an architect that is remodeling two buildings on the south side of Larpenteur, west of Lexington, that will be Banfield Animal Hospital. There was discussion about parking, storm water, etc.

Rethinking I-94 letter was brought up again after also being discussed in our anti-racism workgroup and as a city council resolution (as stated in the board packet in a draft dated 12/17/20). There was some talk about who has been involved other than the coalition of mostly white groups working on this. How are neighbors of color who are most impacted being involved in decision making? Council member Thao is hosting a meeting to discuss this further. The letter that the coalition sent in December needed to be sent by the date so requests were included in the MnDOT "statement of needs and purposes." Lead liaison from the Sierra Club has said that there are things in the document that may not address the historic Rondo neighborhood. Reconnect Rondo is hoping to build a land bridge. They're

trying to incorporate as many voices as possible. It's a continual moving process. It's a matter of whether this is a good time to weigh in.

Question: Why would we vote for something when there's so much ambiguity around it.

Answer: there are parts that we really support. But there's a whole basket that you have to take the full basket or leave the full basket. Not voting for this is also making a choice. You can't stand still on a moving train. This is moving and happening. If no concerns are brought up, will the State or City assume that there were no concerns and make a plan with no input. We will not likely get more information.

**ACTION REQUESTED:**

**Moved:** that the District 10 Como Community Council support the "Rethinking I-94" City Council Resolution, as stated in the draft dated 12/17/20.

**Motion passes** (Maggie Zimmerman abstained from vote)

A couple of months ago we learned of county converting Bethesda Hospital into a housing shelter. D10 members are seeing big issues with evicting people from their temporary housing during a pandemic. There are causes for concern for leaving encampments as well.

A community member, Steve Tuckner, spoke on behalf of encampment support, stating that this will mostly be symbolic as most evictions have happened. City has used the reasoning of propane heaters that have caused fires, there have been robberies and crime. The issue, though, is that we are needing to force people into the shelter system. Shelters are getting better, but most shelters kick you out at 7am, you may not leave your belongings. With tents — they have a 'home' where they can leave their belongings. They have community. They feel supported. They can have a partner. They can have a pet. They can have autonomy and be able to live the way they want to live. Until the city can help people find homes, they should support a city-sanctioned camp. Neighborhood Relations has also been discussing this issue. The anti-racism group will be talking about this ongoing, beyond the pandemic.

**ACTION REQUESTED:**

**Moved:** that the District 10 Como Community Council signs onto and affirms the content of the letter dated December 30, 2020 to the Mayor and City Council asking for a moratorium on the enforcement of illegal camping ordinances until the end of the pandemic.

**Motion passes**

There is movement on the Shalom Home, there is large equipment moving onto the site. The buildings will remain as they are with significant internal renovations.

Next meeting is Wednesday, February 3

**C. Neighborhood Relations (Sarah Reuter)**

Holiday decoration competition went great. Top three got cookies from the Cookie Cart. Know Your Como wrote up a bit about the 1st-place-winning family.

Moving forward: Looking into getting some art, perhaps on utility boxes.

Sanneh Foundation food distribution on Fridays is going smoothly.

Talked about getting a mascot for D10. Can build community and get people excited. Thinking about doing a poll of the entire neighborhood, and then put it up for a vote. Or the board could put forward a couple of ideas and put it up to the neighborhood for a vote.

Parade committee — harvest parade and festival. Likely near September 18th. Sarah will put out more information.

Anti-Racism Workgroup: Meeting next week. Mitra Jalali will be there. Will be meeting with Saint Anthony Park's equity committee. Looking at pushing policy to protect unhoused people.

**E. Staff Report (Michael Kuchta)**

Jill has talked with Catchafire representative about the mission/vision/values for D10, and have come to an agreement about how to move forward. We will schedule a weeknight coming up to look forward to this next part of strategic plan.

If you have budget questions, don't hesitate to call or email Michael. It can be confusing, as Michael and Mike approach the numbers in different ways.

There are two more scheduled weeks of Sanneh Foundation and distributing food. Because of the weather, there will be shifts to keep people from not needing to be out in the cold too long. Sanneh is only committing through January, but is hoping for more Federal Cares funds to continue past January.

**F. New Business (Board Members)**

Melissa introduced the Neighborhood Honor Roll nominees. Board members read nominations aloud and took the Survey Monkey poll. New members: Rita Amendola, James Cowles, and the Block Nurse duo of Molly Fitzel and Olivia Morawiecki.

**VI. Adjourn**

**Motion** to adjourn at 8:29 pm by Melissa Liu. *(first/second) passes*

*Respectively submitted by Marika Staloch. These minutes are not official until approved.*

# **Committee Updates / Action Items**

# Como Community Council: Officers Meeting

Feb. 9, 2021 / Zoom 5:30 p.m.

**Present:** Melissa Liu, chair; Olivia Morawiecki, vice-chair; Marika Staloch, secretary; Mike Ireland, treasurer; Michael Kuchta, executive director.

## Events

- **Food distribution.** We are continuing to partner with Sanneh; remaining distribution dates are Feb. 19 and 26. We are serving about 100 households each Friday, though it's always a struggle to balance reserved meal boxes and adequate walk-up supply. Sanneh may not know until next week if distribution will be available in March. We cannot do distribution on Feb. 12 because the temple needs parking for its Lunar New Year celebration. Michael will work with Olivia to see if Sanneh can supply 20 boxes for Como By The Lake on Feb. 12.
- **Shelter supply drive.** Neighborhood Relations is leading this collection of socks, gloves, and blankets for newly housed residents in Ramsey County shelters. We're keeping it simple as far as the supplies we are requesting. Logistics are falling into place quickly. We have enough volunteers for 9 one-hour shifts on Saturday-Sunday Feb. 13-14. Sarah will rent truck; supplies will be delivered to Bethesda. We are also accepting cash donations; we've got \$460 to date.
- **Sunday Series planning.** Marika suggested partnering with the Library's Read Brave programming, as we did last year on climate change. This year's programming runs March 1-April 24; theme is *Owning Our Stories: Rising Together for a Better Saint Paul*. There are 5 book selections; she has talked with Hwa Jeong Kim from Amy Brendmoen's office about a Ward 5 community read. Marika suggests that if we want have a D10 read and discussion, the best option might be "Front Desk" by Kelly Yang. It's a youth selection written from the perspective of a 10-year-old immigrant girl, but it offers intergenerational discussion possibilities. Marika suggests we get on the list to reserve a certain number of copies that residents can pick up at a nearby library; there are also options of buying copies or using the library's no-wait e-book resource. We probably would want a skilled facilitator; library can provide discussion guides. Using Zoom offers possibilities such as break-out rooms for readers who identify with certain themes or characters. Broader Read Brave theme also offers possibilities for connections to our Know Your Como initiative, or tying into Mapping Prejudice. Officers also suggested by Michael try to reschedule topics that were cancelled last spring: *Nature in Your Own "Backyard"* with author John Moriarty, and *Old Media in a New Era*, a panel discussion with representatives from the Star Tribune, Como Midway Monitor, and Park Bugle. We will talk with board about other Sunday Series topics we can schedule later throughout year.

## Community

- **2021 elections.** Board needs to decide how to conduct elections (based on options now available in bylaws), and how to recruit a more intentionally diverse board (which was a priority that surfaced in the board members' strategic planning self-assessments). The increased participation from 2020 suggests we should repeat alternatives this year, even if we ultimately are able to hold in-person voting.

Next meeting: Monday March 8, 5:30 p.m.

Michael will draft Action Item authorizing mail and online voting options again for April elections, and sketch out a timetable for candidate recruitment, ballot requests, and voting. Much discussion about whether we can mail one postcard to all D10 addresses that covers recruitment of candidates and ballot requests by community members. Last year, printing and mailing cost about \$1,500; we don't have enough money budgeted for two informational mailings, or to mail ballots to every household (this also raises time and security challenges).

Timing and language of postcard mailing will be important. Marika suggests being as explicit as we can to let renters, business representatives and BIPOC residents know they can run; Following inclusivity language typically used in job postings could be a good guide.

There also was discussion of trying a practice that some other district councils use: scheduling informal "drop in" times where potential candidates can have questions answered, learn more about the board, responsibilities, and that there's often a friendly, accessible vibe to the board – it's not all stuffy business, people don't need to know Robert's Rules, etc. Plus, there are options to being involved beyond being a board member. Michael and board members will schedule some one-hour time slots at various days and times once candidate recruitment starts. We'll prepare a fact sheet, and suggest that potential candidates view the video presentation from last year's annual meeting as an overview of what board members work on.

Michael pointed out that best form of intentional recruitment is one-on-one outreach by board members, such as directly in their networks or getting recommendations from people or partner organizations (schools, rec centers, congregations, nonprofits), especially those that have stronger connections with BIPOC residents or with potential board members with key skills. This basically needs to fall on board members; it is not best practice for staff to recruit their own board.

This year, the offices of Chair, Secretary, one seat from each Sub-District, and three At-Large seats are on the ballot. Melissa will find out how many current board members plan to run for re-election.

- **2021 annual meeting.** Bylaws require annual meeting in April. Pandemic restrictions on public gatherings are likely to still be in place, so we will again prepare video presentation of accomplishments as we did last year, and record it for later viewing by residents who cannot attend at 7 p.m. on a Tuesday. Michael already compiles information for city grant report, so preparing a script simply means repurposing the same information.

### Communication

- **Website** (draft site at <https://167d10cc.aeronauticvigilante.com>) Catchafire volunteer Grady Reuler is working on a few of the major gaps in the architecture of the new site.

### Financials

- **2021 work plan.** Officers discussed the draft work plan Michael has prepared for our 2021 Community Engagement grant from the city. Draft will be shared with the board for comment and revision. Michael will draft an Action Item to approve the work plan as presented (or revised) and authorize submitting all the accompanying paperwork when it is complete (with the approval of officers).

We have been informed officially that grant amounts for the City Engagement and Innovation grants will remain the same as in 2020. We have not yet received the paperwork to prepare and submit the Innovation work plan.

- **Audit committee.** Bylaws require an internal financial review every two years in time for annual meeting (though 2017 review did not get done until September). Need to get this on radar so committee can be appointed in March. Alexis Baker, Jill Henricksen, and Amanda Rohrer did the review in 2017. We will review guidance from last review to minimize chances that this year's audit committee runs into kinds of challenges and questions committee members faced in 2017. Flip side is that the chair, treasurer and staff should not be too involved, because it defeats the purpose of independent set of eyes.

### Organizational Business

- **Board Meeting** (Feb. 16).
  - Anticipated Action Items:
    - 2021 Community Engagement Grant Work Plan (Officers)
    - Clean Cars Minnesota rule-making (Environment)

### Other Business

- **Strategic planning.** Values discussion is Thursday Feb. 25 from 5:30-8:30 p.m. Session will be recorded for those who cannot attend all three hours. Ask Jill to give a heads-up at Feb. 16 board meeting.
- **Staff reviews.** Michael conducted review with Emily on Jan. 25; they have a set of goals for 2021. Melissa will conduct review with Michael on Feb. 10.

### Staff Report

- Michael may be on vacation early part of week of Feb. 22.

### Other Business

- **Resources for building relationships.** As a follow-up to January's officers' discussion, Michael did preliminary research on organizations that offer "circle" training or facilitation services. Potential goal would be for board member(s) to get training to offer community dialogue on how to hold space for people who have different views, to be better listeners, to create effective communication among residents who hold divisive beliefs. An organization such as D10 could have unique qualifications to lead this type of work. Potential resources include the Dispute Resolution Center, the Conflict Resolution Center, the Mediation Center, You Have the Power, Peace Making Circles, and Saint Paul resident Gwen Jones, who works through Living Justice Press. Many of the "circle" groups tend to focus on restorative justice and educational community work, but many suggest the approach can apply to more-general community settings. Olivia will talk with Sarah Reuter about whether this could fit into Anti Racism Work Group's goals.
- **Next meeting.** Will be moved to Monday March 8, 5:30 p.m.

## District 10 Environmental Committee Meeting

Wednesday, February 10 2021, 7:00 - 8:20 pm

Attendees: Sara Benzkofer (chair), Amanda Rohrer (board), Jennifer Victor-Larsen (board), Rachel Bowers (board), Mike Ireland, Arty Dorman, Dawn Lamm, Bill Niebur, Gordon Wrobel, Susan Jane Cheney, Michael Kuchta (executive director)

### STANDARD ITEMS 7:03 - 7:05

- Welcome and Introductions
- Amend/Adopt the Agenda

### COMMUNITY SECTION

- Update on Front St Community Garden
  - Ramsey County hasn't gotten an update from Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

### NEW BUSINESS 7:07 - 8:18

- Discuss Clean Cars MN Letter (Sara Benzkofer)
  - Background: meeting with MPCA about a year ago, comment period has opened up again
  - Drafted letter, if approved by committee, will be reviewed at next board meeting
    - Formatting edits
    - Add support for charging station infrastructure?
      - More of a ask rather than statement of support
      - Provide support for existing programs
      - Added: *Support additional infrastructure and policy needed to make them successful*
    - Committee recommends bringing to full board
    - Sara will write an Action Item
- Citywide Spring Clean-Up (Mike Ireland)
  - Sat April 24th 9-11:30
  - Does District 10 want to host? 3-4 volunteers from D10 to hand out supplies, etc
  - Plan for social distancing
  - Volunteers: Arty Dorman, Mike I + 2 others
  - Mike will tell city D10 is interested in hosting
- Tree Trek (Susan Jane Cheney)
  - Plaques
    - Have list of existing and missing tags, and expansion trees to tag
    - Tags from company are reasonably priced for those company already has printed (<\$5)
    - 2 tree species don't have existing tags from company, would cost ~\$15
    - Community project request submitted to city, got approval to move forward
      - Work with Forestry (Rachel Coyle) to figure out how to attach tags
    - Next step: identify specific trees to tag
    - Paying for tags: budgeted \$100, might go over with expansion trees

- Committee can either limit to \$100, pay for overage out of discretionary funds, or get donations
  - Adopt/support a tree program: support on-going education (website, maps, etc)
    - List supporters on D10 website
    - Collect donations
    - Coordinate with Como Campus?
  - Promote as a “Como Arboretum”
- Next Trek
  - Proposed: Saturday June 26th, 10-12
    - Rain date: Sunday 27th
  - Can be done socially distanced
  - Do video recording? Michael will investigate
- Seed Library Cyber Seed Crawl (Dawn Lamm)
  - Next crawl on Feb 20th focuses on edibles and medicinals
  - ~50 are attending, ~200 are interested via Facebook
  - Doing some boosting and targeting on Facebook
  - Looking to add “Little Free Cabinets” (similar to Little Free Library) for seeds in Como neighborhood
    - Goal is to get one in each sub-district
    - Part of “Outplant the Outbreak” campaign
- Update on Organics site
  - City and County in agreement to rebuild site at ~1111 Beulah Lane
  - Still need city attorney approval on who owns land
    - Hoping to get news by end of the month
  - Ramsey Co is ready to build as soon as frost comes out of ground
- Updates on Como Lake treatments from Capitol Regional Watershed District?
  - Michael will get an update for 2021 plans

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

- Virtual D10 Board Meeting, Tuesday, February 16, 7:00 p.m.

## **Next Committee Meeting Time**

- Wednesday, March 10, 7:00 p.m.
- Presentation by Annie Falk, Citizens Utility Board

**Staff Report to District 10 Land Use Committee**  
**Feb. 3, 2021**

ACTION ITEMS FROM JANUARY

**Rethinking I-94:** At its January meeting, D10 Board endorsed draft resolution being developed for Saint Paul City Council. On Jan. 20, Ward 1 Councilmember Dai Thao led a stakeholders' meeting to seek additional input and revisions to the draft. City Council was scheduled to consider the resolution on Feb. 3. Next stakeholders' meeting: Feb. 4, 2 p.m.

**Encampments:** At its January meeting, D10 Board signed onto letter urging Saint Paul to stop evicting unhoused residents from encampments. On Jan. 27, Ward 4 Councilmember Mitra Jalali met with D10's Anti-Racism Work Group to discuss encampments and other city housing policies. View the recording of that discussion:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vzTRnBsXarl9eNiwE8wPIKISmK2VQL\\_h/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vzTRnBsXarl9eNiwE8wPIKISmK2VQL_h/view)

DEVELOPMENT

**1554 Midway Parkway:** Crews are working on additional interior demolition to create a "clean shell" for construction. Developer Jeffrey Laux pledges to keep us informed.

**Hmong College Prep Academy:** Construction of new middle school is under way. Traffic management plan has yet to be approved; I am seeking a draft so we can weigh in to address problems caused by bus queues eating up parking, blocking access to Como Park Apartments, and causing traffic congestion and safety concerns.

**International Institute:** Construction is underway on the building addition. Services are relocated to Saint Anthony Park for the time being. No further update available.

PROPERTY ISSUES

**Duke's Car and Towing:** DSI inspected the business on Jan. 13; found parking on lot in violation of license conditions, and issued correction notice. Have not heard results of follow-up inspection, which could occur any time after Jan. 23.

**963 East Como Blvd.:** On Jan. 20, City Council approved a temporary waiver of vacant building fees; the action gives property owner Michelle Schumacher until March 24 to get permits and other paperwork in place to demolish the building. She intends to build a new house on the site.

**1013 Jameson St.:** On Jan. 13, City Council issued 180-day extension (until July) for property owner Ray Moore to rehabilitate building and correct 11 code deficiencies.

**1204/1208 Saint Albans St. N:** The certificate of occupancy for this duplex was reissued in January. The city says the most-problematic tenant has moved out.

**671 California Ave.:** We have received complaints from surrounding neighbors that tenants are running a recording studio in this single-family home, with music penetrating their walls most evenings as late as 10 p.m. I have talked with DSI; it probably does not violate the city noise ordinance, but may be an illegal "home occupation." We are discussing a combination of approaches, including working with landlord, tenant education, and potential enforcement to resolve the situation.

LICENSES

**Half Time Rec:** We received a few reports from neighbors of periodic, disruptive, late-night activities outside the bar, and possible violations of Covid restrictions, most recently on Jan. 29. Staff is looking into this. No update on City Council approval of new license conditions.

**K&L Sales:** The second-hand dealer's license for this used-car lot at Como and Arona is up for renewal on March 29.

**980 Como Ave.:** Has applied for a short-term rental license. These types of applications typically are approved automatically.

**H&M Auto Body:** The auto repair and paint shop licenses for this body shop at 867 Dale are up for renewal on April 18.

**Como Park Golf Course:** The liquor, Sunday liquor, and entertainment licenses are up for renewal on April 18.

#### OTHER

**Como Lake Drive:** Union Park and Mac-Groveland district councils are investigating asking the city to permanently close the southbound lane of Mississippi River Boulevard to motor vehicle traffic. This could increase the need for us to make a decision sooner than later on whether or not to seek seasonal or permanent closure of Como Lake Drive.

**Dock & Paddle:** Will reopen on weekends beginning March 6. No update on conducting the annual performance metrics survey required in the lease.

#### **Zoning Studies:**

- **Parking:** City staff presented two proposals on Jan. 27 for reducing parking minimums. You can see a PDF of the staff presentation (<https://www.stpaul.gov/sites/default/files/2021-01/Comp%20Plan%20Committee%20Presentation%20INTRO.pdf>) or read the full report ([https://www.stpaul.gov/sites/default/files/2021-01/1-22-21\\_Final%20Parking%20Memo-Complete.pdf](https://www.stpaul.gov/sites/default/files/2021-01/1-22-21_Final%20Parking%20Memo-Complete.pdf)) that was presented to the city's Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee; I have attached my summary below.
- **Family:** City Council has scheduled a public hearing on the redefinition of "family" for Wednesday March 3 at 3:30 p.m. In short, the proposal all but eliminates the term "family" in city zoning codes and replaces it with "household." In most circumstances, the new proposal then allows no more than six adults "and minor children in their care" to live in a dwelling unit. (Let me know if you want the official ordinance language.)
- **Intent of Zoning:** City staff have outlined the scope of a general review of the city's zoning code, much of which dates to 1975. The timeline anticipates initial public outreach in February and March. The study intends to update the zoning code "to align with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, with a focus on equity, people-centered development, sustainability and resiliency, and growth and prosperity through density." It also may revise situations that require consent petitions from nearby property owners.

**Housing Stability:** As mentioned earlier, Ward 4 Councilmember Mitra Jalali held an hourlong discussion Jan. 27 with members of District 10's Anti-Racism Work Group and District 12's Equity Committee. The discussion covered a wide range of housing topics, including density, affordable housing, unsheltered residents, and encampments. View a recording of the discussion: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vzTRnBsXarl9eNiwE8wPIKISmK2VQL\\_h/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vzTRnBsXarl9eNiwE8wPIKISmK2VQL_h/view)

**Twin Cities German Immersion School:** Executive director Ted Anderson is stepping down effective June 30. Applications will be accepted through end of March; interviewing and hiring expected in April.

**Falcon Heights:** FYI, the building formerly known as the TIES Building, on the southwest corner of Larpenteur and Snelling, will become a mixed-use project known as Amber Union. Falcon Heights approved a planned unit development to repurpose the building from office uses to affordable residential and commercial uses. The project has received \$23 million in state bonding money for the costs related to the affordable housing and restoration portions of the project, plus a Metropolitan Council Livable Communities grant. The developers also are requesting tax increment financing from Falcon Heights. The suburb's city council has not yet acted on that request.

## OTHER PENDING COMMITTEE BUSINESS

**Back to the 50s:** Expand State Fair parking overlay for Back to the 50s?

**State Fair Street Parking Study:** Still needs to be analyzed.

**East Como Lake Drive:** Seasonal or permanent closure to vehicles? Rename street?

**Comprehensive Plan:** Adopted in 2015, but work began in 2012.

## SAINT PAUL PARKING STUDY

Planning and Economic Development is proposing a wide-ranging revamp of off-street parking requirements in Saint Paul. City staff are proposing two options:

- Eliminate parking requirements citywide
- Allow developers and businesses to reduce parking requirements on a case-by-case basis by selecting from a menu of exemptions and reductions

### **Summary**

Based on a presentation staff gave to the city's Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee on Jan. 27, 2021, both options:

- eliminate minimum parking requirements within a quarter-mile of high-capacity transit lines
- reduce the need for variances
- require parking and rent to be billed separately in developments of more than 25 units
- significantly reduce costs and requirements under the city's Travel Demand Management Plan language
- reflect recent trends toward online shopping and tele-commuting, which seem to be eliminating parking demand (or shifting demand to shorter-term use)

The proposals do not change parking maximums, on-street parking policies, college parking requirements, or bike parking design standards.

### **Context**

Current parking minimums date to the 1954 and 1975 zoning revisions. They apply to nearly every land use in the city and apply nearly everywhere except downtown. Currently, 35.6 percent of Saint Paul's land area is devoted primarily to moving or storing automobiles.

Historically, the market as preferred an oversupply of free, off-street parking over an under-supply. A majority of current off-street parking in Saint Paul -- and the over-supply -- was and continues to be built at the discretion of property owners, not because of required City parking minimums. Projects in the two years show that developers build 18% more parking than required. Similarly, parking counts of off-street parking during Green Line construction, for example, showed that, even at peak demand, more than 40% of parking spaces at commercial and retail sites went unused.

Parking minimums clash with current city policies in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and the Climate Action and Resilience Plan. Among impacts of current minimum parking requirements, they:

- Hinder the climate plan's goals of carbon neutrality and reducing carbon output in transportation.
- Impede higher commercial and residential density, including goals of more-affordable housing, in part by driving up construction costs and rents.

- Increase reliance on automobile travel, which reinforces itself by increasing the distance between establishments and reducing the viability and attractiveness of walking, biking, transit use, and other alternatives.
- Place the same requirements on neighborhood-based, small businesses as they do on regional big-box businesses, even though small businesses tend to have smaller trade areas and a smaller percentage of customers who drive
- Reduce property tax revenue per square foot
- Force renters who don't use cars to subsidize renters who do (one study says off-street parking for multifamily housing accounts for 17% of housing cost)

City staff believe that, with no minimum parking requirements, developers can let the market determine parking needs on a site-by-site basis. Or, by choosing the option to reduce minimums, the city would give developers 28 voluntary ways to reduce required parking, compared with 3 voluntary options now. In theory, this would allow more land to be devoted to housing rather than parking. This proposal also:

- reduces requirements for duplexes, cluster developments, and multi-family units with two or more bedrooms
- eliminates requirements for units leased to residents with 60% or less of area median income
- eliminates requirements for buildings built before 1955

Como Community Council  
Anti-Racism Work Group  
Jan. 27, 2021  
7 pm via Zoom

Introductions: Councilmember Mitra Jalali, legislative aide Matt Privatsky, Ben Kowalsky-Grahek, Sarah Reuter, Jill Henricksen, Melissa Pappas, KC Harrison, Kathryn Murray, Dan Edgerton, Janet Pope, Kim Lieberman, Suzanne Rhees, Lori Thomas (staff: Emily Rodriguez, Michael Kuchta)

Councilmember Jalali's presentation is recorded and available at:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vzTRnBsXarl9eNiwE8wPIKISmK2VQL\\_h/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vzTRnBsXarl9eNiwE8wPIKISmK2VQL_h/view)

Mitra started by answering the question: "What range of actions can the City take now to get people housed?"

- 3 city facilities are group spaces with no privacy and therefore, people have less autonomy, and COVID practices are harder to maintain safely.
- City policy is that encampments are "tolerated" but when deemed "unsafe", the Mayor can make the choice about whether or not they get evicted. Mitra emphasized that it is important to not evict people without an option: people risk COVID and loss of belongings and dignity.
- The City needs to improve criteria for what is deemed "safe": every site is different, the City must get rid of the subjectivity of "safe", formalize the standards for notification of eviction, prioritize the funding for budgetary improvements, get to "sanctioned space" vs. "tolerated space", and press the need for monetary assistance from the federal and state level
- The biggest barrier with the letter to demand the end of evictions is that it needs a supermajority affirmative vote of the City Council, as well as support from the Mayor's office

-What can District Councils do?

- educate and share perspectives with councilmembers. DC's are sister orgs and have that sway/power. There are councilmembers who need more education on the nuances of the choices that unhoused people are making.
- National best standards/practices for supporting encampments
- Educate your community to have these difficult and necessary conversations around the crisis of evictions and being unhoused

Jenne asked about which sites are being looked at by the City and whether there is discussion around building new spaces, especially thinking of COVID restrictions, shelter with dignity, and low-barrier needs. Mitra's response:

- The City needs policy to support a range of outdoor sites. There is already a lack of adequate numbers of shelters (especially low-barrier) and the current ones are behind and need expansion, especially with the looming end of the eviction moratorium

- The FEMA expansion for funding needs to be maximized, people need transition shelter
- Working to punch through red tape and clear out bureaucracy, we need this funding and housing right now

Matt's response:

- the administration and department staff already are on board with tiny homes
- College dorms are empty; the challenge is how do we make sure money isn't spent temporarily and spent slightly more longer term: spending more to buy buildings outright now saves money in the long term
- How do we spend money the best right now for those who want shelter and know their own conditions?
- District Councils should use our voice to represent *everyone* in our community and hold them all accountable.
- Possible emergency/mutual aid housing fund

Dan asked how to build relationships with our unhoused neighbors.

- Freedom from the Streets is an organization to reach out to; other community groups
- Build direct relationships with dignity and without condescension or preconceived notions
- Could Luther Seminary be a place where community can be fostered on more individual levels?

Kathryn:

- Mental illness is a huge issue; it's important, and life-saving to have mental health resources that are *not* the police. Who can give referrals to those who need that need met to get help?
- Harm reduction
- Get in as you are
- Drug education
- [https://nlchp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Tent\\_City\\_USA\\_2017.pdf](https://nlchp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Tent_City_USA_2017.pdf)

Mitra's longer-term answers/ideas:

- Rezoning and more high-density housing. Housing is a human right
- Individualism v. collectivism
- Basic understanding of community safety, attitudes need to shift the soil
- Possible push for a town hall
- Indoor small structures, confront NIMBYism
- They need support citywide to step up and coalesce
- Tenant Protections: SAFE Housing protections roll out March 1, we will need your help distributing community education information to renters so that folks know their rights
- Use district council convening power to get audiences with state reps and the district offices of congressional reps, host a multi-governmental forum where everyone has to come and show their homework, etc.
- "Affordable" housing is nuanced and inherently racist
- Redistribution of white wealth

- How to use the rest of limited dollars for affordable housing, explore all city funding projects
- Alliance for Metro Stability
- Where to put affordable housing
- Change narrative of “concentrated poverty” and equity in place

#### Debrief

- Use the power to convene
- What is the idea of what we want to do before we pick who to call on
- Athena Hollins? Sunday Series with education on housing, unhoused people, harm reduction?
- Build a truly grassroots campaign
- Use the newsletter, reach out to churches and recognize that harm reduction conversations need to happen
- Neighborhoods Now! is an innovative community educational series to strengthen the work of individuals and organizations working in neighborhoods to:
  - Organize to win issues for people and places
  - Build power to change systems for racial equity and economic justice.
  - Build organizations whose leadership is reflective of the community.
  - Build diverse and effective cross-cultural collaborations.

Invite Amy Brendmoen next with the same questions we sent to Mitra

#### Tasks:

- Em: reach out to Amy Brendmoen, engage North End, check in on website to get it on calendar
- Newsletter: ARWG for Ben, link for new people and debrief on Mitra from Ben