



HOUSING AND LAND USE SPECIAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, January 27th, 2021 | 6:30pm

Visit macgrove.org/ for Meeting ID # and password

Please note: this meeting is being held remotely online via Zoom

Committee Members:

Mike Moore (Chair)
Ann Dolan
Art Punyko
Cindy Radtke
Colin Fesser
Dave Pasiuk
Drew Nelson
Elizabeth Wefel
Gene Johnson
Jack Fei
Julie Kaupa
Kate Baxter-Kauf
Kathy McGuire
Kensley Lipstreuer
Marc Manderscheid
Meg Arnosti (Secretary)
Mike Sonn
Patty Hartman
Saura Jost
Tom Dietsche

Presenters:

Chet Funk
Eliyahu Zmira
Amy Gage

Guests:

Bob Stupka
Brad Griffith
Evan Hall
Gerri Barosso
Jacob Chenitz
Jane McClure
Karie Johnson
Lesley
Marge
Nora Ptacek
Tim Morehead

Staff:

Alexa Golemo

MINUTES

6:40 II. Approval of January 2021 Agenda (*Addition/Deletion of agenda items*)

No additions or deletions.

6:43 III. Approval of November 2020 Minutes

Minutes from November 2020 meeting approved other than to add Patty Hartmann to attendance list.

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6:45 IV. 1074-1096 James Avenue Application to Planning Commission,
Chet Funk, et al., Property Owners & Eli Zmira, Project Manager, DJR Architecture

2 setback variances

Conditional use permit for height

Affordability affects floor area ratio. Currently a 2.75 ratio. Proposal is similar to what was discussed in November. Front yard setback requested is to maintain the front of the building in alignment with existing homes. The zoning in place would require a further setback.

Questions and Comments:

Julie Kaupa: p. 13-15 shows exterior of building. What are the materials? Eli: No materials have been committed. Building cladding will be metal. Street level will include fitness center, lobby. There will be masonry and glass at pedestrian level.

Colin Fesser: Bike parking quantity? EV charging stations? Chet: Yes to EV. Eli: at least required number of bike stalls but probably more.

Saura Jost: Wood construction? During construction, where will materials be staged? Eli: West side will be excavated first. Materials will be staged on site. Yes, wood construction.

Gene Johnson: Is there a representative of Mr. Ira Kip here? Chet is breaking ground for entire block, opening the ground to Mr. Kip who has more experience. Mr. Kip will want all this and more. We must know what is happening on the rest of the block before approving this side.

Cindy Radtke: Impressed with your work on affordability. Will vote in favor.

Ann Dolan: reminder of role of district councils. Our fiduciary duty is to represent the neighborhood. What outreach have you done? Feeling uneasy about the project. You bought single family housing and got it rezoned and now you are asking for a variance. This will negatively affect the neighborhood. I feel we are not adequately representing the people of the neighborhood. Parking: where will all the people park? Eli: St. Paul is behind most cities in the country in affordable housing. The reasons for the requests is to get more affordable housing. We have 2 full floors of parking along with surface parking. We are fulfilling the City requirement. City plan wants increased density and affordable housing. This site is near transportation.

Elizabeth Wefel. Troubled that we are spending time casting aspersions on someone who is not part of this decision. I know people from the neighborhood who like the project.

Art Punyko. Likes the fact that affordable housing was added. Feels we have done quite a bit of outreach. It is near transit, near a grocery. We need something like this. Is in favor.

Marc Manderscheid. 3 questions. Not voting on whether we like it or not. Variance to reduce front yard setback from 25 to 10 feet. CUP for height. We should be looking at the code, not on whether we like it or not. Opinion: no good reason for setback allowance. Developer asked for the zoning and now wants a variance.

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Mike Sonn: sees no reason not to grant variances.

Julie Kaupa: Is affordability a done deal? Alexa: They must seek affordability to get their desired FAR.

Cathy Plessner: This development responds to need for equity.

Drew Nelson: Appreciates efforts of developer and architect. Strongly supports.

Colin Fesser: Have we heard anything from neighbors that would support the CUP?

Kathy MCGuire: Agrees with Marc Manderscheid. This is right across the street from single family homes. Our mandate is to not alter the essential character of the area. This does alter it a great deal.

Research: New developments have actually increased rents.

Jack Fei: Supports requests. This is not a battle of neighbors against the City. Those neighbors are in the best position to advocate for themselves.

Kate Baxter-Kauf: Move to approve all 3 variances. Drew seconds.

Cindy Radtke: This is where the equity work is done.

The Housing and Land Use Committee of the Macalester-Groveland Community Council recommends approval of the variance for front yard setback, variance for rear yard setback, and Conditional Use Permit for a height of 69' 6" for the properties at 1074-1096 James Avenue. (Kate Baxter-Kauf, Drew Nelson)

Final Vote: 12 ayes, 5 nays with 3 abstentions. Motion passes and will go directly to the Planning Commission.

- 7:45 V. Lot K Parking Lot Agreement, University of St. Thomas Saint Paul Campus (Cleveland Ave. S. & Grand Ave.)
Amy McDonough, Chief of Staff and Liaison to the Office of the President & Amy Gage, Director of Neighborhood Relations

Amy McDonough: Chief of Staff to President Julie Sullivan at St. Thomas. They have an agreement with the City that Lot K would either be a residence hall or return to green space. It has become a parking lot but that has not been a permanent solution. Their proposal is to keep it a parking lot but make it multi-modal. They would add electric charging stations with a sidewalk to Cleveland, bike racks, pollinator gardens and trees. It would still have 28 parking spaces. This would be a long-term solution for the space.

Jack Fei: How can you beautify the corner, and how can you get better access to McNeeley hall?

Dave Pasiuk: We always need more parking.

Colin Fesser: Are both ADA stalls van accessible?

Mac Manderscheid: In support.

Cathy Plessner: excited about this.

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Tom Dietsche: supports this strongly. Davanni needs this space and so do others.

Motion to remove restrictive language in the CUP regarding the use of Lot K on the University of St Thomas Campus (Jack Fei, Kathy McGuire)

Final Vote 18-0-0. Motion passes unanimously.

8:15 VI. Adjourn

Minutes submitted by Meg Arnosti.