

Macalester-Groveland Community Council
Housing and Land Use Committee Meeting
October 25, 2023

MINUTES

Committee Members: Mike Moore (Chair), Dave Pasiuk, Collin Fesser, Cathy Plessner, Jack Fei, Elizabeth Wefel, Heather Huffman, Nora Ptacek, Meg Grove, Regina Purins, Cameron Cole, Catherine Plessner, Colleen Crenshaw, Gene Johnson, Kobie Bardouille, Kensey Lipstreuer, Nora Ptacek, Tom Dietsche, Beverly Savarin, Alexa Golemo (Staff)

Guests: Anthony Adams (UST), Jerome Benner (UST), Amy McDonough (UST), Carri Stuhr, Christopher, Deb, Flannery Delaney, Ginny Housum, Gretchen B., Irene Suddard, Jane McClure, Jim Brummer (UST), John Silva, Karen James, Kari Zobel, Kathy, Katie Parke-Reimer, Kelly MacGregor, Patrick Contardo, Steve Dononhue, Tom and Karen Alf, Tom Moss, Daniel Kennedy

6:30 I. Welcome guests & new members and HLU introduction, Mike Moore, Chair
Elizabeth Wefel agreed to act as secretary

6:36 II. Agenda additions/deletions

6:38 III. Approve September 2023 meeting minutes.

Cathy Plessner moved minutes. Dave Pasiuk seconded the motion.

The committee adopted the minutes with a vote of 9 in favor, 0 against and 3 abstentions.

6:40 IV. Lee and Penny Anderson Multi-Purpose Arena on St. Paul South Campus

University of St. Thomas

Plan updates and timelines for the University of St. Thomas Multipurpose Arena development. Project team staff will share the results from the EAW process, next steps in the timeline, and answer questions from the community.

Jerome Benner, the community Liaison for University of St. Thomas began with an update on the arena development. He recapped the EAW process, which was required because the arena will have more than 5000 seats. The EAW is a city led process. Earlier this month, City of St. Paul concluded EAW sufficient and that no further environmental studies necessary.

The EAW does not approve/deny project. It guides process. UST has agreed to several mitigation strategies per discussion with city. On September 26 after EAW done, City submitted to EQB that a further EIS was not necessary. Basically says that it does not need further clarification.

UST is now in process of site review. City has imposed several conditions that must be adopted before final approval. UST is working with several city departments on the conditions.

- UST is committed to developing a plan with St. Paul police on traffic impacts (vehicular and pedestrian). UST will have uniformed officers to guide traffic.
- UST has been receiving public comments, including from St. Paul responsible development action team. UST provided point by point response to the letter.

Changes were made to site plan made in response to public comments. Southeast access from Cretin. Originally all vehicles going from Summit. This has changed so most vehicles are coming from Cretin. They are no longer exploring additional parking from Mississippi River Boulevard.

UST has also committed to noise analysis and to 1 – 1 tree replacements. We want to add more trees throughout process.

UST has been holding voluntary community listening sessions including a townhall, city led EAW workshop, meeting with ISNAC, and meeting with MacGrove HLU. They would like to have input on traffic management plan.

Anthony Adams from Ryan Companies walked through the site plan:

- There's a culmination in a plaza on Grand – it completes 4th side of outdoor courtyard at school. They are trying to make the plaza and access to it pedestrian friendly.
- Main entry is on north side.
- On West side, there is an existing access to Summit. Schoenecker project has inbound on Summit, outbound on Cretin. With this project, they propose that Schoenecker reach through new access point.
- Visiting team can come out via NW drop off.
- They are still working through event traffic plan with city for where buses will need to come in and out.
- The south parking lot is much bigger now, it will be smaller and will also be used for some service vehicles. It will also be reserved for certain people during game.
- Southeast. There will be a service vehicle drive that will also serve as a walkway that connects to Cretin. Access point will be straighter than shown on map.

Next steps. They are working on site plan review and expect approval in early 2024. There is a heritage preservation commission meeting on November 9. The

Capitol Region Watershed District (CRWD) regulates stormwater during construction and in plan.

UST applied for permit, received feedback, and will resubmit in November. They expect approval later this year.

They are hoping to start early utility and infrastructure construction in January 24

In spring 2024 they plan to start arena and are targeting Fall 25 completion to be ready for 25-26 basketball and hockey seasons They hope to come back to this committee in December to provide update

Public discussion and questions.

Question in chat on parking. Response. UST is committed to addressing. Ticketed patrons will have instructions on where to park. They will start with the ramp, then look across campus, use shuttles and incentivize transit. When you buy ticket, it will tell you where you must park.

Jack Fei, HLU suggested charging \$25 per event and working with metro transit to allow people to ride for free.

UST is in discussions with Metro Transit and discussing how to promote transit for higher capacity events.

A nearby resident expressed concern that charging higher parking will drive people to neighborhoods and asked whether there is instruction on parking happening now. She also expressed concern about pedestrians near Cretin.

UST does not currently do this system for football but recognize they will need a system for the arena.

Engineer from Ryan pointed out that the new access point will have limited traffic.

Another resident commented that she likes incentivizing transportation but is concerned about the impact to migratory birds. UST has been talking with the Audubon society about how they can address. Their lights will point downward. There will not be that much gas because it is expensive to keep building cold enough for ice. Lighting control system will sweep lights off.

Another set of neighbors is concerned about parking and believes that that people who attend UST never use transit.

UST recognizes it will be difficult to get some folks to use transit, but people do use park and ride, like state fair. In response to chat question, they are also looking at a designated pick-up/drop off for Uber.

Another neighbor is concerned about parking and skeptical about transit. He wanted to know about UST's experience with shuttles and Transit.

UST operates a shuttle now. They are also studying how the U of M handles shuttles to their games esp. during state fair.

Colin Fesser, HLU, echoed Jack's comments about pushing metro transit for free rides. He thought it might be worth discounting event tickets for those who use bike or transit to get there. He asked what typical attendance of football games is, and how many are students who live on or near campus.

Attendance for football is 4000 – 5000. About 1500-2000 is students.

Meg Grove, HLU stated that 2 per week is better way to state than 35 and then asked questions about what monitoring means.

Amy McDonogh (UST) pointed out that there's no overlap with football and basketball/hockey seasons. Monitoring is a requirement from the EAW discussions. The city wants to make sure that UST is tracking how many people come to event and whether its predictions are met. UST will be giving that data back to the city and using it for continuous improvements.

Meg Grove HLU asked about stormwater and concerns about it ending up in neighbor's basements. Anthony from Ryan explained the site will capture the rainwater and stormwater within its own system and will not be sending it into neighborhoods.

Catherine Plessner moves that we extend discussion time by 15 minutes. Heather seconded.
Motion passes 11 – 0.

Heather Huffman, HLU, expressed her belief that more than 80% of people who live in St. Paul own or share a car and that people will not use shuttle in winter. She expressed her frustrations with this development and with development in the city in general.

Another neighbor said that the shuttles will not work because people will not take them at night. She also expressed concern about events organized by outside groups.

Amy McDonough (UST) acknowledged they need to be more specific about which events will happen.

Another neighbor expressed concerns about parking and his disbelief in the plan. He expressed confusion about why they are monitoring for 2 years and then coming up with a plan.

Jerome, UST explained that they will have a plan in place at start. The two-year monitoring is about continuous improvement.

Another neighbor expressed concerns about parking.

The final neighbor expressed concerns about pedestrians and urged UST to ensure there will be cross walk visibility enhancements in place.

7:40 V. Updates/Announcements

Alexa encouraged people to sign up for our email list at www.macgrove.org/participate.

7:45 VI. Adjourn