

**MINUTES OF MEETING
SOUTH ST. PAUL PLANNING COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY APRIL 2, 2025**

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

Present: Tyler Fehrman
 Tim Felton
 Geoff Fournier
 Tracy Haye
 James Hart
 Andrew Hoffman
 Brianne Miller
 Michael Healy, Planning Manager
 Monika Miller, Associate Planner
 Deb Griffith, Community Affairs Liaison
 Nick Guilliams, City Engineer

Absent: None

- 1) APPROVAL OF AGENDA - Motion to approve as presented– Hoffman/ Miller (7-0).
- 2) APPROVAL OF MINUTES –March 5, 2025 –Motion to approve as presented– Fournier/ Hoffman (7-0).
- 3) NEW BUSINESS

 None.
- 4) PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Ordinance Amendment to Set the Maximum Height for All Detached Garages at 16 Feet

Ms. Miller presented the staff report. The applicant, Jack Pietruszewski is seeking an ordinance amendment to allow detached garages to be up to 16 feet in height, regardless of the roof style. The Applicant would like to construct a detached garage with a shed-style roof that is 14 feet 6 inches tall. Under the current code, the maximum allowable height for a detached garage with a non-hip or gable roof is 16 feet. Garage height rules are a community values and aesthetic decision. Many communities allow larger detached garages than South St. Paul allows today, including cities with similar grid-style development. If the Planning Commission feels the rules today are too restrictive, they could recommend approval of the ordinance as presented to allow detached garages to be up to 16 feet in height regardless of the roof style. If the Planning Commission is more comfortable with a targeted ordinance to address the Applicant's request, they could recommend approval of an ordinance that would allow shed-style roofs to be 15 or 16 feet tall while keeping the height for garages with a flat, mansard or gambrel roof capped at 12 feet tall.

Commissioner Miller asked if the Applicant would still need a conditional use permit if the ordinance amendment was approved. Ms. Miller explained that the conditional use permit request was separate from

the ordinance amendment as a conditional use permit is required to have a detached garage on a property with an attached garage.

Commissioner Fournier noted that the ordinance amendment language stated that a garage cannot exceed one story and asked if the language would still prohibit a dwelling unit from being built on top of a single-story garage. Ms. Miller confirmed it would.

Commissioner Hart asked if the ordinance amendment would change the maximum allowable height for other detached accessory structures such as sheds. Ms. Miller explained that the section of code that is being amended specifically addresses the maximum allowable height for detached garages.

Commissioner Felton asked if staff had any concerns about raising the maximum allowable height for detached garages. Ms. Miller explained that while staff did not provide a formal recommendation, staff feel confident that capping the maximum allowable height for all detached garages at 16 feet would ensure new garages with varying roof styles would match South St. Paul's current development pattern.

Chair Fehrman asked if the Applicant was present. Jack Pietruszewski introduced himself as the owner of 1820 Faber Avenue.

Chair Fehrman asked if any of the Commissioners have questions for Mr. Pietruszewski. There were no questions.

Chair Fehrman opened the public hearing.

No one was present to speak to the matter and no new correspondence had been received prior to the meeting.

Chair Fehrman closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Hart encouraged the commissioners to consider differing the maximum allowable garage height based on the roof style. Commissioner Hoffman noted that mansard and gambrel roofs are uncommon due to their cost and stated that setting different height rules based on the roof style would make the code more difficult to interpret.

Commissioner Haye commented that mansard and flat roofs do not do well in Minnesota under the weight of snow. Commissioner Haye added that it was helpful to know that South St. Paul's standards are more restrictive than the surrounding communities.

Chair Fehrman asked staff to explain the garage height rules in other communities. Ms. Miller walked the commissioners through the attachment in the staff report that laid out the maximum allowable height for detached garages in 12 other local communities.

Chair Fehrman shared he is generally in favor of allowing homeowners to build what they want but that the commission needs to consider the aesthetics of the community.

Chair Fehrman asked the Applicant what his plans were if the request was not approved. Mr. Pietruszewski stated he would move. Chair Fehrman encouraged the Applicant to share more about why he wanted a taller garage with a shed style roof. Mr. Pietruszewski answered that he wanted the shed style roof to store his boat and to complement the style of his existing house.

Commissioner Hart shared his concerns about having South St. Paul go from being the most restrictive on garage height to the most flexible on garage height. Ms. Miller responded that the ordinance as proposed would provide one additional foot of garage height compared to the most restrictive rules in the surrounding communities. Mr. Healy added that the situation was more complicated than other cities simply allowing garages to be 15 or 16 feet tall. Many other cities measure height from the average grade to the average height of the tallest gable which can result in certain garages on slope lots being 22 to 25 feet tall when measured from slab to peak. By capping the maximum allowable height at 16 feet as measured from the floor to the peak of the roof, these loopholes are not an option.

Motion to recommend approval of an Ordinance Amendment to Set the Maximum Height for all Detached Garages at 16 Feet - Hoffman/Haye (6-1) (Hart)

B. Conditional Use Permit Request for a Detached Garage at 1820 Faber Avenue

Ms. Miller presented the staff report. The applicant, Jack Pietruszewski is seeking a Conditional Use Permit to construct a detached garage on his property with an existing attached garage. The proposed detached garage generally complies with the standards for a detached garage, minus the proposed garage's height which the Applicant has applied for a code amendment to address. Staff recommend approval of the conditional use permit subject to the conditions listed in the staff report.

Commissioner Felton asked where the Applicant's property line was in relation to 19th Avenue North. Ms. Miller explained that the Applicant's property line is about 6 feet from the location of the proposed garage. The area between the Applicant's property boundary and the 19th Avenue North right-of-way is unopened alley right-of-way/ part of Simon's Ravine. Commissioner Felton asked who would be responsible for cleaning up any debris or erosion that lands on 19th Avenue North as a result of the project. Mr. Guilliams explained that the Applicant would be responsible for cleaning it up. One of the reasons the City is requiring a geotechnical report as a condition of approval for the project is to ensure the proposed garage would not cause the slope to degrade.

The Applicant, Jack Pietruszewski, came forward to answer any commissioner questions.

Commissioner Felton thanked the homeowner for investing in South St. Paul and asked the homeowner about his plans for the existing attached garage.

Chair Fehrman opened the public hearing.

No one was present to comment on the Application and no new correspondence was received prior to the meeting.

Motion to recommend approval of a conditional use permit for a detached garage at 1820 Faber Avenue, subject to the conditions of approval- Hoffman/Fournier (7-0)

C. Interim Use Permit for a Seasonal Farmers Market at 1151 Southview Boulevard

Mr. Healy presented the staff report. The City is applying for an Interim Use Permit to continue to host a community farmers market in the vacant lot behind Wakota Federal Credit Union. Staff recommend approval of the Interim Use Permit.

Planning Commission Minutes

April 2, 2025

Page 4 of 5

Commissioner Haye asked about the condition of the parking lot and how tents were tethered to the ground. Ms. Griffith explained the tents had weights at the corners to ensure they were tethered to the ground. Commissioner Haye asked if Wakota Federal Credit Union is ok with their lot being used on Wednesdays during the summer for the next 5 years. Ms. Griffith confirmed that they were as the property owner signed the Application thereby consenting to the application. Mr. Healy added that the property owner would not be waiving away their rights by agreeing to host the farmers market and could potentially revoke the agreement at any time.

Commissioner Hart asked if additional locations had been considered for the farmers market. Ms. Griffith walked the commissioners through the various locations the farmers market had previously been held and why the current location was chosen.

Ms. Griffith shared the farmers market opening date as well as the various programs that would be offered, including the power of produce (POP) and a community booth.

Chair Fehrman opened the public hearing.

No correspondence had been received prior to the meeting and no one was present to speak on the Application.

Chair Fehrman closed the public hearing.

Motion to recommend approval of the Interim Use Permit for a seasonal farmers market at 1151 Southview Boulevard- Miller/Fournier (7-0)

5) OTHER BUSINESS

A. 2024 Planning Commission Annual Report

Ms. Miller shared the City Code requires that Staff bring to the City Council an annual report summarizing the actions of the Planning Commission from the previous year. The Planning Commission is asked to motion to forward the annual report to the City Council.

Commissioner Miller noted a spelling error.

Motion to forward the 2024 Planning Commission Annual Report to the City Council- Miller/Hoffman (7-0)

6) STAFF UPDATES

Mr. Healy provided a Planner's update on several topics including: the statewide zoning preemption bills, Met Council's approved Regional Framework for the 2050 Comprehensive Plan Update, Metro Transit's Network Now project, Metro Transit's Arterial Bus Rapid Transit Survey, and ways for the Planning Commission to be more involved.

Chair Fehrman shared that he would like to have a Planning Commission Communications portion of the meeting and encouraged the Commissioners to share events or questions.

Commissioner Miller asked about additional Planning Commissioner training opportunities. Mr. Healy explained that there may occasionally be one-off training opportunities and the Minnesota Chapter of the

Planning Commission Minutes

April 2, 2025

Page 5 of 5

American Planning Association hosts an Annual Conference which may be an opportunity for the Planning Commissioners to attend every few years.

Commissioner Hart asked about other forms of communication the City uses besides social media. Mr. Healy explained that the City has a quarterly newsletter that is mailed to all houses every 3 months. The City also has a website and signage at Jefferson Park.

7) ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn- Hoffman/Miller (7-0)