

**MINUTES OF MEETING
SOUTH ST. PAUL PLANNING COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY MAY 7, 2025**

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

1) Roll Call

Present: Tyler Fehrman
Tim Felton
Geoff Fournier
Tracy Haye
James Hart
Andrew Hoffman
Brianne Miller
Michael Healy, Planning Manager

Absent: None

2) APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Chair Fehrman proposed to add an item to the agenda to discuss adding a new permanent agenda item- Motion to approve the agenda as amended– Fehrman/ Miller (7-0).

3) APPROVAL OF MINUTES –April 2, 2025 –Motion to approve as presented– Fournier/ Miller (7-0).

4) NEW BUSINESS

None.

5) PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Comprehensive Plan Amendment to Update Future Land Use Map Guidance for City-Owned Facilities

Mr. Healy presented the staff report. There are several city-owned parcels whose comprehensive plan guidance on the future land use map does not match the existing zoning or use of the parcel. Per State Law, the City is supposed to always be working to address inconsistencies between its future land use map and its zoning map. City Staff and the City Attorney have identified four inconsistencies between the future land use map and the zoning map for City-owned facilities. These four facilities include: a parcel next to Wentworth Avenue that hosts a drinking water well and radium treatment plant, a parcel next to I-494 that hosts a drinking water well and a pumphouse building, the Public Works building, and the Doug Woog Ice Arena. Staff recommend that the Planning Commission recommend approval of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment.

Commissioner Haye asked if the comprehensive plan amendment at the water treatment site on Wentworth Avenue could open up the site to redevelopment and the loss of the archery range. Mr. Healy explained that the archery range reconstruction and upgrades are a part of the water treatment plant project. Mr. Healy added that the site is not being rezoned and would still have zoning that would allow a municipal use and a public park. Commissioner Hart echoed Commissioner Haye's question. Mr. Healy explained that the zoning of the parcel was not changing but the guiding of the parcel on the Future Land Use Map would be changing to match the zoning of the property.

Commissioner Hart asked if split guidance might be appropriate for the site. Mr. Healy explained that split guidance is unusual for a single parcel. The property that today has split guidance, the Doug Woog Arena, would change to have one consistent guidance if the comprehensive plan amendment was approved. The Doug Woog Arena has four separate parcels and that is why the guidance is split.

Commissioner Miller asked Mr. Healy to elaborate on why a Comprehensive Plan Amendment can take 4-6 months and if the Met Council has a mandated deadline for reviewing comprehensive plan amendment requests. Mr. Healy explained that when the City or a developer decides to do a Comprehensive Plan Amendment, the City has to send notice of this to several public or governmental agencies and offer them 60 days to provide comments on the project. After the comment period, the City then submits a request for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to the Met Council. From there, the Met Council has 15 days to deem it complete. If they deem it complete, the Met Council then has 60 days to review the request and can extend the review of the request by an additional 60 days. After the Met Council approves the Comprehensive Plan Amendment, the amendment has to go back to the City Council for enactment, which can take another two weeks.

Chair Fehrman opened the public hearing.

No correspondence was received prior to the meeting and no one was present at the meeting to comment.

Chair Fehrman closed the public hearing.

Motion to recommend approval of a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to Update the Future Land Use Map Guidance for City-Owned Facilities- Hoffman/Fournier (7-0).

B. Interim Use Permits for a Temporary Concrete Batch Plant for AVR LLC

Mr. Healy presented the staff report. The Applicant is AVR LLC and they are requesting several Interim Use Permits (IUPs) for a temporary concrete batch plant at 843 Hardman Avenue South which is owned by the Danner Family Limited Partnership. The development team at the Danner Family Limited Partnership is actively putting together plans for City approval to redevelop 22 acres of their site into an office-warehouse industrial park. The City has been working with the Danner Family and has received various grants to help the development come to fruition. The concrete plant is part of the proposed reclamation plan for the site as opposed to just a stand-alone operation. Staff recommend approval of the proposed Interim Use Permit.

Commissioner Miller asked if the fee agreement fees were a one-time fee or an annual fee. Mr. Healy explained that the agreement is annual so the fees would be paid to the City annually.

Commissioner Haye asked what would happen if the IUP was denied as the property owner already owns the property. Mr. Healy explained that Danner had indicated that the redevelopment of the site is more financially feasible if they have the concrete batch plant on site and was not sure how this would impact the project if the IUP was denied.

Commissioner Hart asked staff to confirm if the IUP could be extended. Mr. Healy stated that an IUP has a defined end date and can always be extended but this is never guaranteed. Commissioner Hart asked Mr. Healy to elaborate on the impacts of the IUP to the Mississippi River Trail. Mr. Healy stated that the close proximity of the site to the Mississippi River Trail could cause visual impacts due to the height of the structure and increase the amount of dust along a segment of the trail.

Commissioner Fournier asked if the noise ordinance would apply to the use. Mr. Healy stated that the noise standards differ depending on the location and the government agency but that the Applicant would need to comply with the City's noise ordinance regardless. Mr. Healy deferred to the Applicant on the noise level of the use.

Mr. Healy and the commissioners discussed the future redevelopment plan for the site, its proximity to the proposed concrete batch plant, and how the zoning on the site would impact future redevelopment.

Commissioner Felton asked Mr. Healy to expand more on how the IUP is related to the reclamation of the site. Mr. Healy explained that the Danner site has poor soils and needs to be reclaimed in order for the site to be buildable. Part of the reclamation process involves an on-site concrete plant. Commissioner Felton shared his concerns about the development falling through and the site being used for exterior processing for an extended amount of time. Mr. Healy stated the IUP would be terminated one full year early if the development does not move forward. Because part of the Danner redevelopment plan includes the construction of a new road through the site and the City-owned parcel that will be redeveloped, the IUP would help the road construction project move forward. Commissioner Felton summarized that the IUP helps the Applicant redevelop the area at a lower cost to Danner and the City. Mr. Healy stated that was correct and added that the City would likely not approve something like this if the site was a greenfield site.

Chair Fehrman asked Mr. Healy to confirm that the redevelopment of the Danner site would increase the City's tax base. Mr. Healy confirm it would.

Josh Edwards of AVR LLC and Bryan Chirhart of Danner Family Limited Partnership were present to speak to the application.

Commissioner Hoffman asked about anticipated timelines for removing the existing concrete plant and construction of the new plant. Mr. Edwards shared that the existing plant could be removed in about 3 days and that the new concrete plant would be operational by September 1st of this year.

Chair Fehrman asked Mr. Chirhart to explain how this IUP is different than the previous IUPs that were granted to the site for a similar use and why the concrete plant is necessary for the redevelopment. Mr. Chirhart explained that the concrete plant would make the project more convenient but that the project would move forward even if the IUP is not approved.

Chair Fehrman asked Mr. Edwards about impacts to the Mississippi River Trail. Mr. Edwards explained that most modern concrete plants have a dust collector which reduce any potential air quality impacts.

Commissioner Haye asked Mr. Chirhart about how this request is different than previous uses. Mr. Chirhart explained that the IUP would lead to increased cost savings related to the redevelopment of the site.

Commissioner Fournier asked about potential noise impacts. Mr. Edwards explained that making concrete creates little noise. The noisiest portion of the process is related to the vehicles involved in bringing materials to and from the site.

Commissioner Hart asked if the Applicant had any concerns with the hours of operation. Mr. Edwards stated they did not.

Chair Fehrman opened the public hearing.

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

Chair Fehrman closed the public hearing.

The Commissioners discussed the request, how it relates to redeveloping the area, and their concerns about the use remaining at the site if the redevelopment does not move forward.

Motion to recommend approval of the Interim Use Permits as presented- Fournier/Hoffman (6-1) (Felton)

6) OTHER BUSINESS

A. Proposed Planning Commission Communications

Chair Fehrman suggested the creation of a new regular agenda item where the Planning Commissioners can share community events or items of interest with the public. This would be similar to the “Council Communications” that are part of the City Council agenda.

Commissioner Miller asked if this would be within the scope of the duties of the Planning Commission. Mr. Healy stated that it would be slightly unusual for the Planning Commission to offer this type of agenda item.

Commissioner Felton stated that he felt this did not fall within the scope of the Planning Commission’s role.

Commissioner Haye shared her concerns about this type of agenda item being used to elevate a political platform or personal agenda.

Commissioner Hoffman echoed the points made by Commissioner Haye and Commissioner Felton.

Based on the feedback, no motion was brought forward to permanently add a new agenda item.

7) STAFF UPDATES

Mr. Healy shared that the zoning preemption bill that was proposed by the State Legislature does not appear to be moving forward so local zoning authority should remain as-is for at least another year.

7) ADJOURNMENT

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