



## Prospect Park Association Land Use Committee MINUTES

December 8, 2022, 7:00 pm Regular monthly meeting (Zoom)

### Community Members Present:

1. *Aloida Zaragoza*
2. *David Frank*
3. *Diane Dunker*
4. *Eric Amel (Chair)*
5. *Jane Stockman*
6. *Jeff Barnhart*
7. *Clay Lambert*
8. *Julie Wallace*
9. *Kari Simonson*

10. *Laura Preus*
11. *Lynn VonKorff*
12. *Ron McCoy*
13. *Spencer Ung (U Garden)*
14. *Karen Murdock*
15. *Kate Needleman*

### Guests Present:

1. *Carol Lansing, Faegre Drinker*
2. *Dan Pellinen - Tusbie-Montgomery*

1. **Call to order.** The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM.
2. **Minutes approval.** November 10, 2022, Land Use Committee regular meeting minutes were approved with no changes and are to be forwarded to the PPA board of directors.
3. **2630 University Avenue SE (Profile Event Center site).** The architectural firm for this project is DJR. The firm which bought the site is North Bay Company and DG Equities LLC. They proposed a 7-story building for this site. The senior planner for the city on this project is *Peter Crandall*. The Committee of the Whole of the Planning Commission met on October 20 and rejected this proposal. The parcel is zoned “Transit 30,” which means that the required minimum height is 10 stories. Any building that tall requires a steel or concrete frame, which is a great deal more expensive than the “stick construction” of wooden 2-by-4s. The proposed project has two lower stories of concrete and five upper stories of stick construction.

The project is aimed at U of M students, although the developer will accept non-students. *Lynn VonKorff* said that, two or three years ago, PPA passed a motion to encourage affordable housing for students. It is a city requirement that 8 percent of units in a new development be “affordable.” *Eric Amel* said that the paperwork for needy students to obtain “affordable” housing is not well known or adopted; he thought this was an area where the Prospect Park Association could help students.

*Spencer Ung* said his parents opened U Garden in 1993. He thanked all the people of Prospect Park for their support of the restaurant over the years. He said he thought that a 7-story

building would fit in well with the neighborhood. The developer plans to continue to push for a 7-story building.

*Karen Murdock* said the usual variance developers asked for on a project was to get more height than the zoning code permitted as opposed to less height than the zoning required. *Amel* said the code in Transit 30 allowed for between 10 and 30 stories. *Lynn VonKorff* said she would prefer non-student housing on this parcel, but any new housing was good. *Ron McCoy* said the site plans showed construction up to the property lines on both sides. *Amel* said a 15-foot setback is required to allow maximum unprotected openings, so a reduction may be planned.. *Spencer Ung* said the front property line is five feet from the sidewalk, which allows for some flowers and greenery.

*Amel* called for a task force to be formed to discuss the project. He said we should ask, “Is this the highest and best use of the property?” *Ung* said he welcomed input from the community.

- 4. Vacated W. Territorial Rd.** *Evan Roberts*, PPA Transportation and Safety Committee Chair, has completed the draft letter to KSTP to be coordinated with Ward 2 Councilperson *Robin Wonsley*. The Land Use Committee will keep this item on agenda to track as it moves forward. The draft letter is attached.

Hubbard Broadcasting (which owns the KSTP building, on the boundary of Minneapolis and Saint Paul) was granted a vacation of the section of Territorial Street behind their building in 1997 and has fenced off the previously vacated West Territorial Road (behind their studio), between Barry Street (Pavilion Apartments in Saint Paul) and Bedford Street. *Eric Amel* shared the letter by *Roberts* drafted on behalf of the city councils of both Minneapolis and Saint Paul. The two cities have asked Hubbard to testify in front of a joint committee. *Aloida Zaragoza* said this issue has been delayed for months. She said a letter should go to all the top officers at Hubbard, not just the Director of Facilities & Security. *Zaragoza* was asked to help obtain those contacts in order to do so.

- 5. Pop-Up Precinct.** *Eric Amel* said there is a lot of concern about safety in the neighborhood. Is there anything the Land Use Committee can do to address these concerns? The police station for our precinct is up on Central Avenue, a long way from Prospect Park. The Pillars has empty retail space. Perhaps a “pop-up precinct” could fill that space. As the Precinct 2 station is located at 1911 Central Ave. NE, a 13 minute drive to Malcolm Avenue SE, we arguably should have some more police presence in the Park. Perhaps a police car (unoccupied) could be moved around from one place to another. *Clay Lambert* said that the criminals who prey on people in our neighborhood would figure out within a day or so that this car was a dummy and would “tag” it with graffiti.
- 6. Methadone Clinic.** *Kari Simonson* said the Alliance Clinic at 3329 University Avenue SE, adjacent to the residential area on 4th Street, continues to be a problem property. She said the clinic did not offer group therapy for the past two or more years because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but has recently resumed it. The Light Rail Transit attracts crime because criminals prey on passengers. The Alliance Clinic now owns the building at 3329 University Avenue SE.

*Aloida Zaragoza* said the clients of the clinic also create problems for the Speedway gas station at Bedford and University. *Lynn VonKorff* said that a letter was sent to the director of the clinic listing the problems created by clients. *Kate Needleman* said she lives behind the methadone clinic parking lot. She said Fresh Thyme, Speedway, and KSTP all now have security guards, but this did not make her feel any safer. *Zaragoza* said the young couple who bought *Julie Wallace's* house on 4th Street moved out after four months because they did not feel safe. *Ung* said that the staff at U Garden did not feel safe and that it often took an hour and a half for police to respond to a call for help. He added that U Garden has several security cameras.

*VonKorff* said that PPA still had a little bit of city money from the Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) from the 1990s. Perhaps some of this money could go to increase security. *Clay Lambert*, owner of the Holiday gas station at 27th and University, said he has a high turnover rate among his female employees. They often get harassed by male customers, some of whom might be clients of the methadone clinic. He said police come to his station often. *Simonson* said that Alliance Clinic has asked for people to take pictures of people who are causing problems in the neighborhood. Alliance would then be able to check and see if these miscreants are clients. However, *Simonson* said, taking pictures could be dangerous, as the picture-taker could be angrily confronted by the subject of the photo. *Lambert* said pressure from the neighborhood sometimes works to prevent problems from developing. He said the Prospect Park neighborhood was able to keep the CSL blood plasma clinic from setting up just across the street from his station. *Needleman* said the state regulates methadone clinics but does not have any rules about how the clinics are run. Alliance is a for-profit company. *Needleman* said we should encourage businesses to plant flowers, scrub graffiti, and keep their buildings looking tidy.

- 7. Proactive development strategies.** *Eric Amel* said the neighborhood still has many “under-achieving” properties in the neighborhood potential for redevelopment. We should endeavor to attract high-quality developers to Prospect Park. *Karen Murdoch* recommended that *Jeff Barnhart* be put on a list of such developers. *Donna Schneider* said that Ryan Companies is developing the “Highland Bridges” site in Saint Paul. *Amel* said that Ryan does large-scale projects, thus any prospective site would need to allow a substantial sized project, and that he has previously talked to them about the Wells Fargo as well as the Art and Architecture sites. They would not be interested to pursue until Vermilion was clearly out of the picture.
- 8. 93 Orlin Avenue SE.** This house has an absentee landlord and is unoccupied. It has been getting run down to the point where it is now derelict. *Lynn VonKorff* said the owner has not lived there for years, part of the wall is missing, and the property is probably not salvageable. The gas and electricity will soon be turned off. The city inspector has talked to the owner about this house.
- 9. 525 Kasota Avenue SE.** The property owner Union Pacific Railroad plans to expand its intermodal terminal here. *Karen Murdoch* said that the northern boundary of the Prospect Park neighborhood is the railroad tracks and that, therefore, 525 Kasota Avenue SE is in the Como neighborhood. *Amel* said he would look into the issue of whether or not the Union Pacific property has any effect on the Grand Rounds plans.
- 10. 150 26th Avenue SE.** *Clay Lambert* said the Moxie project has been under construction for four or five years. Phase two is slowly moving forward.

11. **United Crusher Elevators.** *Clay Lambert* said he recently heard a rumor that the United Crusher grain elevators had been sold. *Eric Amel* said this news is concerning as no notice is given from the owner. The committee should get confirmation of the situation.

12. **Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned at 8:45.

Respectfully submitted:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'EA' with a stylized flourish.

*Eric Amel, ALA*

Prospect Park Association President / Interim Land Use Committee Chair

MINUTES approved by the Land Use Committee, February 9, 2023.