

City of Duluth Planning Commission

March 3rd, 2025 – Mr. D's Bar & Grill
Annual Meeting Summary

Call to Order

President Gary Eckenberg called to order the meeting of the City of Duluth Planning Commission Annual Meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, March 3rd, 2025, at Mr. D's Bar & Grill in West Duluth.

Roll Call

Attendance:

Members Present: Chris Adatte, Jason Crawford, Gary Eckenberg, Brian Hammond, Jason Holliday, Margie Nelson, Danielle Rhodes, Dave Sarvela, and Andrea Wedul
Members Absent: none

Staff Present: Amanda Mangan, Chris Lee, Jason Mozol, Jenn Moses, Ben VanTassel, Ariana Dahlen, Natalie Lavenstein, Kyle Deming, James Gittemeier, Christian Huelsman, and Sam Smith

Guest Speaker: "Duluth as a Work of Art" with Dr. Jennifer Webb

Dr. Jennifer Webb, an Associate Professor of Art History at UMD, gave a presentation to the commissioners. She prefaced with a summary of her background, including her personal and academic life, followed by a presentation on the history of art in Duluth.

Dr. Webb described the different ways art and structure impacts the way people feel and interact with the spaces they live in. Part of her presentation focused on different sub-parts of the West Duluth area. Dr. Webb talked about the Kom On Inn and the art on the walls inside, and how it sparks memories for folks when they look at the pieces. With most of the pictures she presented, at least one of the commissioners or others in the audience chimed in with a memory or experience they had relating to the content in the image.

Webb also spoke of her students, who are currently collaborating on and creating different neighborhood plan concepts in light of the Core Investment Area (CIA) work being conducted by city staff. She presented some of the illustrations that her students have produced in her classes.

Spirit Valley Core Investment Area Update

Kyle Deming gave a brief presentation to update the commissioners on the Spirit Valley CIA project. His presentation outlined the boundaries of the project area as well as the different sub-sections within it. CIA planning has been identified as a tool in the Comprehensive Plan, and West Duluth was a clear first choice for staff to start working on. Deming also talked about the Spirit Valley CIA webpage on the City of Duluth website.

Deming stated that staff has explored a variety of methods in terms of community engagement. Staff has participated in Spirit Valley Days, there have been a couple Spirit Valley Strolls, surveys have been conducted, public meetings have been held, and there will be more community

engagement to come. He encouraged folks to reach out to him directly if they'd like to discuss this project.

Zenith Award Nominations & Vote

Jenn Moses addressed the commissioners. Planning commission has presented these awards to projects in Duluth since 2010. This purpose of this tradition is to give recognition to projects that come through the Planning Commission.

Chris Lee gave a presentation for the Zenith Award for Plan Implementation. He reviewed the projects that received awards the previous year and then provided a list of projects that came through in 2024 that are eligible to receive a 2025 Zenith Award. He encouraged commissioners to add to the list if they had any other projects they would like to nominate.

Discussion ensued amongst the commissioners about various projects they saw over the course of 2024. Commissioners nominated Brewery Creek and Bailey Builds to receive 2025 Zenith Awards.

MOTION/Second: Sarvela/Adatte approve

VOTE: (9-0)

Election of Officers

Staff and commissioners gave outgoing members Jason Holliday and Margie Nelson recognition and appreciation for their service. Holliday served for 4 years, and Nelson served for 8 years. Jenn Moses informed the commissioners that 20 applications for new commission members have come in, so there will be 2 new members soon. She noted that there will also be an upcoming special meeting for the Planning Commission, and more information is forthcoming.

Nominations for President: Gary Eckenberg.

MOTION/Second: Crawford/Adatte approve by voice vote.

VOTE: (9-0)

Nominations for Vice President: Brian Hammond and Andrea Wedul nominated themselves. The candidates each advocated for their nomination. By secret ballot, Wedul was duly elected the new Vice President.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

Respectfully,

Jenn Moses, Manager
Planning & Economic Development