

City of Duluth Planning Commission

**March 30, 2021
Special Meeting Minutes**

Due to the COVID-19 emergency, many planning commission members participated through video conference from home. The meeting was held as a Special Meeting pursuant to Minnesota Statute 13D.021 in response to the Covid-19 emergency. Public comment was taken at planning@duluthmn.gov prior to and during the meeting, and via verbal comment through public attendance in the WebEx video conference during the meeting.

Call to Order

President Margie Nelson called to order the meeting of the city planning commission at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 30th, 2021.

Roll Call

Attendance: (* Via WebEx video conferencing – all votes conducted via roll call)

Members Present: Jason Crawford*, Gary Eckenberg*, Tim Meyer*, Margie Nelson*, Eddie Ratnam*, Zandra Zwiebel*, Sarah Wisdorf* (Joined at 5:08), and Michael Schaeffer* (Joined at 5:10),

Members Absent: Andrea Wedul

Staff Present: Adam Fulton*, Robert Asleson*, Steven Robertson*

PL 21-008 –Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) 319-323 East Superior Street Redevelopment, Determination on Need For An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

Senior Planner Steven Robertson gave an overview of the issue before the Planning Commission. He stated that the EAW is not meant to approve or disapprove a project, but it is simply a source of information to guide other approvals and permitting decisions. Robertson stated that the EAW process is supposed to determine if an EIS is needed, and how the project can be modified to lessen its environmental impacts. He noted that timeline for the EAW process, stating that the PC reviewed the draft EAW at their February 9th meeting and had an optional public hearing at their March 9th meeting. He added that there were seven citizen comments, one city comment, and one state agency comments, all recorded, with responses, in the staff review. Robertson concluded by stating that based on the information gathered in the EAW process, staff recommend a negative declaration on the need for an EIS.

Commissioners: Commission Zwiebel asked for clarification on what it means to be a contributing historic structure within a larger historic district. Deputy Director Fulton stated that the individual structures themselves do not qualify for national historic designation, but taken as a whole with many other structures, contribute to the historic character of the neighborhood. He stated that these structures are isolated and at the far eastern end of the district, and do not contribute to the district in the same way as buildings where there are other surrounding structures.

MOTION/Second: Zwiebel/Eckenberg to adopt the Record of Decision regarding the Environmental Assessment Worksheet for 319-333 East Superior Street, making a finding of no potential for significant environmental effects; a Negative Declaration and that preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required; and adopting and incorporating the entirety of the City of Duluth Planning File PL21-008 as findings supporting the determination.

VOTE: (8-0)

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully,

Adam Fulton – Deputy Director
Planning and Economic Development