



**Meeting Minutes of Highland District Council**  
**September 8, 2016 7:00 p.m.**  
**1978 Ford Parkway**  
**St. Paul MN 55116**  
**Highland Park Community Center**  
**Email: info@highlanddistrictcouncil.org**

***Building a More Vibrant, Welcoming, and Safe Neighborhood***

**Board members in attendance:** Melanie McMahon, Frank Jossi, Amy Salmela, Ken Jopp Kevin Gallatin, Gary Fishbach, Brian Cleaveland, Bob Whitehead, Jack Dobier, Gary Thompson, Susan Heegaard, Pattie Brady, Nathan Hood, Anne Langford, Sally Bauer, James Beaumaster

**Members Absent:** Peter Armstrong, Joe Kolar, Mike Lindsay, Kent Petterson

**Others present:** Libby Kantner (Legislative Aide to CM Tolbert), Matt Kramer (President for Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce)

**Meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM.**

**Approval of Agenda** Agenda for the meeting was reviewed. Motion to approve. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

**Approval of Previous Minutes** Previous meeting minutes were reviewed. Motion to approve. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

**Guest Speaker:** Matt Kramer (Secretary/Treasurer for Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce)

- Saint Paul Area Chamber (SPACC) is the largest local chamber in Minnesota (by members, excluding the state chamber). Function is to promote business in the East Metro. Done through growing the tax base and improving access to jobs, including through transit. District Councils are natural partners. SPACC aims to be very accessible and would like to partner with us. Their [website](#) has all complete info on staff and directors and they will personally help upon request.
- Mr. Kramer then took questions:
  - Thoughts on fewer jobs in East Metro versus West Metro: It's true; Hennepin County has more jobs than Dakota/Ramsey/Washington combined. The playing field tilts west and SPACC is working with state and regional partners (such as Greater MSP and the Metropolitan Council) to reduce inequities. For example, after LRT extensions there will be 49 miles of LRT, only 8 of which would be outside of Hennepin County.
  - Thoughts on Saint Paul's new sick and safe ordinance: SPACC was not in favor of the ordinance as implemented. Their primary concern was lack of exemptions for very small businesses like Minneapolis has. SPACC did not oppose it outright and some members even supported it. SPACC recognized that it would pass so they tried to influence it to make it more accommodating to their members' interests. It's not the end of the world and SPACC has moved on and encourages members to make the best of it.
  - Does SPACC help specific property owners or business land tenants? No, but they will help make connections or introductions within their mission.
  - Thoughts on tax base: It is a challenge, particularly due to Saint Paul's high percentage of properties that are tax exempt. Business contribute to tax base but are low consumers of services, generally getting back 85% of what they contribute. SPACC doesn't want the East Metro to be bedroom communities where tax incidence on residents are high and services are low.

- Thoughts on transit: Transit facilitates access to jobs. Fixed route transit infrastructure spurs economic growth, so SPACC encourages it. For SPACC the priority for transit is access to business/jobs, not so much moving people longer distances.
- Thoughts on how District Councils can help small business deal with changes like LRT and parking meters: members can be fearful of uncertainty. SPACC tries to sell the benefit and disprove myths (such as myth that Green Line development killed businesses, it is false when controlling for the natural birth/death cycle of businesses). SPACC strongly supported parking meters on Grand and downtown because they generate parking turnover for businesses. The Grand Avenue Business Association's opposition was counter to SPACC's efforts. SPACC is willing and able to talk to business owners to help them understand how change can work for them.

**Public Comment** No public attendees, no comments.

**Treasurer's Report** was delivered by Amy Salmela. Routine update, no significant trends. Motion to approve was seconded and carried unanimously.

**Executive Director report** was delivered by Kathy Carruth.

### **Executive Committee Report**

- Fiscal Agent Agreement
  - Motion to discuss was heard and seconded.
  - Reviewed Fiscal Agent agreement in support of Friends of Highland Arts (FHA). FHA has applied for 501(c)(3) status and is awaiting decision from IRS. Result expected in December. In the interim they would like HDC to collect and hold donations to FHA so FHA donors may receive tax deduction benefits.
  - Some discussion, including any risk of liability. Confirmed the agreement reasonably protects HDC from concerns.
  - Motion approved unanimously.
- Board retreat is 9/19. Melanie McMahon provided overview of CIB and STAR process and encouraged board members to serve on CIB committees when the time comes. Each board member brainstormed and wrote down project ideas, to be reviewed as a group at the retreat.

### **Standing Committee Reports**

- **Community Engagement Committee**
  - HPCC play area was approved for CIB funding. Will remove the tennis court.
  - Opportunity to install a temporary parklet courtesy of Friendly Streets Initiative. Needs a city permit to occupy a parking spot. Suggestion to install in front of Highland Grill/Quixotic Coffee. Kathy to contact business owners for permission.
- **Transportation**
  - Thu 9/22 Pedestrian safety event at Highland & Kenneth
  - Wed 10/5 Bike/Walk to School Day, event at RanHam
  - Kevin will be a speaker at Nov 16-17 State TZD Conference: "Creating a Successful Pedestrian Safety Campaign". Co-presenting with SPPW's Paul St. Martin and SPPD's Jeremy Ellison.
  - Kevin attended a speech by Dr. Van Houton, at the invitation of Public Works and 8-80 Fellow Margaret Jones. Attendees included SPPW, SPPD, State TZD, MnDOT, U of M, and Ramsey County. Very encouraging that these parties are moving to make Saint Paul pedestrians safer.
    - Key takeaways:

- The fundamental problem in pedestrian safety is that drivers don't see pedestrians, because drivers aren't looking for pedestrians.
  - It is not true that only road design can change driver behavior to improve pedestrian safety. It is possible to change driver behaviors in a meaningful and lasting way.
  - In the case study of Gainesville, a one year enforcement and education campaign raised driver yield rates from 20-30%, to 75%. Follow-on studies one year and two years after showed even higher yield rates, around 90%.
  - Small scale, low cost treatments can be highly effective
  - Center medians reduce instances of crashes with injuries by 50%.
  - There is no evidence that painted crosswalks cause pedestrians to take increased risks.
- **Community Development Committee**
    - Crescent Cove Hospice for Children is proposed for Highland Park. Nothing to vote on at this point, but wanted to share they are coming.
    - Resident of 1669 Saunders would like to convert existing front-facing 1-car garage into living space, and retain the existing front driveway.
      - Ordinance requires driveway and curb cut to be removed after garage is removed.
      - Property owner would like to retain the front driveway for additional off-street parking.
      - The property has access to a rear, alley-facing 2-car garage.
      - There is precedent in the neighborhood for upholding the ordinance. Another property did not get permission to retain front driveway after garage conversion and the city is forcing the issue.
      - There are aesthetic concerns with vehicles parked in front without garage access.
      - Heard motion to deny variance request, seconded.
      - Board voted to deny variance request. Board members Melanie McMahon and Gary Thompson abstained.

**Ford Site Update** provided by Kevin Gallatin. Met with city planner Mike Richardson to understand current state of planning. Plans are fully drawn with slight variations based on current unknowns (unknown where Ford ballfields will go). No big surprises on what the plans entail; it's basically a mixed use development of medium-to-higher density, with street grid lining up with existing grid. Cretin and Montreal Avenues go into the site and intersect. Smaller street network radiates from there. Finn Street proposed to continue north through Lunds & Byerlys parking lot (no changes north of Ford Parkway). Most of site proposed to be Traditional Neighborhood zoning, but select areas would be zoned Business to allow institutional business and increase jobs.

**City Council Report** No formal presentation from Libby Kantner.

#### **Business Representative Reports**

- **West 7<sup>th</sup> Business Association Update** No members present to provide update.
- **HBA update** Ann Langford provided brief update that Highland Fest was very successful.

**Adjourned** at 9:00PM