



Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board

625 Robert St N

Saint Paul, MN 55155

651-757-1500

<https://mn.gov/caapb/>

Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board Meeting

March 18, 2024, 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

DRAFT Minutes

Board Members

Present: Board Chair Lt. Gov. Flanagan, Board Vice Chair Dana Badgerow, Dr. Kate Beane, Hannah Hills, James McClean, Melanie McMahon,

Joined Later: Rep. Klevorn, Rep. Schultz, Sen. Pappas, Alicia Belton,

Joined Later and Left Early (did not vote): Sen. Nelson

Quorum present? Yes.

Proceedings

Meeting Kick-Off

- Lt. Gov. calls the meeting to order at 2:06 p.m.
- Overview of Agenda
- Board member roll call

Item 1 - Capitol Area Community Vitality Task Force (CACVTF)

Staff Overview: Chair Flanagan hands the discussion over to Principal Planner Peter Musty. Peter introduces the Capitol Area Community Vitality Task Force (CACVTF) and shares the Legislative Language to remind the Board Members that \$5 million was provided by the MN State Legislature in 2023 to fund investments in community vitality in the Capitol area. The Legislation defines Community Vitality Investments to support safety, livability, and economic health. Legislation also provided the Task Force members consist of community members and representatives and be appointed by the mayor, MN Legislature, the governor, and the Board itself. The Task Force would convene and collaborate on a report that recommends a design to transfer funds into the community, including a program plan and model for governance and

administration. CAAPB Board Staff would hire a resources team to assist the Task Force. Today, we share the recommendations and the Suggested Board Actions are:

1. Acceptance of the report by the CAAPB: alignment with tasks required in 2023 legislation.
2. Approval of the Task Force Recommendations
3. Authorization of a 60 day comment period—during launch of Community Voices Initiative
4. Authorization to forward the report from CAAPB to MN Legislature

Peter hands off to Hannah Hills, CAAPB member appointed by the mayor, representative of Capitol Heights Block Club, co-chair of the Vitality Task Force. The other co-chair is Rep. Samakab Hussein who could not be here today.

Hannah Hills – Chair of Task Force:

Hannah thanks the Board Members for meeting a second time in March, acknowledging busy schedules. She states that the Vitality Fund aims to give people who live and work in the area an easier way to self-determine and advocate for things that are important to the Capitol area community. This grant will allow the community to strengthen their own identity by investing in themselves—making them better equipped to welcome everyone who comes into the Capitol area from near and far. Hannah is grateful for and commends Task Force members for meeting and for their unique talents. She thanks:

1. CAAPB Board Staff for their hard work despite being a small team.
2. She thanks Carlo Cuesta's team Creation in Common (CIC) for completing a significant amount of work in such little time—conducting 70+ interviews in a month.
3. She thanks Stephanie DeVitt's team at SDK for navigating the complicated world of grants and making sure that the process the Task Force proposes is thoughtful and transparent.
4. She also thanks the City of St. Paul members for stepping in and also assisting.

She shares that although some people may think \$5 million dollars is just a drop in a bucket, the money will be carefully stewarded and although it can't solve every problem, it will provide strength and hope to a struggling community. Hannah passes the conversation to Carlo Cuesta.

Creation in Common (CIC) – Carlo Cuesta

Background and Base Research: Carlo shares that the framework was developed by the Task Force through an extensive review of current Capitol planning and investments, demographic and social economic data, and a review of best practices for governing the money. Three programmatic parts:

1. Launch Investments (FY 2024, \$500,000): Immediate administrative and direct support contract to assist community vitality.
2. Community Vitality Grants (FY 2024-27, \$1,500,000): Supporting artists, events, businesses, and livability projects.
3. Community Voices Initiative (FY 2024-27, \$3,000,000): Collective community vitality improvement strategies, devolved and implemented with residents and business owners.

The Community Voices Initiative is their focus. It strategically empowers Capitol Area business owners and residents in the decision-making process, focusing on the allocation of \$3 million

from the Vitality Fund towards impactful solutions that resonate with community need. By the end of April, they will present the initial recommendations of deploying \$1 million from the Vitality Fund for the Board's review. Carlo shares the Capitol Area population demographics and socio-economic data from their research.

Summary of Engagement

The engagement strategy was intentionally designed to capture voices often left unheard—sometimes a survey or official focus group doesn't do it. "We had to have one on one and face to face interactions." They interacted with people from the Good Neighbor Group, Frogtown Community Center, Hmongtown Marketplace, BIPOC Business owners, indigenous residents, drug and housing counselors, educators, environmental workers, religious workers, artists, and parents amongst others. The community wants solutions that support all residents, but especially to:

1. Address Cost-Burdened Households
2. Address Drug Use & Addiction
3. Expanding Programming for Youth & Young Families
4. Improve Disability & Accessibility Infrastructure
5. Benefit ALL Critical Community & Cultural Assets

Summary of Recommendations for 1st Year: Community Voices

Carlo shares the Start-Up Recommendations for Spring 2024 and 2024-2026. For 2024, upon completion of the Community Engagement Process, CAAPB will receive recommendations from community members to invest \$1 million on the specific strategies they identified. Beyond 2024, funds will be dispersed by the City and CAAPB Staff in partnership to launch and enable specific strategies developed by community members that address the needs and challenges of residents, business owners, and community stakeholders to reflect the solutions that they co-create.

Carlo asks for Peter to help him in recommending the Launch Investments. These were needs that needed to be addressed more immediately. Peter adds that these were reflected in the Good Neighbor Group as well as with the 70+ interviews that CIC conducted. Peter adds that these would be in partnership with the City. Carlo thanks for Board for the opportunity to present. Peter introduces Gloria Contreras Edin as a vital Task Force and community member.

Gloria Contreras – Task Force Member:

Gloria is a longtime business and building owner. She recognizes the changes to the community and shares the frustration and weariness from the community and the feeling that they have been forgotten. She speaks to the genuine engagement process and appreciates the transparency of the process from both CIC and SDK. Lt. Governor Flanagan thanks Gloria for her work in the Task Force.

SDK – Stephanie DeVitt

Peter introduces Stephanie DeVitt of SDK and her work for background research and development of the grant program that will get the funds back to the community.

Background Research

Stephanie shares the process of reviewing Case Studies and conducting interviews from other programs that had similar desires to see how people made strategic investments in vitality and what the lessons of using vitality to leverage those investments were. She says the biggest takeaway is that vitality is really about the people and not the business facades or infrastructure. She shares that the strongest grant programs kept the community involved in designing the process and overseeing how they are used. Stephanie thanks Gloria and Rep. Perez-Vega for their help in being part of the small work group to come up with the following recommendations:

1. Structure Grant Oversight for Community Relationships
2. Pursue a Grant Strategy that Maximizes Investments
3. Fund Priority Topics: Arts, Businesses, Livability
4. Pay Attention to Non-Grant Programs that Extend Impact

Summary of Recommendations for 1st Year of Grant Project

The Grant Oversight Structure would be a three-legged stool, with St. Paul Economic Department helping out with administrative aspects, 3-5 members of the community as part of Community Governance, and CAAPB Staff to facilitate with the Community Governance and the Board.

To maximize investments, SDK proposes three different phases:

1. Phase 1: Build Relationship Infrastructure (2024-Q2 2025)
2. Phase 2: Maximize Early Investments (2025-2027)
3. Phase 3: Rice Street Reconstruction (2028)

Discussion

Lt. Gov. Flanagan thanks everyone for the work that went into the research and development of this grant. Before beginning the discussion, she mentions that Alicia Belton and Rep. Schultz have joined the meeting.

Vice Chair Dana Badgerow begins by saying that she is overwhelmed by the amount of community input. She does mention that there is not that much money there and asks how much consideration has been put into what can be accomplished within the budget.

CAAPB Principal Planner Peter Musty answers that it is something the Task Force has considered, but do not have more specific proposals yet because those items should come from the community. He requests for flexibility from the board for CAAPB staff to explore feasibility going forward.

City of Saint Paul Director of Planning and Economic Development Nicolle Goodman underscores the large amount of interest and the little amount of money. She speaks to the administrative burdens of administering grants and mentions that it may not be able to accomplish all the ideas presented and speaks to prioritizing and leveraging the funds that are available. Dir. Goodman shares the experience that the City and other programs have in administering grants programs as well as in technical assistance and how their experience can be used to save on funds by not duplicating efforts or reinventing what is already present.

Dana Badgerow thanks Dir. Goodman for answering her question and their support of the project because they would be a wonderful partner.

Sen. Carla Nelson joins online.

Hannah Hills speaks to the launch investments being only for the first year, and that the \$500,000 would be a starting point to excite the community. Ms. Badgerow also shares that Hannah is a big asset to show linkage to the CAAPB.

Peter Musty mentions collaborating with the City not to outsource work, but to show again that they have worked alongside CAAPB before in the past. Board Member Melanie McMahon agrees with the opportunity to execute and work together and to multiply the opportunities and funds.

Rep. Isaac Schultz appreciates the community feedback. He requests a clearer process for the larger expenditures.

CAAPB Executive Secretary Erik Dahl thanks Rep. Schultz for his involvement and refers to the governance structure that SDK proposed: CAAPB would appoint a Capitol Area Vitality Grant Committee of 3-5 people that would be made up of members from the Neighborhood Group or CAAPB staff to assess the grant proposals from the Community Voices Project by CIC and report it to CAAPB to report to the Board Members for final approval.

Rep. Schultz shares his desires to impact local members and focus on local investments. He wants more guard rails for how the grants should focus on local non-profits or businesses that have more of a local impact/presence instead of one that supports the entire state. Additionally, he voices his concern regarding Aid Based Grants to provide to families for rental or utility expenses. He acknowledges it as a noble effort, but due to limited funds, he wants it to result in additional investment or growth in the community. Rep. Schultz uses the example of the desire from the community for access to a grocery store and the lasting impact for the community as a whole as opposed to a monthly payment to an individual or family. He emphasizes the importance of investments having a multiplying effect and impact for the long-term and focus on enhancing the community so more people want to live in the Capitol Area or helping more investment come to the Capitol Area.

Chair Flannagan follows up with Carlo for what he envisioned that assistance would look like.

Carlo answers that it was a priority to a lot of the people that they had engaged with. The respondents wanted access to support and the desire to augment and connect with the existing support—such as Focus Minnesota. They are a local non-profit on Rice Street and work with emergency food work and rent/utility assistance to local families. Carlo shares that families would pay for rent/utilities before securing food for themselves, so the desire for assistance was something that CIC heard over and over again—this solution for aid-based grants came from the community members themselves.

Chair Flannagan agrees that the committee that gets appointed can have those conversations to allocate a portion of the grants to that when it arises. Ms. Hills agrees that not everything proposed today can receive funding, but that the committee would be able to help prioritize those needs.

Board Member James McClean clarifies whether or not the Task Force would continue to meet, or if the work of the Task Force is complete. Exec. Secretary Erik Dahl answers that once the report has been submitted to legislators, the work of the Task Force is complete. The Board and CAAPB Staff will select a separate committee with more neighbors to emphasize local input.

Mr. McClean asks if there will be any communication between City work and this grant program so that people can have more resources. Lt. Governor, Mr. Dahl, and Ms. Goodman all agree that there should be partnership between CAAPB and the City to identify any existing grant programs as well as any gaps.

Ms. Badgerow recommends we move to approve the report. Mr. Dahl summarizes the resolution to the group, emphasizing 2a, a 60 day comment period with the work of Carlo and CIC.

Dana Badgerow moves to approve the resolution. Hannah Hills seconds. There are a total of 8 votes by roll call: 7 yeses and 1 nay from Rep. Isaac Schultz.

Item 2 - Capitol Mall Design Framework (CMDf) Timeline Update

Exec. Secretary Erik Dahl gives the update on the Capitol Mall Design Framework (CMDf). He proposes a resolution to reconvene in May 2024 after Sasaki has completed the comment period. This meeting will include an update on the CMDf as well as final approval of Phase I. Rep. Schultz motions to approve the resolution to extend the date. Ms. Badgerow seconds the move. There are a total of 7 votes by roll call with 7 yeses. Board Member Alicia Belton abstains.

Item 3 – Approval of Minutes

Hannah Hills moves to approve the minutes from the meetings of 10/4/2023 and 3/1/2024. Ms. Badgerow seconds. Lt. Governor Flanagan calls for a voice vote, no nays. The minutes are approved.

Item I – Capitol Area Community Vitality (CACV) Next Steps

Exec. Secretary returns to Item I, to summarize the next steps of the Capitol Area Community Vitality:

1. Referral to Legislature
2. Continue Voices Initiative
3. Partnership Meetings Between City and CAAPB
4. Come back to the Board in May 2024 to appoint a Grants Governance Committee
5. Developing Launch Investments in 2024
 - a. Looking at staff capacity and initial contracts for safety, cleanup, and early technical assistance

Lt. Governor Flanagan encourages anyone who wants to be a part of the grant committee to speak with Mr. Dahl. She thanks the consultants for their hard work in preparing the research, reports, and input. Her gratitude extends to Hannah for connecting the work of CAAPB with the neighborhood and community more than ever before. She thanks Dir. Goodman for her work and participation in the meeting and collaborative spirit. The Lt. Governor adjourns the meeting.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 3:18 p.m.

DRAFT