



Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board

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Freeman Building

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Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board Meeting

Tuesday, June 3, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

DRAFT Minutes

Board Members

Present: Board Chair Lt. Gov. Flanagan, Board Vice Chair Dana Badgerow, Dr. Kate Beane, Michael Bjornberg, Hannah Hills, James McClean, Melanie McMahon, Rep. Klevorn, Rep. Schultz, Senator Nelson, Senator Pappas

Left Early: Senator Pappas, Senator Nelson

Not Present: James Garrett, Jr.

Quorum present? Yes.

Proceedings

Meeting Kick-Off

- Lt. Gov. calls the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.
- Overview of Agenda
- Board member roll call

Approval of Agenda

Lt. Gov. Flanagan asks to approve the agenda. Board Vice Chair Badgerow moves to approve the agenda, and Senator Pappas seconds the motion. Lt. Governor Flanagan calls for a voice vote, and there are zero nays. The agenda is approved.

Item 1 – Approve Minutes from 9/24/2024, 12/11/2024, and 03/24/2025

Lt. Gov. Flanagan asks to approve the minutes from September 24, 2024; December 11, 2024; and March 24, 2025. Board Vice Chair Badgerow moves to approve the minutes, and Hannah Hills seconds

the motion. Lt. Governor Flanagan calls for a voice vote, and there are zero nays. The agenda is approved.

Item 2 – 615 Park: Conditional Use Permit and Variance

Lt. Gov. Flanagan introduces agenda item 2 - 615 Park: Conditional Use Permit (CUP) and Variance. She then hands the meeting over to Principal Planner and Zoning Administrator Peter Musty.

Mr. Musty thanks Lt. Gov. Flanagan and brings before the Board the consideration of a conditional use permit and minimum lot size variance for 615 Park Street. He mentions the letter from applicant Bibi Abdalla and the statement and FAQ she provided. He highlights that several items in the packet are new since the Board meeting in March 2025. The applicant is proposing to open an Intensive Residential Treatment Services (IRTS) facility licensed by the State of Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS). The applicant has completed much of the necessary paperwork for licensing to operate and occupy the facility.

The proposed investment meets all of our congregate living standards, with the exception of the lot size minimum primarily due to the unique context of it being a smaller corner lot of 0.11 acres. Mr. Musty highlights that due to recent reforms, in Saint Paul, outside of the Capitol Area, this sized adult care home (six persons or fewer) would be allowed with no Conditional Use Permit required.

CAAPB wishes to record our thanks to the Department of Human Services for their assistance and their presence today at the Board meeting.

Mr. Musty turns the meeting over to Executive Secretary Cedarleaf Dahl, who thanks Peter, Jessie, Tina, Hannah, DHS, and the staff for hosting and contributing to a lot of the public meetings.

Executive Secretary Cedarleaf Dahl explains the different roles of the CAAPB and other agencies. CAAPB approvals run parallel to both licensing and building code. CAAPB is not a licensing body. CAAPB issues the Zoning approval. The operating license to run an IRTS facility is achieved through reviews at Ramsey County, issuance from the Department of Human Services, the Department of Health or the Department of Corrections, depending on the facility. Building codes are also considered by the City of Saint Paul.

Executive Secretary Cedarleaf Dahl points out that CAAPB's focus today is about the zoning of the building, not approving the licensing of the IRTS facility. He then hands the meeting over to Board Member Hannah Hills.

Ms. Hills thanks Lt. Gov. Flanagan for providing extra time to have these conversations and for CAAPB staff to facilitate conversations. Ms. Hills explains that at the last meeting with the community, members expressed concerns about the new congregate living facility due to past experiences in the area. Ms. Hills personally witnessed CUP violations and poor living conditions as residents were relocated. These experiences have understandably shaped the community's lens. This was why the conversations with DHS and the applicant were essential.

Ms. Hills acknowledges that this IRTS facility is one of the few tools available to offer stability and transition support if we want to reduce homelessness, prevent rehospitalization, and give people a better chance at recovery. She also discusses the impacts that the Mental Health Hospital and the Vitality Fund will have on the community. Ms. Hills concludes that granting the variance is not without

risk but also points out that the facility will be highly regulated, the consequences for mismanagement are real, and the potential benefit to both residents in recovery after a mental health crisis and the broader community merits serious consideration.

Board Vice Chair Badgerow asks to go on record as saying she has never seen such due diligence on a particular application. It's just fabulous what staff has done, what Hannah has done, and the outreach to the community.

Lt. Gov. Flanagan thanks Board Vice Chair Badgerow and asks if there are additional questions/discussions from the Board.

Senator Pappas agrees that this process has been thorough, and notes that it is reassuring to know that the facility will be accepting people from hospitals and not from correctional facilities.

Senator Nelson agrees that the process has been thoroughly vetted and applauds the involvement of the neighbors, staff and CAAPB. She also asks that the record reflects that these facilities are called IRTS facilities, and that she has served on the Health and Human Services committee for over a decade and is familiar with the massive need we have for more mental health in general, including IRTS facilities.

Senator Nelson states that the CAAPB's job is to make sure that the CAP-designated 66 blocks around the Capitol follows the CAAP Board rules. She explains that we cannot change the size of the lot, and that it is the role of the CAAPB to maintain those minimums. She states that the site is very small, and that she would not be in support.

Lt. Gov. Flanagan thanks Senator Nelson and asks if there are any comments or discussions online.

James McClean expresses appreciation for Senator Nelson's comments. Mr. McClean mentions that he didn't hear the lot size as a concern from the community in Board member Hannah Hills' comments, so he was curious about the framework for variances.

Peter Musty addresses his question and explains that variances are typically applied to property sizes and property exceptions. In Capitol Heights, there are not a lot of standard lots. Mr. Musty points out that the structure on 615 Park Street is suitable for occupancy, it has access to public transit, and is near parks. Mr. Musty directs Board members to review the memo as it lays out the specific criteria. The lot size is close, but that is what is being voted on today.

Senator Nelson asks for the map of 615 Park Street to be displayed. She notes that there is no backyard and there is more city parking than there is land. She also asks how long the property has been vacant.

The applicant, Bibi Abdalla, states that it has been vacant for quite some time. She also states that they have intentions of making more space in the backyard around the garage. Bibi Abdalla also shares her experience with mental health concerns in her family.

Lt. Gov. Flanagan asks Ms. Abdalla how long the home has been vacant.

Ms. Abdalla states that it has been vacant a few years.

Representative Klevorn asks DHS if the square footage would be detrimental to human habitation of the building.

Erin Ruiz, Adult Intensive Services Lead in the Behavioral Health Division of the Department of Human Services (DHS), introduces herself to the Board and attendees. She explains that at DHS, they consider whether there is enough space to go outside and sit in the yard, enough space to live in the home and have visitors, and enough privacy for residents.

Rep. Klevorn points out that in the photo and map of the home, there are apartment buildings next to it that appear to have less green space than 615 Park Street. She asks if that is correct.

Mr. Musty answers that she is correct and it is not uncommon in the Capitol Heights blocks for there to be little green space around homes and apartment buildings.

Lt. Gov. Flanagan thanks Rep. Klevorn and Ms. Ruiz for their questions and comments. She then noted that at the last Board meeting, she, as chair, determined that additional conversation was needed with the community. And she wants to associate herself with Board Vice Chair Badgerow's remarks about how impressed she is with the staff and Ms. Hills.

She notes that licensing will not be handled by CAAPB, and there will be a rigorous process that Ms. Abdalla will go through. Lt. Gov. Flanagan then states that she thinks CAAPB should approve the conditional use permit and variance today with the conditions that have been set by the CAAPB staff. She also highlights that the City of Saint Paul makes sure the site and building are safe and up to code.

Board member Hannah Hills added that the lot size concern was not coming up with residents during the community meetings. The concern was how the property will be managed.

Executive Secretary Cedarleaf Dahl added that staff is committed to checking with the City of Saint Paul regularly and making sure we're notified if there are any concerns.

Peter Musty summarizes the resolution. There were 3 proposed conditions that resulted from collaborations since the March Board meeting: there is an adjustment clarifying bedrooms and number of occupants, the facility will maintain a direct online resource with contact information, and CAAPB staff will convene a meeting with the community/Board if property issues arise.

Senator Nelson states that she believes the vote should be divided into two separate votes because they are different issues. She then moves to do two votes: one on conditional use permit and one on the variance. Senator Pappas seconds the motion.

Lt. Gov. Flanagan asks that CAAPB staff reads the language. Executive Secretary Cedarleaf Dahl reads the resolutions separately.

Board member Melanie McMahon asks for clarification on whether the conditions outlined in the previous resolution apply to both. She thought they should be included in both the CUP and the variance as they were helpful and applicable to the work that's been done.

Executive Secretary Cedarleaf Dahl confirms the new language.

Ms. McMahon clarifies that the conditions are specific to the CUP and the variance is a standalone vote.

Senator Nelson shares her concern about the number of residents and points out that the building code is for 5 residents until a sprinkler is installed. Then at that time, an additional bedroom may be added for the maximum of 6 residents.

Lt. Gov. Flanagan notes that the resolution indicated allowing 5 guests. She asks if Senator Nelson could suggest language that she would like to be included in the resolution.

Senator Nelson asks that conditions two and three follow the granting of the conditional use permit, and condition one would apply with the variance.

Executive Secretary Cedarleaf Dahl asks if Board member McMahon or DHS could provide advice on the occupancy limit for the site.

Board member McMahon states that 5,000 square feet is a common lot size in Saint Paul and has no concern with five or six occupants at the residence as it is pretty standard in the city.

Lt. Gov. Flanagan notes that there is a motion to separate the two items in the resolution.

Executive Secretary Cedarleaf Dahl explains that one item would include the board recognizing offer for the applicant to maintain an informational online presence and accepting offer for the applicant to attend meetings proposed by CAAPB staff if necessary to address any issues. The second would be the CUP resident and room clarification attached to the variance.

Board member Hannah Hills notes that without the variance, the CUP doesn't matter because they're not allowed to operate without a variance.

Representative Klevorn expresses concern about separating the two items, as that could set a precedent for the future of giving a variance without a CUP. So, she suggests keeping them together and passing as one resolution.

Lt. Gov. Flanagan takes the roll for the motion of separating the conditional use permit and the variance. There are 9 ayes and 2 nays. The motion fails.

Lt. Gov. Flanagan asks for a motion to approve the current resolution of the conditional use permit and the variance. Board Vice Chair Badgerow motions to approve the resolution, and Board member Hannah Hills seconds the motion. Lt. Gov. Flanagan asks for any more discussion.

Senator Nelson asks that it be noted in the record that she is voting no because of her concern about granting a variance for the size of the lot in the CAAPB jurisdiction. Senator Nelson is very supportive of IRTS facilities, she knows there is a great need for them, and has personal experience in this field.

Lt. Gov. Flanagan calls the roll for approving the Conditional Use Permit and Variance resolution. There are 9 ayes and 1 nay. The motion passes.

Lt. Gov. Flanagan thanks the CAAPB and Ms. Abdalla. She then passes the meeting to Board Vice Chair Badgerow.

Item 3 – Update: Capitol Area Zoning and Design Rules

Executive Secretary Cedarleaf Dahl explains that CAAPB conducted a lot of outreach and is taking time to ensure we keep working with stakeholders and Board members and will come back with an action item in the fall. CAAPB has already done regulatory review and documentation and code testing drafts of rules. Now we're developing final rulemaking documents. He then passes the meeting to Cecilia Kim, PhD, Planning Manager at Opticos Design, Inc.

Ms. Kim introduces herself and provides her credentials. She then provides a high-level overview of the proposed draft rules and SONAR.

Ms. Kim asks for questions. Executive Secretary Cedarleaf Dahl reiterates that we are not voting on anything today, but this is an update.

Senator Nelson asks about the block standards. She also expresses concerns about parking around the Capitol Area.

Senator Pappas notes that wayfinding signs may be helpful when addressing parking concerns.

Senator Nelson asks if she could be provided with the net parking information.

Item 4. Commemorative Work: Emergency Medical Services

Lt. Gov. Flanagan moves onto agenda item 4 – an application for a Commemorative Work Emergency Medical Services Line of Duty Death Memorial (EMS LODD). She then hands the meeting over to Commemorative Works Planning Fellow Tina Chimuzu.

Ms. Chimuzu provides a historical background of the application submitted by Adam. S. Harvey, President and Founder of the EMS LODD Memorial Foundation. She then explains that the application was found to be complete and conditions for adding a new artwork were met. The next step is to gather comments on whether the application meets all the stated conditions. Ms. Chimuzu shares the resolution with the Board.

Senator Nelson moves to approve the resolution, and Board Vice Chair Badgerow seconds the motion. Lt. Gov. Flanagan calls the role for votes. There are 9 ayes, zero nays. The resolution is passed.

Ms. Chimuzu explains next steps of opening a public comment period and then bringing a summary of the comments and a staff recommendation to the Board. Then the Board will take action on whether the conditions have been met.

Item 5. Commemorative Work: Pillbox Update

Lt. Gov. Flanagan moves onto agenda item 5 – Commemorative Work: Pillbox Update and asks Ms. Chimuzu for a brief update.

Ms. Chimuzu provides a brief background of Pillbox and shares historical photos and maps of the baseball park. She also explains that the application is being processed per the rules. A public comment period was held. Twelve of the 13 comments were in favor. CAAPB is working with Pigeon Consulting who is currently conducting a historical background report.

Lt. Gov. Flanagan thanks Tina Chimuzu for the updates, and thanks Board Vice Chair Badgerow for her work on the Commemorative Works process.

Item 6. Commemorative Work: U.S.S. Ward Gun Update

Lt. Gov. Flanagan moves onto agenda item 6 – Commemorative Work: U.S.S. Ward Gun Update and hands the meeting over to Tina Chimuzu.

Ms. Chimuzu provides a background of the application to remove the U.S.S. Ward Gun from the Capitol Grounds. She provides an update about the Commemorative Artwork Review Committee (CARC), the members, and the public hearing and CARC meeting that was held on May 22, 2025. Ms. Chimuzu then summarizes the CARC recommendation.

Executive Secretary Cedarleaf Dahl and Tina Chimuzu provide an overview of the recommended Board Resolution.

Board Vice Chair Badgerow moves to accept the resolution, and Rep. Schultz seconds the motion. Lt. Gov. Flanagan asks for any discussion.

Representative Isaac Schultz served on the CARC and expresses that he enjoyed this process and seeing it work through for the first time. He states that this is a positive step in the right direction, and the feedback that was received from Minnesotans was overwhelmingly in support of this direction. For that reason, he seconded approving this resolution.

Lt. Gov. Flanagan thanks Rep. Schultz and thanks him for his service on the CARC.

Executive Secretary Cedarleaf Dahl thanks the Department of Administration for reviewing the budget and working with CAAPB to help us move this process quickly. He also thanks David and Lindsey from the Minnesota Historical Society. He also notes that Tina Chimuzu will be leaving in July, and thanks her for the fantastic job she has done with the Commemorative Works.

Lt. Gov. Flanagan calls the roll for votes. There are 8 ayes and zero nays. The motion is approved.

Ms. Chimuzu provides the next steps in the removal process.

Item 7. 2025 Legislative Update and Other Projects

Lt. Gov. Flanagan moves onto agenda item 7 – 2025 Legislative Update and Other Projects. Lt. Gov. Flanagan hands the meeting over to Executive Secretary Cedarleaf Dahl.

Executive Secretary Cedarleaf Dahl shares the three items in the final State Government bill language that impacts CAAPB.

Executive Secretary Cedarleaf Dahl also mentioned a Blue Star Gold Star plaque. He also provided updates regarding the Tribal Flag Plaza and adding plants and signage. Executive Secretary Cedarleaf Dahl thanks the Lieutenant Governor's Office for their help facilitating conversations with Tribes. He also thanks Wayne from the Administration Department who helped move funds forward for the Tribal Flag Plaza. He also discussed tree plantings in the Upper Mall.

Lt. Gov. Flanagan thanks Chair Klevorn and Representative Schultz for their work on the CAAPB.

Lt. Gov. Flanagan shares that Board Vice Chair Dana Badgerow will be resigning from the Board. Lt. Gov. Flanagan expresses it has been an absolute joy and pleasure working with Board Vice Chair Badgerow. Her expertise as a former Commissioner of Administration and knowledge of Minnesotans and how this state works has been invaluable. She also appreciates her patience and thoughtfulness and leadership. We will continue to see her work here at the Capitol.

Board member James McClean thanks Board Vice Chair Badgerow for her service and expresses we will miss her.

Board member Michael Bjornberg thanks Board Vice Chair Badgerow, noting that working with her is one of the highlights of his professional career and personal experiences.

Representative Klevorn thanks Board Vice Chair Badgerow for her mentorship, leadership, and guidance, and always keeping the people of Minnesota front and center.

Executive Secretary Cedarleaf Dahl thanks Board Vice Chair Badgerow for her support, mentorship, and guidance.

Lt. Gov. Flanagan asks if there is a motion to adjourn. Board member Hannah Hills moves to adjourn, and Board Vice Chair Badgerow seconds the motion. Lt. Gov. Flanagan takes a voice vote. There were zero nays.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 11:57 a.m.