

CAAPB BOARD MEETING MINUTES FOR NOV. 18, 2019 (Approved)

Board Members and Advisors present:

Lt. gov. Flanagan, Bryan Carlson, Denita Lemmon, Michael Bjornberg, David Lanegran, Elaine Fink, James McClean, Alicia Belton, Ann Buck, Rep. Dehn, Ted Lentz, Don Grundhauser, Rep. Hertaus

Board Members absent:

Sen. Nelson and Sen. Pappas

Others present:

Jacob Grundhauser, Andy Schweizer, Gail Romanowski, Katie Hatt, Brian McMahon, Ted Tucker, Greg Ruhland

Lt. Gov. Flanagan gaveled the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and immediately proceeded to administer the Oath of Office to the new Mayoral appointee, James McClean. She also welcomed special guests Commissioner Alice Roberts-Davis (Admin.) and Commissioner Myron Frans (MMB), here to address a different matter on the agenda.

The Chair cited Mr. McClean's role as Director of Government Relations for Health Partners, prior to which he served on the Saint Paul Chamber. In addition, he received a law degree from the U of MN and has served on a number of Boards: Catholic Charities, Saint Paul Business Review Council, Work Force Innovation Board of Ramsey County, Saint Paul Alliance and the Capitol River Council.

Agenda Item 2: June 10, 2019 Board Meeting Minutes was MOVED and APPROVED..

Agenda Item 3: CAAPB Capital Budget Review

Comments:

Commissioners Roberts-Davis and Frans presented their concerns, transmitted via a letter distributed to the Board, regarding both the CAAPB opposition to the Capital Budget request for demolition of the Ford Building and to the most recent Re-Use Study for the Ford Building, commissioned by the CAAPB.

Their presentation focused on the condition of the Ford Building, mothballed since 2006 or so, the resulting excessive cost of any rehab needed to allow for its' reuse. Commissioner Roberts-Davis spoke to the narrow scope of the CAAPB Study which looked only at re-use, in contrast to seeing the value of a cleared site with greater flexibility. Commissioner Frans spoke to financing implications relative to the tax code and cost-effectiveness of State funding as landlord, in addition to conflicts with use of State-built facilities with private parties. Admin. Commissioner also noted

that certain amenities associated with the Ford Building, such as the pedestrian tunnel and usability of the site, are likewise associated with the site itself, with or without the Ford Building.

Board Vice-Chair Buck asked what CAAPB Architectural Advisors thought. Bjornberg, who had been contracted to actually write the study, first noted that Encompass, the Administration Department's own consultant had acknowledged, as every other study, that the building was, in fact, structurally sound, and also noted that their own study was narrow in scope, allowed to only examine continued mothballing or demo but not reuse. He also pointed out that the Ford Building comprises only 15% of the total State holding on the block, allowing for a great deal of flexibility for possible reuse of the Ford – either in whole or in part – and that the Ford site, be it as the existing building or a new facility, would require all new mechanical and electrical systems. He reminded the Board, based on findings of the study, that more than two-thirds of the twenty-three Ford Buildings have been reused and only two have been demolished, and in his view, without having a program for a new building on the site, it might be difficult to determine whether or not the building could prove valuable. Ann Buck asked if there couldn't be an analysis looking at both the merits of reusing the building or demo with reuse of the full site.

Commissioner Roberts-Davis spoke to the needs to meet their performance standards and cost effectiveness, saying that as landlord, they have a fiscal responsibility to the State and look to the site for a building that might have a capacity for some 900 employees along with a parking ramp for some 450 spaces.

Board Member McClean asked for clarification from Comm. Frans on the restrictions regarding State debt and private uses, with the response from MMB focused on the State Constitution and IRS rules. Board Member Lentz spoke in favor of a clean site with regard to flexibility and possibility that the solution might not be just as either/or.

Lt. Governor spoke to the need to more closely evaluate and discuss the merits of both options, with other discussions revolving around the historical issue of who might be forced into the renovated building, what rental costs might be; context given the close proximity to the historic church and the current lack of anything else on the block save surface parking; the impact of the current Comprehensive Plan and studies, as well as past CAAPB policies with regard to the disposition of the Ford Building; and the increase in interest in the site for a number of agencies. Lastly, the possibility of historic designations per the National Register was briefly mentioned.

Mandell next reviewed the CAAPB review comments for all eleven of Administration's Bonding requests, all of which had been supported in the preliminary review save that request for demolition of the Ford Building, which the CAAPB had been opposed to since 2008 when first proposed.

Commissioner Frans noted that they are required to submit their recommendations to the Governor by end of December 2019 for the Governor's final decision, so any comments were needed by then. Several of the Board's legislators noted that with requests totaling over five billion dollars and the usual bonding bill usually (for virtually all of the past twenty-five plus years) rarely higher than one billion, many projects are likely to fail to be included.

Lt. Governor Flanagan suggested that there be another opportunity for all to discuss the issues as well as merits of each position and that finalization of the study be held until such time as that discussion resolves the conflicting positions, either with ongoing disagreement or some point in between. Vice-Chair Buck suggested that might be the Comprehensive Plan Committee, with other Board Members invited. Mandell advised the Board that with the Committee at four Members, should six or more Members come, it would be a quorum, requiring posting and follow the rule of open meeting law (inviting RSVPs ahead of time).

Agenda Item #4 – Comprehensive Plan (4a) Land Use Diversity Update:

Lt. Governor Flanagan spoke to the Administration's Mission and Value Statement, published by the Governor's Office at start of the year and sent to Board members in their packet ahead of time. She spoke of the goal "*to improve the lives of all Minnesotans by working collaboratively to implement policies that achieve results*" (focused on children and families), and how she applies those guiding principle to every one of her responsibilities. As she saw it, it's mirrored in the work we have laid out as the CAAPB, making sure people feel included and welcome, that all work to think about structural inequities and working toward being accessible, transparent and accountable, including voices from under-represented communities.

Principle Planner Peter Musty and Planner Linda Spohr started with a review of Chapter 6 – Land Use Diversity in the Capitol, starting with a review of the seven guiding principles, which lead to the chapters and for today, chapter 6 released during the summer and now presented with a simple overview of just the changes since you last saw and gave tentative approval to. They noted the most significant change was addition of some baselines, based on recent information they analyzed, supplemented with a section for each baseline titled "Going Forward," (that is, aspirational ideas), which then lead one to the guidance for regulation.

They spoke of urban villages, the "missing middle" and the various baselines, including available mix of goods and services, office space, employment anchors (including a deeper discussion for a grocery store), and residential choices. In addition, there was greater detail on the age of structures and structured vs. surface parking. In this area, there was more discussion with the Board, as well as between CAAPB Staff and City offices, about the different issues surrounding food trucks on the Capitol Mall vs. available food service in the State buildings.

With the changes to Chapter 6 reviewed, Board Member Lanegran MOVED, Board Member Buck SECONDED, and the motion was APPROVED.

Agenda Item 4b: Comp. Plan/Chapter 3: Public Realm

Next, Musty and Linda moved into Chapter 3 – on “public realm.” He noted that staff has met several times with City of Saint Paul on this chapter, from the guiding principle to baselines, all focused on an integrated, high-quality, human-scale public realm via ‘four big moves.’

Rice Street, over the next decade, more than likely will undergo a significant amount of change – hopefully contributing to the area of connectivity. In addition, they addressed the extension of the quality, safety and beauty found on the Capitol grounds out into the neighborhood, including Rice Street. For example, they cited a recent private improvement to the triangular empty parcel owned by Clear Channel. Through their efforts, coordinated with the MN Horticultural Society and the Urban League, they created a pedestrian-friendly pocket park that now offers respite and a new green space, possibly even a site for future artwork. This was successful thanks in part to the CAAPB efforts over the past five years and infusion of some funding from the City’s Commercial Vitality Zone project on Rice Street. They informed us of new baselines on park amenities, public right of ways, frontages, and public art, speaking to the many different stories staff heard from the community.

With CAAPB Board approval, staff will release Chapter 3 for Stakeholders to comment and review over a period of a month. These stakeholders will include approximately twenty parties including three surrounding neighborhood district councils, the local Block Club as well as key individuals. Ms. Spohr reported that the list of those stakeholders and their comments and responses are all tracked and available for review. At the Chairs suggestion, this list will be distributed to the full Board.

With that, Board Member Lentz MOVED approval of Chapter 3, Board Member Lanegran SECONDED. Motion APPROVED.

The next topic will be Chapter 7 and subsets 7a (Capitol Rice – already approved), 7b (Capitol Heights), and 7c (Fitzgerald Park) – all based on outreach, community engagement and district details which will be followed by Chapter 4 on mobility and access.

Agenda Item 4d: Comprehensive Plan: Board Discussion

Linda Spohr addressed CAAPB Staff work in gathering visitor, legislative, and then regular employees who work on the Campus input and feedback on their experience of the Capitol and Grounds – as preparation for Chapters 1 and 2 of the Comprehensive Plan around visioning the Capitol Area; adding that Staff was now

soliciting real time Board feedback. Taking the first principle “Vision for the Capitol Areas” to be a unifying factor for all those who come to visit, work, live, learn and play. Putting forth two questions, staff and the Chair invited Board responses. First question: “What are some of the lessons that can be learned from the Nation’s Capital and what it represents to those who go there”? Some of the responses involved the National Lawn and our Mall and the contrast in amount of open space given the constant pressure for new Memorials, the level of respect and reverence for our current Mall and Memorials, the historic evolution as seen in clearance of old, temporary or substandard structures and an underutilized surface parking lots in the creation of enhanced open spaces, ceremonial public realm and other areas that contribute to the public good – even if the interim use is that of public parking for visitors.

The whole idea of Minnesota’s Capitol as the symbolic heart of one of the things that is always at the forefront when it comes to the special quality and pride, we all place on the building and its’ surroundings – with a renewed sense of history and recognition that it’s the People’s House. Several expressed a strong affinity with the second-floor porch atop the front entry, know as the loggia and available with reservation, to the public. The Chair, addressing Board Member Belton’s point of the need to be able to see yourself reflected in the Capitol, spoke about her experience at the National Museum to the American Indian and the Museum of the African American both of which are on the National Mall.

Paul noted the information gleaned from surveys in both the Capitol Building and the Mall were from visitors, media, lobbyists and Legislative Members all of who work here.

Rep. Dehn spoke favorably of the open access to the Capitol for the public and even groups of people such as musical groups. He hopes that as we continue to consider the safety and access to the Capitol Building, that anything related to security needs to be in a way as to not make people feel as if they’re not welcome in the building.

Additional discussion then focused on “the coherence for both the area itself as well as for how well the building itself works as both a place of work and a museum, with now expanded opportunity for public exhibits and public use. Lt. Governor addressed some of the images that for her and others interfere with the highest possible experience, speaking to Knute Nelson who, as Governor, had ordered the removal of Indigenous people from the State, as well as Columbus, whose dealings with Native Americans is already well documented, then citing the interpretive work on the third floor by the Historical Society – and then, admiringly, of the current temporary art exhibit by Vern Northrup called ‘*Akinomaage*’ (a collection of photographs of nature taken with his cell phone). Part of our job, she said, “is being good stewards of this building, place and space, to make sure we’re telling the full story and offering the best of high-quality experience and accessibility.”

Agenda Item 5: Performance Award for Executive Secretary

Lt. Governor Flanagan introduced the matter of a performance raise for Executive Secretary Mandell, a recommendation from the Executive Committee for a full 3.5 percent salary increase effective January 1, 2020. The report from Board members Buck and Lanegran indicated that Mandell had foregone such increases for the past two years although eligible. They reviewed his submitted list of work accomplishments which was described as being modest compared to what he'd actually done, it was then reviewed by the Lt. Governor as Chair. Lt. Governor Flanagan described Mandell as being very Minnesotan "in downplaying his work and suggested that for the future, we check with SMART and HR for what they might have in the way of more formalized, thorough and comprehensive evaluation.

Lanegran MOVED the recommended performance raise, Buck SECONDED, and MOTION was APPROVED.

Agenda Item 6: Nellie Stone Johnson Statue

Executive Secretary Mandell spoke to an update of the Nellie Stone Johnson Statue project. He expressed appreciation to Board Members Fink, Belton, and Dehn as well as Architectural Advisor Michael Bjornberg who served as non-voting Chair for the Request for Qualifications/Request for Proposals Design Competition. Mandell said that it was definitely one of the most complicated and toughest projects he's been involved in – contentious at several different stages including in the final selections. He noted that there is now a selected designer – and there was some material in the Board packet – including information on the designer and photos of the model he put forward – with reservations of his own. That designer, a professor who lives near Duluth and teaches at UW Superior, told the Jury at the time that he'd wanted to speak with Nellie's family members to get a better idea for Nellie, but that was against the rules in order to reinforce the need for all competitors to get exactly the same information and nothing more. Tim Cleary, the designer, even admitted that he wasn't satisfied with his model, one which Mandell said, probably reflected a greater amount of effort than some of the others. Mandell said that now, the RECs office of Administration would be leading the effort to execute a contract with review by the client group.

Rep. Dehn likewise complimented Bjornberg on his work as Chair, acknowledging that this project was one of the most contentious and difficult he's ever been part of, which, he said, leads him to believe that the completed piece will be really great because anything that made it through this process is going to be fantastic, especially based on who the artist is. Dehn also expressed appreciation for having been invited to participate, despite the contentiousness.

Lt. Governor thanked all who served in the process and said that she thought the statue for Nellie will be a very important addition to the Capitol.

Bjornberg interjected that prior to the project, he hadn't known who Nellie Stone Johnson was, but after reading the book, he is excited about telling her story in the Capitol.

Mandell briefed all on the progress for Administration in their project to rehab all the Memorials on the campus – at about \$2 million – over the next year or two. He said that the restoration of the Wilkins Memorial was done, and that Peace Officers was nearly complete – both funded under an earlier project appropriation. Work still in progress on a revised WWI Plaque in the Court, approved by the Legislature in 2019, and on the expanded interpretation of the Floyd B. Olson Statue, approved by the Board earlier.

Lastly, Mandell put the Board on notice that, due to really aggravated invasion of Emerald ash borer, Administration Department, working with CAAPB staff, had contracted for removal of over one hundred and twenty trees along the two sides of I-94 in the Commons Section in the coming month; adding that the CAAPB has already started work up with MNDOT on the plan to re-landscape these seven or more block areas, hopefully starting as early as next summer – using a less homogeneous, more varied landscape plan. Public notices and press releases are already in the works.