



City of Northfield

City Hall
801 Washington Street
Northfield, MN 55057
northfieldmn.gov

Meeting Minutes - Draft Planning Commission

Thursday, February 20, 2025

6:00 PM

Council Chambers

6:00 PM - REGULAR AGENDA CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Buckheit called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Chair Betsey Buckheit, Philip Holleran, Kathleen Holmes, Bill Kuhlmann, Brain Nowak, Steven Schmidt, and William Schroeer

Also present: Chad Beumer, Council Member (Ex Officio Member); Jake Reilly, Community Development Director; Mathias Hughey, Associate City Planner; Xiomara Conde Arenas, Youth Representative; and Alisha Hayes, Meeting Associate

Absent: Claire Casson, Youth Representative

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Commissioner Schroeer, seconded by Commissioner Schmidt, to approve the agenda. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7- Chair Buckheit, Holleran, Holmes, Kuhlmann, Nowak, Schmidt, and Schroeer

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made Commissioner Holleran, seconded by Commissioner Holmes, to approve the January 16, 2025 PC Meeting Minutes. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7- Chair Buckheit, Holleran, Holmes, Kuhlmann, Nowak, Schmidt, and Schroeer

1. [25-102](#) January 16, 2025 PC Meeting Minutes

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comment

REGULAR AGENDA

2. [PC M2025-002](#) Election of Planning Commission Chair and Vice-Chair.

*Nominations for Chair 1st
Nominations for Vice Chair 2nd*

*Holmes nominates Kuhlmann for Chair
 No other nominations for Chair
 Kuhlmann willing to take on role of Chair
 Current Chair Buchheit declares Kuhlmann as Chair for 2025*

*Nowak nominates Schroeer for Vice Chair
 No other nominations for Vice Chair
 Buckhiet declares Schroeer as Vice Chair for 2025*

3. [PC M2025-003](#) Recommendation to Designate Central Park (421 4th St. E.) as a Local Heritage Preservation Site.

Mathias Hughley, Associate City Planner, presented on Central Park.

First, Mathias fielded questions by Board Members, summarized topics, but not limited to the following:

- operations of parks*
- what needs to be approved*
- snow in winter closes off Central Park (Public Works question)*

Second, discussion amongst Commissioners, summarized topics, but not limited to the following:

- playground replaced in ~2026, concerned about what HPC will approve and what they will not.*
- Other organizations determining what is recreation and what is not.*
- complication of matters that fall outside of historical significance*
- Neighborhood park vs. city wide events/serves a wider function than just a neighborhood park*
- why add an approval process and layer of control that isn't necessary, burden the land for future usage*

HPC and Council will make final decision.

A motion was made by Commissioner Holleran, seconded by Commissioner Buckheit, to recommend for approval the Designation of Central Park as a Local Heritage Preservation to Council. The motion failed by the following vote:

Yes: 1- Holleran

No: 6- Chair Kuhlmann, Vice Chair Schroeer, Buckheit, Nowak, Schmidt, and Holmes

4. [PC M2025-004](#) Comprehensive Plan Draft Review and Discussion.

Jake Reilly presented the Comprehensive Draft Plan for review and feedback, then questions to Mr. Reilly and discussion amongst Commissioners.

A summary of questions and/or topics but not limited to the following:

- consistency with text*
- Integration of maps with text is highly important*

April 5th to bring to Council---either March 20th meeting or special meeting

Kuhlman- for special meeting we want 99% finish product
What level of completion is needed to make a decision on this?
-Full compliment of words and graphics (per Jake Reilly)

Large overall goals set but...

- City should vs. City will (all should say City WILL)
- numeric goals (not actions)--need more action points
- desired future states for ALL
- parks seem absent- no overarching context of how parks are functioning- does not include ANY SYSTEMS, took a different approach to planning, linking for outcomes
- building storm water system to handle 500 year rain (also a system but does reference in COMP PLAN page 67)- addressing systems due to climate action plan

Nowak- question about Comp plan and how it related to Historic Preservation

- narrators of plan, what is the perspective that should be taken- should be consistent
- street patterns and connectivity
- Housing study/housing goals (40 houses per year vs. currently 8-9 houses per year--not meeting that goal)

Executive summary and key point "poster" (easily translated, no in depth reading)
PC annual review to bring to Council (bylaws every year PC will review the Comp Plan)
Comp Plan as guiding document for PC to bring annual review to COUNCIL

Pg. 60 pattern and scale vs. intensifying housing (conflict of interest) *Land Development Code--comp plan can't solve future disputes, rec'd to take OUT "Patter and Scale" in Comp Plan

Actions vs. outcomes and working with Strategic Plan (difficult to track it all as our work as "ONE") consistent with Comp Plan vs. Strategic Plan

Kuhlmann- be specific and general at the same time. mix of specific actions vs. non-specific actions (Reilly) understanding the concern of being too general or too detailed and what to take out and what to include

Staff plans to create two page poster that will be presented to PC

When can PC expect a more finalized draft by Community Development staff?

- 1 week for something in writing (next weekend March 1st/2nd)
- 2 weeks to have texts and maps/graphics (March 8th) *policy direction map most important

Mr. Reilly requested comments to text document by Friday/tomorrow 2/21/25---clean text version by Mr. Reilly can have that ready by Friday, February 28th THEN next meeting the format would include policy level graphics.

Schroerer to propose special meeting before March 20th meeting.

What needs to be ready for Council by April 5th? Tools for Strategic Planning (per Holmes) What we need next needs to be really close to final/almost there document

Holmes to forward email of public comment(s) to Jake Reilly.

Special Meeting set for Monday, March 10th in 2nd floor Training Room

STAFF UPDATES

No Staff Updates

BOARD MEMBER AND COMMISSIONER REPORTS

No Commissioner Reports

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Nowak, seconded by Commissioner Holleran to adjourn the meeting at 8:28 p.m. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7- Chair Kuhlmann, Vice Chair Schroeer, Buckheit, Nowak, Holleran, Schmidt, and Holmes