1. Call to Order – Roll Call

2. Approval of Minutes of June 5 and June 19, 2019

Commissioner Robertson made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Kraft seconded the motion, and the motion passed on a vote of 5-0.

3. Public Hearings

   A. Implementation of former Sam’s Club land use study recommendations

      Applicant: City of St. Louis Park
      Location: 3745 Louisiana Ave
      Case Nos: 19-18-AZ, 19019CP, 19-20-Z

Commissioner Dumalag stated she has a conflict of interest on this item and therefore will recuse herself and abstain from discussion and voting.

Laura Chamberlain, consulting planner with HKGi, presented the staff report.

Ms. Chamberlain noted city wide goals for the site include:
- Support TOD
- Maintain/Expand Tax Capacity
- Fulfill Climate Action Plan
- Provide Affordable Housing
- Maximize use and efficiency

She explained three scenarios that could fit on the site including employment, residential and mixed-use developments.
Ms. Chamberlain stated direction from the city council along the transit area included mixed-use, with a housing focus for those with living-wage jobs, urban design optimized for pedestrian scale, and parking reductions and shared parking. The council prioritized environmental concerns, and directed implementation through the comprehensive plan and zoning amendment.

Ms. Chamberlain stated there were six people from the South Oak Hill neighborhood that attended a neighborhood meeting on August 8, 2019, and she noted their concerns regarding environmental contamination at the site, safety during construction, and long-term safety. Attendees also expressed concerns over traffic along Louisiana Avenue and desire for more direct communication on the SWLRT project.

Chair Eckholm asked for clarification on the zoning change to the map, and asked if it will be only temporary, and then later be zoned for PUD, when a development comes into the site.

Ms. Chamberlain stated yes and noted a PUD would be encouraged by staff in order for the land to be developed more consistently with the comprehensive plan. These zoning districts will be in place until a transit-oriented development district or form-based code is adopted by the city.

Staff recommended approval of the resolution amending the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and recommend approval of an ordinance amending the Official Zoning Map and adding text to the Zoning Ordinance to define and regulate self-storage facilities.

Chair Eckholm opened the public hearing.

Julie Rappaport, 8915 West 31st Street, asked if there has been any outreach to the Three Rivers Park District, the Met Council, or the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District. She noted these groups are looking to purchase land within first ring suburbs in order to create areas to help clean toxic land with the use of plants and gardens. She noted SLP SEEDS works on food justice and this is a viable alternative to the proposed use of this site. She noted the site would be better suited to civic use and pointed out the building is already set up for cooking, refrigeration and could house a public community commercial kitchen. Ms. Rappaport explained this would help also to create jobs and job training and supplement meals for school children, and she hoped the commission will consider alternative ideas for the site use.
Commissioner Johnston-Madison asked if she has approached anyone outside of the city, such as those who own the property.

Ms. Rapaport stated Three Rivers is looking to purchase land, and this site could allow for low-income folks living on Louisiana Avenue to use this land for growing fresh, safe foods. She stated currently there is a study being conducted on food access and security and this fits well into the comprehensive plan. She proposed an urban farm or year-round greenhouse and added there are many people who would like to come to meetings to talk about this endeavor and she encouraged the commissioners to think about alternative uses for the site.

Johan Domingo Lopez, an intern at SLP SEEDS, stated he lives in Robinsdale, but is a Junior at Benilde St. Margaret. He stated he has learned much while an intern in St. Louis Park over the summer and stated this area and concept would impact youth and help them grow in a healthier sense. He stated he and his family have been enriched through his work and learning about food justice. He stated having a 24/7 greenhouse at the site could greatly improve the community, while also reducing carbon emissions and addressing transportation costs and the climate crisis.

The Chair closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Robertson stated the idea from Ms. Rapaport is very interesting, however he was skeptical that this site was appropriate, especially as it relates to SWLRT and housing. He also stated he would be interested in finding alternative sites for this public gardening concept.

Chair Eckholm agreed this is an interesting idea and suggested vertical farming within the building would be an interesting idea. He added reusing the building might be an option, and he encouraged Ms. Rappaport and Mr. Lopez to continue to pursue this idea. Chair Eckholm stated if there is community support for this, it should be brought to the commission and council for discussion.

Commissioner Johnston-Madison stated this is a great idea, but it would need to be incorporated into the reuse of the existing building. She asked Mr. Walther what the next step for this group might be.

Mr. Walther stated looking at a civic designation for a property before it is in public or civic institution’s control would be rare. He added the zoning designations proposed do not prohibit such uses on the property.
Mr. Walther added the city’s formal notification process did include notifying Three Rivers Park District, Metropolitan Council, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District and others in the area around the site, however to date, there has been no comments from those organizations expressing opposition to the proposal or interest in purchasing the site.

Commissioner Kraft added the ideas brought up this evening are interesting and innovative, and she hopes sites can be found within the city in order to pursue these ideas further.

Commissioner Robertson made a motion recommending approval of the resolution amending the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and as well as figures, tables and text. Commissioner Johnston-Madison seconded the motion and the motion passed on a vote of 4-0-1 (Commissioner Dumalag abstained).

Commissioner Robertson made a motion recommending amendments to the official zoning map. Commissioner Johnston-Madison seconded the motion and the motion passed on a vote of 4-0-1 (Commissioner Dumalag abstained).

Commissioner Robertson made a motion recommending amend to the zoning code and addition of storage facilities. Commissioner Johnston-Madison seconded the motion and the motion passed on a vote of 4-0-1 (Commissioner Dumalag abstained).

Mr. Walther stated this will now go to city council for the first reading on Tuesday, September 3, 2019. If approved there will be a second reading September 16, 2019.

B. Size restrictions for retail and service uses in the C-1 Zoning district
   
   **Applicant:** City of St. Louis Park
   **Case Nos:** 19-05-ZA

Gary Morrison, Assistant Zoning Administrator, presented the staff report.

Mr. Morrison noted this change will minimize large scale stores within the C-1 district and promote small businesses. He stated the amendment sets a maximum size limit of 7,500 square feet for retail and service uses that may be allowed administratively, and a maximum of 10,000 square feet for retail and services uses with a conditional use permit reviewed by planning commission and approved by city council.

Mr. Morrison stated that staff recommends approval of the amendment.
Chair Eckholm opened the public hearing.

Chair Eckholm closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Kraft made a motion recommending approval of the size restrictions for retail and service uses in the C-1 Zoning district. Commissioner Johnson-Madison seconded the motion and the motion passed on a vote of 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:38 p.m.