STUDY SESSION

The study session commenced at 6:00 p.m.

1. Arts and culture strategic framework focus group

Meg McMonigal, Principal Planner, provided background on the Friends of the Arts strategic planning, and noted several meetings she had attended. She added a community group of about 20 comprises the steering committee that is now conducting focus groups around the community. This evening, she stated, she will ask the commission several questions related to arts and culture within the city.

When you think about creativity and culture and arts in St. Louis Park, what type of activities, opportunities or amenities come to mind? The commissioners noted the following items:

- Concerts at Wolfe Park
- Streetscape art
- Community education courses
- Playgrounds at Wolfe Park are welcoming
- Projects like artwork by Cub Foods and at Excelsior & Grand, the beehive-shaped fireplace/grillrelocation to Lilac Park

What amenity are you most excited about? The commissioners noted the following items:

- The murals on the buildings at Parkway Pizza and at the Nest
- Amphitheatre and 36th Streetscape
- Artists who display at the ROC at the art fair in summer
- Lobby of city hall, could add more displays of local art
- Twin Cities Film festival is unique and spectacular

Commissioner Johnston-Madison stated it’s important to note many buildings and projects are all starting to look the same within the city. She added she appreciates developers using art in their creations.

Commissioner Johnston-Madison added the Moline Apartment in downtown Hopkins honors the Moline Company, which is interesting, adding possibly the St. Louis Park historical society
could look into this type of feature could be incorporated into art and rotating features in various sites throughout the city, and in the historic Walker Lake district as well.

Do cultural and artistic amenities and opportunities add to the unique identity of St. Louis Park, in what ways, and do they contribute to vitality of the community?

- **Film Festival** – sense of pride, positive and vital to community – but doesn’t play into the city’s identity – would like to see this more promoted
- **Wolfe Park**
- **Amphitheater**
- **Westwood Hills Nature Center**
- **Dakota Bridge**
- **Minnehaha Creek bridge at Louisiana**
- **Sculpture at Excelsior and Grand**
- **Tower Light**
- **Full Circle at West End**
- **Sculpture at Ellipse on Excelsior**
- **Sculpture at Fresh Thyme**

In what ways does the city thrive as a creative enterprise?

- Put in issues of Park Perspective 3 times per year, whatever emphasizes community
- School district – opportunity there with art classes and youth

Barriers:

- Outdated language in home occupations ordinance, and not knowing enough about creative enterprise in the city, need a place to gather and collaborate in the city related to art.
- **Lennox Center** – art classes there and community education classes, better utilizing spaces within the city – having places to display vs. create art.
- **Need for historical society/arts center in an old school building**
- **Need studio space or places for this to develop** – i.e. at the PLACE development, live/workspace – but not doable by PLACE on the south side – needs more long-term planning.
- Would be nice to have maker spaces and places for artists to congregate and look to incorporate this into buildings that are available and do an inventory of buildings - i.e.: Lennox or the Roc – if have this, then can promote arts better.
- Find out of there is a center or place where art is congregated, where there are various studios, a coffee shop, a brewery, and other areas where projects are started – collaborative space. This might take place at Historic Walker Lake district.
- **Turn former Nash Frame building into artist space on Wooddale Ave.**
- Don’t think art when think of St. Louis Park, but the city has great parks, great bike trail systems and amenities – so when think of art, might be better to think of outdoor spaces as art opportunity areas that are not necessarily manufactured locations to specifically host art.
Arts and spaces should evolve organically vs. fabrication, and not tear down old buildings to create new.

2. Annual report and 2020 work plan

Sean Walther, Senior Planner noted some items that were previously in the 2019 work plan and now shifted into the 2020 work plan because they have not yet been completed.

Chair Eckholm asked about the billboard ordinance item.

Mr. Walther noted the ordinance currently prohibits billboards and existing billboards are not allowed to be relocated. A developer asked the city council to revisit the regulations to accommodate a development proposal. This was reviewed by the city council and city council agreed to consider potential options but did not commit to making any changes. Staff has researched some potential options and will eventually share potential changes with the city council at a future study session. Planning commission may be asked to make recommendations if it proceeds further.

The commissioners reviewed the remaining items on the plan.

Mr. Walther stated the planning commission’s work has some limited overlap with water conservation programming.

Commissioner Robertson stated this can be reviewed but there are many resources available, so it’s not a high priority currently.

The commissioners agreed to leave all the “parking lot” items that were not high enough priority to include in 2020 but may be items to explore in future years.

Chair Eckholm stated there should be something about affordable commercial properties on the work plan.

Commissioner Kraft asked what the transitional industrial zoning is. Mr. Walther stated staff this refers to expanding the uses allowed in the some of the city’s industrial lands, and perhaps creating a third industrial district that could be deployed in specific locations in order to limit the geographic scope of where these expanded uses would be allowed.

The commissioners agreed the affordable commercial item could be included in Q1 or Q2.

Chair Eckholm stated this could be reviewed as part of the city’s TIF program.

Mr. Walther stated the council will want to review the work plan for 2020 again with the commissioners next year, and a joint meeting will be set up to do so.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.