

NEWS RELEASE

Saint Paul STRONG

AMENDMENT TO THE PARKLAND DEDICATION ORDINANCE AT CITY COUNCIL OCT. 28

Whoever said government moves slowly should come to St. Paul. Government moves so fast, the City Council can't even keep up. Wednesday, October 28, an item on the consent agenda that would direct the Planning Commission to study, report, and make a recommendation to the City Council was before the Planning Commission's Comprehensive Planning Committee on Tuesday, October 27.

Don't like pesky tax-payers muddling in the City's business? Well, come on over to St. Paul because we've got that figured out, too. All the men and woman currently on the City Council said they support the principles of Saint Paul STRONG. Those principles include a pledge to reform City Hall to be more open to all citizens. But, hey, if you can't show up for yesterday's meeting, that doesn't mean the city isn't transparent, it just means you're slow.

STRONG stands for Safe, Trust, Responsible, Open, Neighborhoods, and Generations. Trust is the one that especially stands out at the moment, since all the Council incumbents agreed to "make sure full and informed citizen participation comes BEFORE decisions are made—not after."

At issue is an amendment to the Parkland Dedication Ordinance that this Council just passed on August 26. After being on the books less than a month, it became apparent that nearly two-years' worth of effort and virtually no public policy discussion, other than to say it was "a good balance" without being able to explain why, might not have been the brightest idea. The Parks Department quickly discovered problems administering the very ordinance they spoke in favor of, even though parks advocates were pointing out flaws in the plan. Council Member Dai Thao was the lone voice in the wilderness, standing up for parks and trails in our community.

How to deal with this? The City Council put the item on the consent agenda at the October 28 meeting, 3:30pm. Because its on the consent agenda, expect no discussion.

The tax-payers would be better served if the Council took a little more time with this and got it right this time around. Please urge your Council Member to take a careful look at the ordinance and have a REAL policy discussion when they take up this ordinance.

Vote on Tuesday.

What does this ordinance do, anyway? Well, it means that when the shiny new soccer stadium gets built, there would be green space for local kids to play soccer on, too. It means that when housing developments are built, kids would have a place to play in the grass. It means that when you want to ride a bike trail, you don't have to drive your car to Minneapolis to find one.

St. Paul, the Most Livable City in America, where government is so fast we held the meeting yesterday.

Contact: John Mannillo

(651) 292-8306

john@mannillowomack.com