



**NORTH  
LOOP**  
NEIGHBORHOOD

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**North Loop Neighborhood Association  
Planning + Zoning Committee March 18, 2026, Meeting Minutes  
Time 6:00 pm**

1. 12 of 13 committee members were present: Jo Vos, Matt Sharkey-Smith, Neal Reardon, Mollie Scozzari, Missy Rotterdam, Alice Eichholz, Matt Bruns, Grant Johnson, Frederick Dawes, David Miller, and Fernando Burga.
  - a. One committee member is on leave of absence: Francesco Parisi
  - b. Guests: Peter Killen, Owner, Killens Irish Pub, and Jason Vanselow, Project Designer, HGA
2. Committee called to order at 6:05 pm by Vos.
3. January and February 2026 minutes and March 2026 agenda approved by committee members.
4. Eichholz moved to elect Vos and Merrifield as committee co-chairs, seconded by Rotterdam. Motion approved unanimously by members.
5. **Peter Killen: Killen's Irish Pub, 324 Sixth Avenue North: Applications for Liquor License and HPC Certificate of Appropriateness**
  - a. Peter Killen presented his plans to open Killan's Irish Pub in the footprint of the former First Draft Tap Haus. He described his extensive background in the hospitality industry and his vision for a neighborhood pub. He discussed the pub's design, capacity, and operations, including plans for live music and a focus on creating a cozy neighborhood bar rather than a large venue.
  - b. Killen discussed plans for an outdoor patio, which will feature planters and greenery.
  - c. Killen described his plans to modify the exterior of the building, including adding decorative wooden pillars and updating signage. He noted concerns about the wooden facade and its maintenance in extreme weather. The Heritage Preservation Committee will review these changes to determine their appropriateness for the historic district. Killen expressed confidence that his proposals fit well with the neighborhood's character.
  - d. Killen hoped to open in mid-May and cited plans to hire approximately 40 people.

- e. Killen is requesting approval for an on-sale liquor license, with both in-door/out-door and Sunday sales. Upon questioning by Vos, Killen indicated that the establishment will not be open late hours (2 am).
- f. Johnson inquired about managing capacity during high-demand events, and Killin explained his plan to use security at the door and maintain a conscious limit on crowd size to ensure efficient service and compliance with regulations.

6. **Jason Vanselow: Ford Center, 420 North Fifth Street: Application for HPC Certificate of Appropriateness**

- a. Jason Vansel, an architect with HGA Architects and Engineers, presented a proposal for expanding the north entry of the Ford Center, a historic building in Minneapolis. The expansion aims to improve security, energy efficiency, and user comfort while maintaining the building's historic character.
- b. Key features of the proposal include a new vestibule, an expanded security desk, improved visibility, and a waiting area for visitors. According to Vanselow, building security is a major reason for expanding the entry. The vestibule will not only offer visitors a sheltered waiting area but will also give security staff improved visibility and control over traffic near the security desk. In addition, the vestibule will improve energy efficiency, create a more attractive waiting area for visitors, and provide a “grander” entrance to continue to attract high-end tenants to the building.
- c. Vanselow also discussed the building's history and its significance as a former Ford Model T manufacturing facility.
- d. Johnson suggested the possibility of incorporating an MLB museum into the building, which North found intriguing and agreed to pass along to relevant parties.

7. **Committee Actions**

- a. **Killen's Irish Pub:** Committee members unanimously endorsed Killen's plans to modify the exterior of the building by adding decorative wooden pillars and updated signage, stating that his plans “are appropriate modifications to an existing building in an historic district.”
- b. Committee members were especially pleased to hear that he wants the pub to serve as a “neighborhood bar,” emphasizing a smaller, more intimate atmosphere, low-key music, good food, and walk-in service. Committee members believe that this is the type of establishment North Loop residents want to see more of in the neighborhood -- one that serves local residents rather than “out-of-towners.” The committee also endorsed Killen's plans to add greenery and planters to the outdoor patio.
- c. **Ford Center:** Committee members unanimously supported HGA's plans for a vestibule. Members thought that the proposed vestibule was a thoughtful addition to building improvements made in 2012, which the Planning and Zoning Committee supported at the time. Further, the committee noted that the vestibule's materials and overall appearance were appropriate modifications to an existing building in an historic neighborhood.

- d. Although adding the vestibule may result in some loss of trees, Vanselow assured committee members that they were looking for additional areas for greening.

## **8. Old Business**

- a. The committee discussed ongoing concerns about signage regulations, particularly regarding Rabbit Hole's proposed flashing digital sign. According to Vos, a nighttime "test" of Rabbit Hole's proposed signage would be demonstrated before the next meeting, and members were encouraged to attend. She would provide members with the date, once set.
- b. Members reviewed an update on the West River Road closure proposal, which has been approved by the Park Board but lacks funding. It requires further investigation into costs and impacts.
- c. Members discussed future planning needs around the farmer's market area, particularly considering upcoming light rail development in 2027. They discussed the need to be proactive about future development in the area. Merrifield and Reardon suggested reviewing existing plans and engaging with the business community and farmer's market governance to shape future development.
- d. The committee discussed plans for a large, complex development site on the Star Tribune site that will have a significant impact on the neighborhood. Burga shared student work and ideas for the site, which will be presented in early May. The group agreed to increase community engagement and education about development possibilities, with Burga planning to share student work on Instagram. They also discussed the need to be proactive about future development in the area, particularly around the farmers' market and light rail station. Merrifield suggested reviewing existing plans and engaging with the business community and farmer's market governance to shape future development.
- e. Merrifield provided an update on the light rail project, noting delays in funding decisions and their impact on local development initiatives. Miller reported no updates on historic preservation,
- f. Finally, the committee discussed the limitations of their authority regarding development, emphasizing their role in promoting local ownership and opposing foreign investments. Burga highlighted the importance of master plans in informing the comprehensive plan cycle, while Reardon suggested reviewing the 2009 plan for insights.

9. The next meeting is scheduled for April 22, 2026.

10. The meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.

