



**North Loop Neighborhood Association
Planning + Zoning Committee April 22, 2026, Meeting Minutes
Time 6:00 pm**

1. 12 of 13 committee members were present: Jo Vos, Diane Merrifield, Matt Sharkey-Smith, Neal Reardon, Mollie Scozzari, Missy Rotterdam, Alice Eichholz, Matt Bruns, Frederick Dawes, David Miller, Grant Johnson, and Fernando Burga.
 - a. Committee members absent: Francesco Parisi (leave of absence)
 - b. Guests: Joe Berg, Jay Ettinger, and Deepak Nath, Rabbit Hole; Margaret Olmgren, Louis Nelson, community members; Rick Ferraro, Spectrum Sign Systems; Flight Club, Lauren Bizzigotti and Joe Schafran, MG2; and Jordan Kosak (sp???), Metro Transit.
2. Committee called to order at 6:05 pm by Vos.
3. March 2026 amended minutes and April 2026 agenda approved by committee members.
4. **Rabbit Hole, 411 North Washington Avenue: Interactive Signage Application**
 - a. The discussion to approve a digital sign application from Rabbit Hole began with Vos presenting a recap of an April demonstration for community and committee members. The business has submitted a variance request to the city and is awaiting a hearing, with Vos emphasizing their willingness to work collaboratively with neighbors while maintaining the sign's limited functionality.
 - b. The community meeting reached a compromise to allow for the digital sign to be operated until 2 AM in exchange for reducing brightness to 20 percent, removing dynamic image changes, and limiting image updates to one per minute with fade transitions.
 - c. The discussion also touched on noise levels from the establishment, with the business owner noting they had added sound barriers and had not received complaints about indoor noise. The conversation ended with plans to address crowd noise on the sidewalk, with follow-up discussions planned between the business and the HOA president for 5th Avenue Lofts.
5. **Flight Club Signage, 729 Washington Avenue North: Signage and HPC Certificate of Appropriateness Applications (former Galley Food Hall)**

- a. MG2 presented proposed signage and exterior modifications package for the Flight Club project at 729 Washington. The presentation included details on exterior signage modifications for the main entry facade and secondary facade, including branded blade signs, decorative vinyl awnings, and menu boxes. (While MG2 plans to eventually renovate 7,414 square feet of interior food hall space into a full-service restaurant and bar to be known as Flight Club, the April 22nd meeting dealt only with changes to the exterior of the building, including signage, door and window awnings, and moveable patio tables/umbrellas.)
- b. MG2's proposed signage includes an illuminated wall sign (25 SF) above the main entry to Flight Club, another smaller illuminated blade sign (8.5 SF) above a secondary entrance, and a third illuminated wall sign (20 SF) facing the patio. Other proposed exterior modifications include green-striped awnings above the main entry and patio window/doors and solid green patio table umbrellas – all typical branding for Flight Clubs in other cities.
- c. Vos raised questions about the vinyl awnings, and Bruns inquired about the disposal of existing signage. MG2 clarified that metal components are recycled, but most signs are made of plastic and cannot be easily recycled.
- d. MG2 clarified that a historic preservation application would not be required since the building is not in a historic district. MG2 indicated the space is planned to open in Q4 2026, and they will be applying for a liquor license, at which time it will return to P + Z.

6. Elsewhere Warehouse Signage Application, 730 Washington Avenue North: Rick Ferraro, Spectrum Sign Systems

- a. Rick Ferraro, Spectrum Sign Systems, reviewed plans for a new internally illuminated projecting sign that would better landmark and identify the building. Ferraro described the sign as a 144" by 30" LED illuminated flag sign measuring 30 square feet with red and white lettering on a black background. The new sign would be placed above the traditional sign band adjacent to the building's entrance due to visual obstructions in the area.

7. Metro H Line: Informational Presentation

- a. Jordan Kosak (sp?), Metro Transit, discussed plans to establish a bus rapid transit (BRT) line to replace Route 3 and create a new crosstown connection in St. Paul across 35E. The line will run from St. Paul's Sunray Transit Center through downtown Minneapolis to 10th and Washington Avenue N, with service every 10-15 minutes and enhanced stations featuring real-time displays, shelters, and fare payment systems.
- b. The project is currently in the planning phase with public engagement ongoing until May 4th, followed by a recommended corridor plan release in August and final approval expected in fall 2026, with construction anticipated to begin in 2028.

8. Committee Actions

- a. **Rabbit Hole:** The Planning and Zoning Committee unanimously passed a Motion of Conditional Support for Rabbit Hole's application for a dynamic sign inside the window of the main entrance at 411 Washington Avenue North. This support is contingent upon Rabbit Hole meeting the following four conditions, in addition to applicable city requirements and approvals:
 - i. The sign would be illuminated at 20 percent of its brightness capabilities;
 - ii. Images would not be animated;
 - iii. Images would transition at one-minute intervals, with a slow, fade-in fade-out between images; and
 - iv. Transitioning from one image to another would cease at 11 pm on weekends, after which only one static image would be illuminated until closing time.
- b. **Flight Club:** Committee members strongly approved a letter of support for MG2's proposed signage and outdoor décor plans. Members noted that the proposed changes compliment the current décor of Nordic Plaza as a whole and the overall ambience of Washington Avenue and the North Loop neighborhood. At the same time, members expressed some concern that future modifications to the outdoor space at Nordic Plaza – and other similar outdoor neighborhood spaces – compliment rather than “clash” with existing décor.
- c. **Elsewhere Warehouse:** Committee members strongly endorsed plans for Else Warehouse's new blade sign, noting that it made it easier to identify the entrance to Else Warehouse. Members thought that the proposed sign blended in nicely with the ambience of Washington Avenue.
- d. The committee took **no action** on the exterior door replacement project at Itasca Building, 702 First Street North. The committee did not hear a presentation for the project due to the project manager's inability to attend the meeting.

9. The next meeting is scheduled for May 20, 2026.

10. The meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.

