Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission Meeting July 24, 2012, Room 317 City Hall

Date of Z&P Meeting: September 27, 2012

ITEM SUMMARY

DESCRIPTION: Item #2, BZH #26451

Mark W. Bollinger on behalf of the Minneapolis Public Schools submitted an application for the Demolition of an Historic Resource to allow for the demolition of Shingle Creek Elementary School at 5034 Oliver Avenue North.

ACTION: The Heritage Preservation Commission adopted staff findings and denied the

demolition of Shingle Creek Elementary School at 5034 Oliver Avenue North, established interim protection; and directed the Planning Director to prepare

or cause to be prepared a designation study.

TRANSCRIPTION

Acting Chair Kelley: Our first item is #2, 5034 Oliver Avenue North, staff report from Mr. Hanauer.

Hanauer: Good afternoon, Chair Kelley and commissioners. This is the Shingle Creek Elementary School Demolition of an Historic Resource application submitted by Minneapolis Public Schools. Shingle Creek Elementary, as reported in the staff report, closed after the 2006-07 school year and the Minneapolis Public Schools is looking for approvals to demolish the school. We really appreciate Ms. Lucas' thorough report on Shingle Creek School. It provided a great history of the school and the design. In the conclusion of her report, the school was, in her opinion, not seen as a historic resource.

I wanted to go over the ordinance before going into the findings from the staff report, for a demolition of historic resource application, if the commission determines that the property is not a historic resource, the commission shall approve the demolition permit. If the commission determines that the property is a historic resource, the commission shall deny the demolition permit and direct the planning director to prepare or cause to be prepared a designation study of the property as provided in Section 599.230, or shall approve the demolition permit as provided in this section. Now, for the approval of a historic resource, part B of 599.480, before approving the demolition of a property determined to be a historic resource, the commission shall make findings that the demolition is necessary to correct an unsafe or dangerous condition on the property or that there are no reasonable alternatives to the demolition. In determining whether reasonable alternatives exist the commission shall consider, but not limit it, to the significance of

the property, the integrity of the property, and the economic value or usefulness of the existing structure.

CPED, as you see in the recommendation, does believe that the school is a historic resource, given its identification in three context studies and the additional research that was completed. The three context studies that the Shingle Creek Elementary School was identified in as a historic resource: the 1998 Minneapolis Historic Context Study, 2005 Minneapolis Public Schools Historic Context Study, and the 2011 Historic Resources Inventory, the survey of the Camden area of Minneapolis. As highlighted in the staff report, staff feels that the property may meet three designation criteria. Criterion one, the property may be associated with significant events or with periods that exemplify broad patterns of cultural, political, and social history. The Shingle Creek School completed in 1958 along with the neighboring homes exemplifies that post-WWII development in north Minneapolis. If the commission takes staff's recommendation to study, we want to look at the social significance of the school and its association with the desegregation efforts in Minneapolis in the 1960s. In 1967 busing from one school to Shingle Creek were tried to help with the desegregation efforts. Criterion 3: the school may be associated with distinctive elements of neighborhood identity. We believe Shingle Creek School may likely be the most identifiable building in the Shingle Creek neighborhood. And the Legacy Book, the book where we got our original historic resource list, our inventory, in the early 90s, states that there are few monumental structures on the north side except for churches and schools. One thing that I noted in the report was that at this current time there are no historic landmarks in the Camden community or the Shingle Creek neighborhood. Criterion 4: CPED felt that the property may embody distinctive characteristics of architectural style. Shingle Creek Elementary School embodies the cluster design, which is the only school in Minneapolis that was built in that style. The report talks about the bubble design and how that was the original design proposed for this site but that, in the end, it was the cluster design that was chosen. One of the characteristics of the cluster design was that it was a more economical school design and that might have played a role in choosing this school design after some time went on in trying to have that bubble design school work at this site. This is the prototype or the school that Shingle Creek Elementary looked to for inspiration, Heathcote Elementary School in Scarsdale, New York, designed by the architectural firm Perkins and Will. It was completed in 1954, about 4-5 years prior to Shingle Creek Elementary School. Two other criterion that we have looked at that the school possibly may meet, criterion 5, that Shingle Creek exemplifies a landscape design distinguished by uniqueness. The school has a strong association with the creek, Shingle Creek, and the neighboring park property. The school was the first campus style school to be erected on a school park property, a joint effort with Minneapolis Public Schools and the Minneapolis Parks and Recreational Board. And finally, criterion 6, may exemplify the work of a master designer. Designed by the architectural firm Shifflet, Backstrom, Hutchinson and Dickey, we'd like to have more time to study the works, the collective works, of Shifflet and Dickey who designed a number of prominent buildings and schools in Minnesota. Currently there are no landmarks by either architect in the city of Minneapolis that are locally designated.

So, moving on to the other aspects of the report, is the demolition necessary to correct an unsafe or dangerous condition? CPED did not feel that the applicant provided documentation that this was the case. Are there ...

Kelley: Pardon me, Mr. Hanauer, let the record show that Chair Larsen has arrived.

Chair Larsen: Good afternoon everyone.

Hanauer: I'll just continue on ... are there reasonable alternatives to demolition? The applicant proposal is to demolish the school and turn it to green space as an extension of the park. In a 2008 reuse study commissioned by the Minneapolis Public Schools, items that were reuse recommendations by the community: a youth leadership academy, Camden Youth Engagement Project, a fitness center, adult and children's daycare, assisted living, senior activity center, art space and music education, office space for neighborhood organizations and use as a park building. I wanted to talk about the building assessment briefly as well. I highlighted that the 1963 report stated that the school was an outstanding elementary school plan located on an adequate site and that the building condition and construction is excellent. And this was just to point out and to counter some of the statements made by the consultant in that there were some reports that showed its shortcomings but that there are also reports showing that the building, in the 1960s, was a quality school and served its purpose well. The integrity of Shingle Creek – its materials have definitely been compromised with replacement windows but we feel that it retains its other aspects of integrity. As far as its economic value and usefulness, the estimated market value of the school is \$6.9 million by Hennepin County records; the building at \$5.6 million and the land at \$1.3 million. Minneapolis Public Schools has provided information showing that there are a number of repairs that need to be made at an estimated \$2.8 million. The Shingle Creek Neighborhood Association did submit a letter proposing the demolition and in your addendum packet I believe you received one letter that was in support of the demolition. So staff recommendation for this application is to deny the application for the demolition of Shingle Creek Elementary School, establish interim protection, and direct the planning director to prepare or cause to be prepared a designation study. I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Chair Larsen: Any questions? Not at the moment, but I have a feeling we will later. We will open up the Public Hearing, is there anybody that wishes to speak either for or against the application, please step forward. One at a time, just for a couple minutes each. We'll just have everybody who steps forward state their name and address for the record.

Carol McCrillis: My name is Carol McCrillis, I live at 5045 Oliver Avenue North which is directly across the street from Shingle Creek Elementary School. I have lived there for 35 years. I don't have anything prepared, I do not agree with everything that he said. Sunday night, or afternoon, once again, the police were at the building. Three squad cars showed up, someone had broken in, once again, into the building. This happens often. It is not, I repeat, not, an uncommon occurrence. The building is, I think, in disrepair. There are trees growing around the foundation. I talked to someone who said there are trees growing in the building at this point. Also that for the past almost six years I have looked at this building every single day and known of people coming to inquire about purchasing the building. No one wants to purchase it. I just have a question about why, I really don't understand why somebody would deny it. I just can't figure it out, so that's my two cents. I object to that, and put on record, also by the way I am a member of

the Shingle Creek Neighborhood Association. I am just speaking as a citizen and my concern about how much money, how much tax money, is going into this white elephant. Thank you.

Chair Larsen: Thank you. Is there anybody else that wishes to speak for or against this application, please step forward.

Clyde Kane: My name is Clyde Kane, and I am interim director of facilities and I wanted to add a few comments regarding Shingle Creek.

Chair Larsen: I'm sorry to interrupt, director of facilities for ...

Clyde Kane: Minneapolis Public Schools.

Chair Larsen: Ok great, thank you.

Clyde Kane: Shingle Creek has a record that goes back quite a long ways. Unfortunately it hasn't been a good one and I'm not opposed to the school itself but just the fact that it was a problem school for maintaining. The heating system, the underground piping, failed many years ago and so we had to go in and repipe the heating system through the corridor system. By adding those large pipes down the corridor system it reduced the height of the available space in the corridor system and created a tunnel like effect. It wasn't what we wanted to do but it would have been prohibitive to repair the piping. And there have always been issues because of the low height of the building with vandalism and kids getting up on to the roof. And it would, again, be prohibitive to do anything to prevent them from getting up on the roof. Even back in the 1980s we had some occasions of kids on dirt bikes, pulling them up on the roof and racing their dirt bikes on the roof of the school. Recently, with the closing of the school, we've had serious vandalism problems. The previous speaker mentioned the event just this past Sunday. That happens very frequently and we are spending \$35,000-\$50,000 a year just replacing the windows. It would be to our advantage to put plywood over the windows but we don't want to do that because it would reflect on the neighborhood. But we are going in, we have a glazer on call, he goes out there whenever there is a call and repairs the windows. Sometimes if he doesn't have the proper glass in storage at the site, he has to wait until the following day to make those changes or those corrections but we are trying to keep the property as good as we can under the circumstances.

Back in the 1990s there was much discussion in the facilities department as to what is the worst school of all of the Minneapolis schools. And there were two of them that always came up: one was Burrows School in south Minneapolis and one was Shingle Creek, only because of the conditions. And so in 2003 because enrollment was on the increase, we went ahead and built a new Burrows School. Had we had the same sort of impetus, we may have considered building a new school at the Shingle Creek site, but there never has really been the increase enrollment to support it because we have other schools in the immediate vicinity. So it has been a problem child for us for a long time. A few years ago I talked to one of the principals that serve there and her indication was it was an extremely difficult school to manage because of the pod system. It was hard to have a good connection with the teachers. It was a difficult building to maintain

discipline in, just because of the pod structure. Also because of the pod structure you have more exposed walls. Most of our buildings are two and in some cases three story buildings so you have a box that is built around and it is very energy efficient. But you have all these exposed surfaces of all of the pods and it is an extremely expensive building to heat and if it were to ever be air conditioned it would be the same issue for air conditioning. So she later went on to become deputy superintendent of Minneapolis School and has since retired, but she was there for a number of years.

So there is a record of it not working well for Minneapolis Schools and that is not saying anything against the neighborhood because I have lived in that neighborhood and I have relatives that live in that neighborhood. When I was first married, my wife and I rented a double bungalow there. We have other relatives that live on Washburn and Xerxes and Queen and so I know the neighborhood well and I know when the schools were built. I know the history of the neighborhood because where it is built is where truck farms were years ago. And I can remember that one of my relatives bought a brand new house in that area in 1952 and paid \$11,995 for a two-bedroom, single bath home. Hard to believe nowadays that you could do that. The area was developed primarily for ownership by city employees. Most of the first people that lived in the area were either firemen or policemen or city of Minneapolis employees because there was a requirement that you had to live in Minneapolis to work in Minneapolis. So that is kind of the history of it. And I would truly like to move forward with the demolition. I would also feel that in lieu of finding another use for the property, we would just return it to green space. It could become part of the park. A number of years ago we talked about possibly exchanging that property, but at that time the Park Board did not have the money to buy the building so they just wanted the land. But at that time we were not willing to discuss proceeding on that basis. We would be interested in an athletic field at the Olson site and if at some time in the future we could come to an agreement we would possibly do a land exchange. I thank you for listening.

Chair Larsen: I do have a couple questions for you. So are you the replacement for the executive director, Mark Bollinger?

Clyde Kane: I couldn't hear.

Chair Larsen: Are you the replacement for Mark Bollinger?

Clyde Kane: I am. Mr. Bollinger was recently promoted to chief of administrative services. I am normally the manager of design and construction but I am filling in as interim facilities director during that time.

Chair Larsen: So you are here representing the school district?

Clyde Kane: Yes.

Chair Larsen: And are you familiar with the report that was prepared and submitted?

Clyde Kane: Yes.

Chair Larsen: Ok, and do you, can you answer for me, do you recollect what the property was marketed at when it was attempted to be sold back in 2008-2010 I believe?

Clyde Kane: We never did get an offer on the school. We listed it with United Properties. We only had two showings, one was to a charter school and they couldn't come up with the funding, and the other was I don't remember the name but it was not a school.

Chair Larsen: And you don't recall the asking price, did you have a sales price?

Clyde Kane: We did not have a price, we would just negotiate a price at that time based on who the buyer was.

Chair Larsen: And do you have, I haven't seen any in here, I see the estimate for the repairs to the property ... do you have an idea or information as to the cost for the demolition?

Clyde Kane: About \$280,000.

Chair Larsen: Alright, and the estimate that was prepared, is that essentially to keep it mothballed but heated or is this more of a repair to if someone was going to operate the facility, the 2.6 million dollars.

Clyde Kane: The deferred maintenance that was listed there was at the time when we closed the school. That was our best estimate on what it would take to restore the building to maximum condition. However, now we have prepared the school for demolition to remove the asbestos and as a result, that will add additional cost. So in preparing it for demolition, there would be further costs to use the building effectively in the future. So that would be in addition to, I think it was 2 million 300 some thousand for the deferred maintenance.

Chair Larsen: So the mechanical system has been removed, the ductwork has been removed, so that would be required to be added in again.

Clyde Kane: I would hazard a guess that it would be somewhere around five million to make it a totally usable building again.

Chair Larsen: Alright, any other questions? Alright, thank you very much. Is there anybody else that wishes to speak for or against the application, please step forward.

Jeff Johnson: Good afternoon, Commission, my name is Jeff Johnson. I live at 5000 Commerce Avenue North, and that is within the Shingle Creek neighborhood. I am a board member of the Shingle Creek Neighborhood Association, and I put that down on the registry list, but today I am going to be speaking as a neighborhood member and also as an alum. In 1968 I started kindergarten there and I went there until 1975 in the sixth grade and in the early 70s I was one of those kids that was on the roof. I don't know if it is a good thing or a bad thing to follow Mr. Kane, because it throws off everything that I originally intended to say and I certainly couldn't

do it in two minutes allotted. In 2001 I chaired a commission of the Shingle Creek Reuse Committee. At the time Dr. Carol Johnson was in charge of Minneapolis Public Schools. We went there with a report that we had put together as a neighborhood association and as members of the community, parents of kids that attended the school at the time. We submitted the report, and after that day Dr. Johnson gave us a one year reprieve. The next year she did that same thing also. In 1982 the school was closed. The Pillsbury Foundation stepped in because they had the foresight. They closed it because of demographics, they said. It wasn't the children that were needed to be there at the time. The Pillsbury Foundation stepped in and they utilized the school as senior programs and pre-school and, like I said, they had the foresight that demographics would change. In the mid- to late 1980s they reopened it again. In 2001 we go through this with the reuse, and here we are today. I have been dealing with this for a long time. I try to separate the passion as someone who attended that school and I try to (?) to importance of what that structure was as a centerpiece to the neighborhood. When I looked at the criteria that CPED had put out, and I'm thinking historical, I'm thinking of people and events. Those are easy things. If I think of a structure, then I have to think of something like the pyramids. So now how do I come here in front of you folks here today and try to justify the historical value of that structure, and I don't know if I can. But it is the social significance, as someone had used the term, and I thought, aha, that is where it lies. That is where the historical resource. The school board will tell you many things and I would be very careful to take these facts and figures that we've heard earlier. In 2001 they presented a list and the monies it would cost ... this study was done from the University of Michigan ... when I went there, Mrs. Erickson was the principal at the time. She was the last principal of the school and she went on to another school in the city of Minneapolis. We went through this with engineers who worked at the school and who worked there with the staff. We looked at this list item by item and they said well this doesn't pertain to us because that is Park Board property, this doesn't pertain because it has already been done. So it was very shoddy work at best. When you talk to the staff, the teachers at the school at the time, they said we love the idea of having our pods because in each classroom there is a bathroom for boys and girls and each has an exterior door that locks. And then there is just the one door to the main hallway. They loved it. This is according to the staff at the time that it was last used. So I would be very skeptical about this. The main thing that I see when we are talking historical uses, I am thinking future. In the late 50s and early 60s families such as my parents, and my father was an employee of the Minneapolis Public Schools, he was a janitor, they moved there because that school was there and for the surrounding parks. This is why they moved there and I am confident that people would move back again if that structure ... young couples move in and say I would love to walk my children to school, to be part of the PTA and I don't have to get into the car and drive down the highway or in some cases I don't have to drive at all, I just have to get on a bus. This is what makes neighborhoods grand. Shingle Creek neighborhood was grand when I was growing up, I believe it can be again today. Without a doubt. Without a doubt. They talked about more park space, in Shingle Creek I grew up playing baseball, football and hockey all year round until I started high school. There are five baseball diamonds in the Shingle Creek park system. It is beautiful. They don't put up the hockey rink for us anymore and they tore down the tennis courts, but these baseball diamonds are underutilized. Why in the world would you want more park space to be underutilized. If they tear down the school, it will never be rebuilt again. There will never be an elementary school in the Shingle Creek neighborhood, I am confident of that. It wasn't long ago when they tore down the original Jenny Lind school, and you know what they

realized? Opps, we're going to have to build a new one. They have closed Hamilton School. I believe that what is good for the Shingle Creek neighborhood is good for the north side. The north side has had a real tough time the last couple decades. I believe what is good for the north side is good for the city of Minneapolis, the city that I was born and raised in and that I love. I am just so passionate about this, and I've just gotten off a whole lot but I want to thank you very, very much and I want to thank CPED for the wonderful work they did.

Chair Larsen: Thank you. Is there anybody else that wishes to speak for or against, please step forth.

Amy Luesebrink: Hello, my name is Amy Luesebrink and I am the staff person for the Shingle Creek Neighborhood Association. I am here to speak and help answer any questions regarding the letter that was submitted, if that is the case. I spoke to the board chair just previous to this meeting and he wanted me to reiterate the fact that Shingle Creek Neighborhood Association continues to advocate that the Shingle Creek Elementary School is a community asset and an asset to our neighborhood. It is definitely a tearing issue in a community that is like Shingle Creek. We are the furthest northwest corner neighborhood almost entirely residential. It has a heavy industrial park on the south end that separates it from the entire city and also a railroad track that is the busiest in the metro area. We have no retail stores in the neighborhood. The Humboldt Greenway Project that took 100 properties from the area is defunct. They went through a big huge process over the last four years trying to figure out who owns what because it is a county/city project but the developer in mind went default. There is no convenience stores even to get gallons of milk, you have to go to Brooklyn Center to get your milk because you don't want to go south because you'll hit the railroad and wait 20 minutes for the cars to go by, the rail cars to go by. So for having community assets in the Shingle Creek neighborhood, we don't even have a grocery store in the size, in Camden area, the size of a Rainbow or a Cub, and that's 30,000 residents that have to go to Brooklyn Center, Robbinsdale, or somewhere else to get groceries. So I just want to put that in to perspective here. We also will be losing one of our two libraries next year when they improve the Webber Park library, or they are going to demolish that library and put in a pond. So we're losing assets right and left. I was really excited to read Mr. Hanauer's report because, as Jeff said, we have been advocating for this school. And I'm not advocating for the school, I'm just saying that it is an asset for the community and we wish that we could work with Mr. Hanauer and Mr. Kane and the Park Board. We've heard little bits and pieces here and there at the community level but they've not really come out and said this is what we're going to do. And I think that lends to the other board member's perspective of frustration of when is there something going to happen with this building? Some of the historical pieces were really exciting that Mr. Hanauer pointed out that we hadn't ever heard before, so I am hopeful that you will give time and thought into allowing us to possibly looking into that further because there is historical significance. When the Humboldt Greenway project was first being proposed in the late 90s there was a study done by Carol Zeller, Zellie, called the Shingle Creek African American Community and it documents some of the true heritage or true history of our area that might coincide with the points that he brought out. We'd like some time to be able to develop that. Also researching just in the last two days since his findings came out the pod structure for the schools is Winning A War Across the Nation, from Connecticut to Oklahoma to Missouri for schools that are being built in 2009, 2010, and 2011 as pods. So is

there some historical significance, did this school start a trend that we haven't yet found out about? Not sure, we haven't had the time to look into that. You'd asked, Chair, about the market value in 2007. We had Shingle Creek had a CURA grant researcher come out and do a reuse study for the school. At that time the land market value was between 1.6 – and the building – 1.6 to 2.6 million is how he documented that. So it is kind of interesting in this time, economic downturn, foreclosures, epidemic tornado, that a school building can go up in value. We'd like to know more about that. But really the opportunity to have everybody come out to the community that is involved and share what their thoughts are about when the process when happen was something that is going to go on with this would be something really helpful. So, appreciate your time and I'm happy to answer any questions.

Chair: Questions? I guess not at this time, thank you very much. Is there anybody else who wishes to speak for or against the application, please step forward at this time. Nobody else? Ok, we'll close the public hearing. Commissioners, what's your thoughts?

Hunter Weir: My inclination is to support the staff recommendations at least in part because I don't feel as though there has been enough time to think about this, to research it to the extent that it needs to be done, and demolition is forever. And while I'm not unsympathetic to issues of crime and vandalism, it really does not speak to whether or not this is a historic property. That's an issue for park police, city police, CPC Safe, and others, and I am sympathetic because I live right across the street from a school with an attached park so I kind of know what that feels like. I'm not minimizing the experience for people. But I really don't feel it has any bearing on the value of the building as such.

Chair: Ok, other thoughts?

Kelley: I find this one a pretty difficult decision too. I put a lot of weight on the staff report. It is a well done report and is based on some good data. That this property is potentially eligible under not one or two but actually three different criteria makes me take it all the more seriously. It is difficult for me to imagine any future generation coming to cherish this kind of difficult to maintain and heat and cool building and the various cost ranges that we've heard for bringing it back into service. I just can't see it having a market value that high, but on the other hand, I guess the big question that I have still in my mind is how much time has the community had to react to this. If they did have more time, would some buyer come out of the woodwork or something like that? No offer and only two showings speaks to me like a pretty, you know, either it spent too little time on the market or it wasn't publicized perhaps. So I guess I have some questions on that and that leads me to think I'm leaning towards either supporting the staff report altogether or maybe considering some kind of delay. I'm not ready to make a motion yet, I'd like to hear what the other commissioners have to say.

Chair Larsen: Alright, thank you. Anyone else?

Haecker: I think it is a kind of a tough decision and I agree with the other commissioners. Tough decision, you know, I've been rereading what guides us is the HPC and our regulations and sort of determining whether or not we should support the delay. And is it, I mean it's not

quite a pyramid that's for sure but it does exemplify in my mind some broad patterns. Honestly some energy efficient, inefficient, broad patterns that were very prevalent in the mid-century which frankly shouldn't be exemplified. But it's a pattern that's for sure. But I also sympathize with the school and I can understand that they have a lot of different facilities and costs and they are a big institution that needs to make broad decisions that affect micro-level detail stuff. And then the economic value or usefulness of the, I mean it certainly seems like the deferred maintenance and issues like that and the vandalism, and every day it doesn't get repurposed the more expensive it is going to get. And finding a Rainbow to buy it, they're not going to want the structure the way it is, they are going to want to tear it down as well. Those are just random thoughts, but distilling that down does it, from a historic viewpoint, does it have some semblance. And again, the report was excellent from the staff and I guess I leaning toward it does have enough significance at least in looking back at some of the things that we've made decisions on at least in the two years that I've been a commissioner. It does sort of rise to that level in my mind that we would at least follow the staff report and direct a criterion study. That's not a motion but more just a thought.

Chair Larsen: Commissioner Mack.

R. Mack: If we take our charge seriously in following our own rules and regulations as far as identification and protection of historic resources, I think we need to follow the staff recommendation. I find it personally interesting to sort of trace some of the things that have happened within the design of schools. The ones that I went to had great big windows, then they went to pods, then they went to schools with no windows, and now they are starting to put windows back into schools. I think this building represents a relatively brief but significant period in educational philosophy and it is the only one that I know of in the entire region that still maintains this kind of a design. So I would urge us to adopt the staff finding, I guess I will make a motion that we adopt staff findings and move to deny the demolition permit and ask for a designation study.

Chair Larsen: Ok, so there is a motion on the floor. Is there a second?

Lindberg: Second.

Chair Larsen: Ok, thank you. Alright, discussion on the motion. I do have a question based on your comment and I think that the question I have is if you look at education patterns and you can say there is a shifting, a constant shift, of education methods, and so at that point, is it the city's responsibility, the citizens, to lock into place every one of those methods of the education system. Because now, of course, you are going to force current education methods into the infrastructure of the previous education method.

R. Mack: I was not saying that it had to remain a school. I said that I think that it needs to be recognized as an important piece of what was a national trend and of which there are relatively few examples left.

Chair Larsen: Within our city.

R. Mack: Within our city it is the only one I know of. And I don't know of any others in the Twin Cities ... there may be but I'm not familiar with them. And I think that some clever architect and some clever developer, and there are one of each down there, could surely come up with reasonable alternatives that can work within the energy and the efficiencies to come up with an appropriate alternative use.

Chair Larsen: Alright, Commission Faucher.

Faucher: I just had a question and I'm not sure if it is for staff or for you as Chair, if we are recommending that we deny the demolition permit and that a study be prepared, and a study already has been prepared, how do we go forward from there? We just commission another study, or staff looks into it?

Chair Larsen: You are referring to the study that was prepared on behalf of the applicant?

Faucher: Yes.

Chair Larsen: That's a good question ... staff?

Faucher: I guess it is a staff question.

Hanauer: Chair Larsen and Commissioner Faucher, that has to be determined by the planning director. The staff recommendation is to direct someone be it a consultant or staff to prepare a designation study. Although it is recognized that Minneapolis Public Schools has already wrote a report on the school's eligibility.

Chair Larsen: They did some research.

Hanauer: They did research.

Chair Larsen: There is a distinction there, the distinction is they have done some research to support their application and we can choose to look at that and go against their research. But therein lies the challenge, if we believe it then we may not find, and if you believe it doesn't rise to the level, as they do, then it becomes the possibility that, nor does the recommendation from staff in the report prepared by the staff. Because that is the potential outcome. That the report puts it under interim protection, they did the report, the report comes back and says there is not enough. So the recommendation is to not designate, that is always an option. Commissioner Lindberg, do you have a comment?

Lindberg: I did before, but to follow Bob Mack is near impossible so ... but I agree with the commission in that this is a challenging decision when you look at the cost of maintenance, when you look at the interior of the building. But then that may also be a blessing for any building moving in. You also look at the social significance and how it has been used in the neighborhood, built in the neighborhood. You look at the interesting pieces that came from

Aaron's report talking everything from segregation busing just to the development patterns in the neighborhood. So it is the other piece that I look at is every building can be very expensive to maintain and great numbers can be shown. And every building can be very cheap to maintain, it just depends on what is going to be done. I've been involved in some reuse studies that have been very helpful and where you've actually had a chance when a building has been near demolition to take the community together and figure out how it can be used. And maybe that has happened before, maybe with a new set of members involving both old and new figuring out funding ... if this school really is thinking about a land swap maybe there is a possibility of, and again I'm not the business analyst here, but maybe moving that building over to a non-profit and ridding the school of their financial upkeep and keeping assets in the community as asked. But, so I am going to agree with the motion that I seconded, that we adopt staff findings and deny the demolition.

Chair Larsen: Ok, Commissioner Tableporter.

Tableporter: I just want to support the idea that there is a further study done. If you look at the report that was done by the Minneapolis Public School, the report there, and the report that was done by CPED, they looked at very similar things and came to very different conclusions. So that strikes me as requiring some additional work to actually go into some more of the details and come to a firmer sense of how historic the building is. I don't know how many post war cluster plan schools there were across the US, for instance that strikes me as something that would be very interesting to know. Not just in Minneapolis. But I think we sometimes go beyond ourselves in talking about what could be done with the property but it strikes me that if people out there are very concerned about this and if we are going to be doing an additional study, it might be a good time to look at alternative uses and figure out currently, today, what is possible, because it strikes me that some of the ones that were looked at previously are rather dated. Things have changed and there might be new charter schools, etc. These are kind of just not formal recommendations certainly, they are outstepping our bounds, but they might be something interesting for those who are passionate about the building to think about.

Chair Larsen: Commissioner Hunter Weir?

Hunter Weir: Mine was just a clarification. I don't believe the motion explicitly stated to place the property under interim protection. Do we need to do that?

Chair Larsen: That would definitely be part, maybe if Commissioner Mack would like to restate the motion as stated, as indicated in the staff report, that might help to follow along.

R. Mack: Do you have the official wording?

Chair Larsen: On page 10.

R. Mack: I move that we adopt staff findings and deny the demolition of Shingle Creek Elementary School, establish interim protection, and direct the planning director to prepare or cause to be prepared a designation study.

Chair Larsen: Ok, so that is a clarification that is acceptable to the seconder?

Lindberg: Acceptable to the seconder.

Chair Larsen: Ok, thank you. Alright, just a couple other thoughts from my perspective. One of the things as you look at staff's effort to look at the reports, the information provided by the applicant, like many I'm not overly moved by cost of repair even four million or five million seems pretty cheap to me. People will spend a couple million on their house to remodel it so five million on a school doesn't seem so bad. And certainly the condition rids the property of asbestos, you are going to have reuse and so to put it back with new materials, anyone is going to want to do that. So the condition of the property doesn't bother me so much. So you look at the extend of what the staff is looking, kind of looked at in terms of the criterion, one of my overall concerns has always been as we look to master builders, master architects, there is sort of a tendency to say, oh look, this took place awhile back, I haven't heard of that architect in awhile but he designed a few buildings, he must be a master builder. I'm not sure whether we will say that Commissioner Haecker, Commissioner Faucher, or Commissioner Mack are master architects, that is for history to decide. But I think there is sort of a reach a little bit on the part of saying that gee they designed three schools, they must be a master builder. So maybe we will find out a little bit more I think that as we look at this and others it may be something we want to keep in mind. I think what really does become difficult is what is neighborhood identity and how does a school affect neighborhood identity. And I think that can't be minimized, but at the same time is there a need or requirement that once a school is built that it can never be removed. I think that is in someways almost what you are asking for. You are saying hey, they built the school, people went here, people created an identity around this school, and can there never be change to change that, does that school always have to remain? Because you can make that argument in any neighborhood, in any city or any portion of the city, and so how do we work with the changing demographics, realities, economic interests, and so to say gee this is important - of course it is important. Everyone has memories, but at the same time, what makes it rise above. Above just the average. Everyone is going to have those memories so what makes this a step above. And I think that is what has to be looked at. You are going to have protests at every school. There are lots of things that happen at schools, so this is to say that we are preserving it on the, because it is part of the social history of the city ... it has got to be a little more than that to me. Something else. And so I will support the motion but I think that we need to look carefully at what really makes it step forward.

Haecker: I actually do think you are preaching to the choir, I agree with what you are saying. I don't think that every little thing ... someone designs a new door knob and all of a sudden it is a historic thing. I'm really acting just under our regulations and that the commission delay a final decision 180 days to allow parties interested in preserving this historic resource have a reasonable opportunity to act to protect.

Chair Larsen: That's not what this is.

Haecker: That's not what ... we're denying the demolition permit.

Chair Larsen: No, we're denying the demolition permit, putting it under interim protection, and this would be as an individual landmark. Individual landmark within the city of Minneapolis.

Haecker: Well right, but part of our criterion for denying a demolition permit, from what I understand.

Chair Larsen: That's an option, a demolition delay. An option is to say we will approve the demolition but give 180 days. But here we are saying we think it is, we think there is enough information to put it as an individual landmark.

Haecker: How long is the historic criteria ...

Chair Larsen: How long is that process?

Haecker: Yeah.

Chair Larsen: One year with an extension for another six months if it can't be completed, if the staff doesn't have the time to complete it, which is quite a possibility given our workload. So now you are talking a year and a half before it could be decided whether or not it is approved or not. Whether we would vote to approve it as an individual landmark status.

Haecker: Right, based on another report.

Chair Larsen: Based on another report, that is correct. So if you thought that it should be demolished, if you can't find, you want to see if there is something that could be done within 180 days, but if you can't, then it can be demolished. Then that's a different motion.

Haecker: That's a different motion. Ok.

Chair Larsen: Alright, other comments, questions? Seeing none, we'll call the roll.

Ayes: Tableporter, R. Mack, Lindberg, Hunter Weir, Faucher, Larsen

Nays: Kelley, Haecker Absent: Lackovic, L. Mack

Motion Carried