

City of Kalamazoo
PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes
June 2, 2016
DRAFT

Second Floor, City Hall
City Commission Chambers
241W. South Street, Kalamazoo, MI 49007

Members Present: Rachel Hughes-Nilsson, Chair; Charley Coss, Vice-Chair; Geoffrey Cripe, Tracy Hall, Derek Wissner

Members Excused: Joshua Cook, Emily Greenman Wright

City Staff: Rebekah Kik, City Planner; Wendee Mayes, Recording Secretary

Guests: None

A. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Hughes-Nilsson called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL

Planner Kik proceeded with roll call and determined that the aforementioned members were present.

C. ADOPTION OF FORMAL AGENDA

Planner Kik requested that PC #2016.09 a request from PROPS 19, LLC for Plazacorp for a street vacation be removed from the agenda.

Commissioner Coss supported by Commissioner Cripe, moved approval of the June 2, 2016 Planning Commission agenda as amended. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Hall, supported by Commissioner Wissner, moved approval of the April 12, 2016 Planning Commission minutes as presented. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

E. COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

F. PUBLIC HEARINGS

P.C. #2016.07: Request from the Lakeside Academy for a special use permit to allow a new multi-purpose building to be constructed on the school property at 3921 Oakland Drive. [Recommendation: motion to approve the special use permit request with one condition.]

Commissioner Hughes-Nilsson will be abstaining because of a professional conflict. Planner Kik presented a staff report. The applicant is requesting a special use permit to allow a new multi-purpose building to be constructed on the school property. Lakeside Academy is currently a 79-bed

facility that serves boys and girls ages 12 to 18 who are in need of a temporary, out-of-home environment. The average stay is between 6 and 15 months during which time they receive educational and behavioral assistance from trained teachers/counselors. The maximum student capacity for the school is 120. Two years ago the school erected a temporary structure on the west side of the campus area for practices of the school's sports teams. Lakeside is now proposing to construct a permanent building on the west side of the campus for use as a gymnasium, classrooms, and various assembly events. This new building is intended to replace the temporary facility. The new building will only be used for school events and will not be used by the general public or other outside groups. This building will be located directly west of the central parking area and the land area for it is currently undeveloped. The design is for a 12,760-squarefoot, one story building. Exterior lighting will be wall mounted and shielded to minimize glare. Landscaping will be added to the east side of the building. The exterior will resemble that of the administration building. The layout will include a gymnasium, three classrooms, a multi-purpose room, locker rooms, offices, and storage rooms. A preliminary site plan has been submitted to the Site Plan Review Committee, which was reviewed and returned to the applicant with a list of minor changes. City staff is currently waiting for a revised site plan to be submitted.

Don Nitz, CEO of the Lakeside Academy, spoke as representative for the application. Mr. Nitz stated that Lakeside Academy has turned some corners over the last 10 years. Currently, they are operating with approximately 120 – 122 students on their campus daily. The academy has only one small gymnasium, which was built for the elementary children back in the mid-1960s and does not suit teenagers. This building would enhance the social and personal wellness for the students.

Commissioner Hall, supported by Commissioner Wissner, moved to approve P.C. #2016.07: Request from the Lakeside Academy for a special use permit to allow a new multi-purpose building to be constructed on the school property at 3921 Oakland Drive with one condition pertaining to the need for a final site plan for the facility. With a roll call vote, the motion carried. Commissioner Hughes-Nilsson abstained.

P.C. #2016.08: Request from Kalamazoo College to rezone 106 Thompson Street from Zone RS-5 (Residential, Single-Dwelling District) to Zone IC (Institutional, Campus District). [Recommendation: motion to recommend to the City Commission to approve the rezoning.]

Planner Kik presented a staff report. This application is a request to rezone the parcel at 106 Thompson Street from Zone RS-5 (Residential, Single-Dwelling District) to Zone IC (Institutional, Campus District). The parcel contains a two-story house with an attached garage and was most recently used as a bed and breakfast facility. The parcel is located in the West Main Hill Neighborhood. Kalamazoo College purchased the parcel last year and would like to use it as a new Welcome Center for the school as well as the admissions department. The college plans on a few changes to the building and site; 1) change the current attached garage into a reception area, 2) improve egress from the basement via a small addition to the sun porch, 3) repave the driveway to provide better barrier-free access, and 4) the current parking area north of the building will be removed and replaced with a landscaped greenspace. This building is on the historic registry. The school has agreed to work with the city's Historic Preservation Coordinator on any exterior improvement. A new parking lot is being created on the vacant lot to the south of the subject parcel. The Campus Master Plan is being amended to add the subject parcel and to identify the new Welcome Center use in the building. City staff has made the following findings in regards to this request: 1) the proposed rezoning of the subject parcel is needed to allow Kalamazoo College to have its Welcome Center in the building, 2) it will place the subject parcel in the same zone as all the other property on the Kalamazoo College campus, 3) the proposed changes to the building will be

in compliance with the requirements of the historic designation, and 4) the area neighborhood associations have provided support for the request.

Greg Diment and Paul Manstrom represented Kalamazoo College. Mr. Diment stated that the modifications to the 2012 Campus Master Plan were approved. Mr. Manstrom added that the plan is to put 18 offices into the building with Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. office hours. He added that they want to work with the Historic Preservation Coordinator on the interior renovations as well as the exterior to preserve the building. Commissioner Cripe asked if the Welcome Center will be for potential students and others to get information on the college. Mr. Diment answered yes; the Welcome Center will be a place for the admissions staff and a reception place for perspective students. Commissioner Hall inquired as to if the new parking lot would be for students and faculty as well as the Welcome Center. Mr. Manstrom answered that the parking lot would be for the Welcome Center visitors and staff only. Commissioner Coss expressed concern with traffic in that area, especially along West Main Street, and asked if there would be some type of barrier along the roadside. Mr. Manstrom followed up that the only parking on this parcel would be barrier free parking; all other parking would be in the parcel to the south.

Four neighborhood residents; Robert Milne, Elizabeth Fitzgerald, Claire Milne and Matthew St. Peter spoke as to the feasibility of the building changes and if Kalamazoo College had the means to make the necessary changes. The residents had heard that because the building has a lot of concrete, the renovations would be difficult and that the college does not have the means to do the work. With the rezoning in place, they would then be free to make the building into something other than the Welcome Center. They would like to know the project can be funded for renovations before the rezoning takes effect.

Commissioner Coss asked staff if city engineers had reviewed these renovations. Planner Kik explained that normally rezoning comes before in-depth studies of the renovations occurs. Commissioner Coss then asked about the concerns with something else being done with the building such as a coffee shop. Planner Kik responded that the current zoning would allow a tea or coffee shop. The IC zoning holds many different classifications and after the rezoning other uses would be allowed. What the IC zoning would do is allow the college to have mixed uses that a campus would need. Mr. Diment spoke as to the question of the college having the means for the renovation. He stated that present staff has identified funding for this and it will be recommended to the Kalamazoo College board next Sunday. The costs have been identified and the college would like to start the renovations this summer. Mr. Manstrom added that the schematic design is being worked on already. None of the issues presented are insurmountable. Most structural issues are not serious and are being addressed. The biggest issue of the moment is getting air conditioning into the building. Commissioner Coss inquired as to a timeline for the renovations. Mr. Manstrom replied that the college intends to occupy the building a year from now. Commissioner Coss asked if the motion could be contingent on the college having the funds. Commissioner Hughes-Nilsson answered that it cannot be a condition of the rezoning. Planner Kik added that this rezoning is a recommendation to City Commission and that there will be two more opportunities for comment with the City Commission.

Commissioner Cripe, supported by Commissioner Hall, moved to approve P.C. #2016.08: Request from Kalamazoo College to rezone 106 Thompson Street from Zone RS-5 (Residential, Single-Dwelling District) to Zone IC (Institutional, Campus District). Motion to recommend to the City Commission to approve the rezoning. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

G. CITIZENS' COMMENTS (Regarding non-agenda items)

Shannon Pfau asked about PC #2016.09 being removed from the agenda and if it would be back on in the future. Planner Kik answered that it is expected to be rescheduled. , Currently the applicant is discussing other options with the business to the north of them. If and when the application is put back onto the agenda, a new public hearing notice will be sent out.

H. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

I. NEW BUSINESS

Recommendations from the Nominating Sub-Committee for the two open commissioner seats.

Commissioner Coss spoke for the Nominating Sub-Committee on the applications. There were two applicants who had shown interest in filling the two openings on the Planning Commission; Gregory Milliken and Matt Lager. Both applicants were found to be qualified for serving as Planning Commissioners. . Commissioner Coss recommended that Mr. Milliken fill the position of Commissioner White who left with a partial term.

Mr. Milliken addressed the Commission. He has lived in Kalamazoo for 14 years. He has 10 years of experience as a planning consultant and 3 years as planning director for Oshtemo Township. He currently works for Bronson Hospital and is now free to work on the Planning Commission. He expressed his excitement for this chance to become a Planning Commissioner.

Commissioner Cripe stated that it was a privilege to be on the nominating committee. He is excited about both candidates and appreciated the depth of experience that they will both bring to the commission. Also, it will be good to have someone (Mr. Milliken) who can bring a planning background to help with some of the more in-depth problems that are brought before the commission. Commissioner Coss added that he will also be helpful when it comes to the 5-Year plan.

Commissioner Coss, supported by Commissioner Wissner, moved to nominate to the Planning Commission Mr. Gregory Milliken to fill the seat vacated by Commissioner White. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Coss, supported by Commissioner Cripe, moved to nominate to the Planning Commission Mr. Matt Lager to fill the seat vacated by Commissioner McBain. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

J. CITIZENS' COMMENTS

None

K. CITY PLANNER'S REPORT

Planner Kik reported on site plan projects for 2016.

Highlights of some projects:

- Chemical Bank has submitted plans for a building at 1910 Parkview Ave.
- Rx Optical has submitted plans for a new office building at 1825 S Park St.

Planner Kik also presented an update on Imagine Kalamazoo 2025. The first phase was a huge success. Initially it was believed that maybe up to 250 people would participate. By the end of phase one, participation included approximately 1,200 people. Two sets of consultants have been hired to go through all the data and surveys and report on the findings. Also, two planning interns are starting work as well to help with the project. June 22nd will be the kickoff date for phase two. There is a new Imagine Kalamazoo website coming soon. The city is still doing public outreach; attending events at the art and music hops, working with the neighborhoods, attending Kalamazoo Pride on June 10th, Lunchtime Live at Bronson Park, as well as other venues and events. Going to events that people are already attending and reaching out to the public has been very successful.

Commissioner Wissner asked how Planner Kik is taking the post-it notes that are being filled out and making them into something meaningful. Planner Kik responded that she is using data entry for the notes. Everything is being put into spreadsheets with topics and categories. The consultant is disseminating the data, cross-referencing words that are being used consistently, and analyzing what people are saying and translating it into principles. According to the data, the three main topics that people are talking about are equity, connectivity and sustainability. Commissioner Coss asked if it was a mixed method analysis. Planner Kik responded that is what it is. Planner Kik stated that getting everyone's post-it notes and putting them through an unobjective third party review is the best way to take every person's words seriously.

L. MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS BY PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

None

M. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m.