

## **PLANNING COMMISSION**

**Minutes**  
**March 1, 2007**  
***DRAFT***

The City of Kalamazoo Planning Commission meeting was called to order by Commissioner Kuseske at 7:00 p.m. at the Edison Neighborhood Association offices at 816 Washington Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49007. Approximately 6 additional people were in attendance.

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Terry Kuseske, Chair; Frank Cody, Vice Chair; Sonja Dean; Casey Fawley; James Kneen; Merilee Mishall; Linda Wienir

### **MEMBERS EXCUSED**

Kelly DeRango

### **MEMBERS ABSENT**

Bertha Stewart

### **GUESTS**

Barb Miller, City Commission Liaison  
Tammy Barnard, Executive Director, Edison Neighborhood Association  
David Kinsey, Board President, Edison Neighborhood Association  
Mattie Jordan-Woods, Executive Director, Northside Association for Community Development

### **CITY STAFF**

Keith Hernandez, Deputy Director/City Planner, Rob Bauckham, Assistant City Planner; John Kneas, Assistant City Attorney; Amy Thomas, Recording Secretary

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Commissioner Kuseske thanked the Edison Neighborhood Association for hosting the Planning Commission meeting.

### **ROLL CALL**

Planner Hernandez completed roll call and determined that the aforementioned members were present.

### **APPROVAL OF ABSENCES**

Commissioner DeRango contacted city staff to advise that he would not be able to attend the March 1, 2007 Planning Commission meeting.

**Commissioner Cody, supported by Commissioner Dean, moved approval of Commissioner DeRango's excused absence from the March 1, 2007 Planning Commission meeting. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

(7:05 p.m. – Commissioner Mishall arrived.)

(7:07 p.m. – Commissioner Kneen arrived.)

### **AGENDA (March 1, 2007)**

There were no changes to the agenda.

**Commissioner Wienir, supported by Commissioner Cody, moved approval of the March 1, 2007 Planning Commission agenda. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

### **MINUTES (February 1, 2007)**

There were no changes to the minutes.

**Commissioner Mishall, supported by Commissioner Dean, moved approval of the February 1, 2007 Planning Commission minutes. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

### **COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Planner Hernandez referred to a letter that was received from Jon Hornbeck at the Regency Square Apartments concerning the public hearing on tonight's agenda.

### **PUBLIC HEARING**

**P.C. #2007.03: Consideration of a request from Whites Road and Westnedge, LLC to rezone 529 and 535 Whites Road., and the west portion of 3124 S. Westnedge Avenue from Zone RM-15 (Residential, Multi-Dwelling District) to Zone CC (Commercial, Community District).**

Planner Bauckham provided the staff report, which is incorporated in these minutes by reference hereto. This rezoning request involves two parcels on Whites Road west of the Damon's Restaurant. Each of the parcels contains a single-family home. The applicant

is the owner of Damon's and he is seeking to purchase these two properties and have them rezoned for commercial use. The applicant has received written approval from the owners of the two parcels with regard to the rezoning. The applicant would like to combine the Damon's property with the two parcels on White's Road and then redevelop the entire site. The proposed redevelopment will involve demolition or relocation of the two houses on the White's Road parcels. The Damon's building will be demolished and a new building will be constructed on the western portion of the site. Two smaller buildings will also be constructed on the east side of the site. The applicant has submitted a concept plan, but city staff has not received the final site plan at this time. If the rezoning is approved, the applicant will have to submit a site plan to city staff for approval before they begin construction. The future land use map shows the Damon's parcel and the two subject parcels on Whites Road in the general commercial land use category. There is a Walgreen's Pharmacy to the north (across White's Rd.) of the subject properties; there is an office building to the south; commercial use to the east (across Westnedge); and the Regency Square apartments are to the west of the subject properties. City staff is recommending approval of the rezoning to the City Commission. City staff is requesting that the applicants make an effort to relocate the houses to another area.

Commissioner Wienir mentioned that the Planning Commission received a letter from Jon Hornbeck, Manager for Regency Square Apartments regarding a privacy fence on the eastern property line of the apartment complex. She requested more details on that issue. Planner Bauckham pointed out the location of the fence on the map. The fence/screening referred to by Mr. Hornbeck would be on the western border of the Damon's property.

Commissioner Kneen inquired as to how many parking spaces would be required for this project. Planner Bauckham stated that for this type of commercial retail use the ordinance requires 1 parking space for every 305 square feet of the gross floor area of the building. For an office use the requirement would be 1 parking space for every 330 square feet. There is already adequate on site parking for the proposed project.

Commissioner Kneen inquired as to how the applicant would know if the houses need to be removed when there is no specific plan at this point. Planner Bauckham advised that if the size of the property is reduced, the applicant would have to decrease the number and/or size of the buildings.

Commissioner Mishall inquired about the requirements for green space and trees. Planner Bauckham stated that there is requirement for 20% green space. The applicant would have to include that during site plan review.

Mark Chilcott, from Plaza Corp., the developer for this project, advised that he is representing Steve Montanye, the owner of the Damon's Restaurant. The feasibility analysis indicates a need for additional commercial use opportunities on S. Westnedge Avenue. The best utilization of the site is to square it off by adding the two parcels to

create better flow and utilization of the land. The owner of Damons doesn't want to abandon the building, but 11,000 square feet is too large for the current use; Damon's market had shrunk. The applicants will be returning to city staff with a site plan, and they hope to start construction in late summer or early fall. It is anticipated that there will be retail uses in the building, possibly including a sub shop and financial institution. The strip mall on the back of the property will include a restaurant and hard goods. Damon's will relocate in the larger building.

Commissioner Mishall mentioned that the subject property is located at a busy intersection. She inquired as to how the applicants intend to deal with the increased traffic. Mr. Chilcott commented that he was not certain there would be an increase in traffic. Looking at the property from an engineering standpoint, there are two existing exits and there has been discussion about combining those exits and having full turning movement. There has also been discussion of consolidating the White's Road access.

Commissioner Mishall commented that there are already numerous strip malls; she inquired as to how this one would be different. Mr. Chilcott stated that this intersection has a high traffic count and nearby residential developments are underserved by good retail businesses. This will be a high quality retail center with attractive landscaping. Retailers are expressing interested in locating on that corner.

### **Public Hearing**

No one spoke at the public hearing.

**Commissioner Cody, supported by Commissioner Fawley, moved to close the public hearing on P. C. #2007.03. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**Commissioner Cody, supported by Commissioner Fawley, moved to recommend to the City Commission to approve P. C. #2007.03, consideration of a request from Whites Road and Westnedge, LLC to rezone 529 and 535 Whites Road, and the west portion of 3124 S. Westnedge Avenue from Zone RM-15 (Residential, Multi-dwelling District) to zone CC (Commercial, Community District). With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

### **CITIZENS' COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

None

### **OLD BUSINESS**

None

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **1. Update on Edison neighborhood activities.**

Planner Hernandez advised that there have been staffing issues at DKI (Downtown Kalamazoo, Inc.). As a result of those issues, work on the Edison Main Street program has not progressed at the intended pace. The Community Planning and Development Department is trying to provide resources for that program. A lot of work has been done along Portage Rd. and the intention is to continue with those improvements.

City staff has been working with the owners of the Market Street Plat. The current owner is a California-based company, and the goal is to arrange for the sale of the plat to someone who can develop it.

The Planning Commission decided against rezoning the proposed Bryant Street housing project. The developer wants to pursue this project and secure the additional financing he needs to build on that property. He is trying to build within the parameters of the existing zoning.

Commissioner Kuseske stated that the Edison Neighborhood has a new Hispanic center at the St. Joseph's Catholic Church. They now have more room and, hopefully, they will be able to expand their services in Edison.

### **2. Recommendation from the Nominating Sub-Committee.**

Commissioner Fawley advised that the Nominating Sub-Committee interviewed two candidates for the Planning Commission. The sub-committee would like to nominate Mr. Reed Youngs to fill the upcoming vacant seat on the Planning Commission. Mr. Youngs has worked in many townships surrounding Kalamazoo. He is a resident of the Winchell neighborhood.

Planner Bauckham added that both candidates had good qualifications and it was a difficult decision for the committee. The other candidate indicated that he would be interested in filling the next available position on the Planning Commission. Commissioner DeRango's term expires on March 31<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Youngs would be eligible to serve on the Planning Commission as of the April 5<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission meeting.

**Commissioner Fawley, supported by Commissioner Cody, moved to recommend to the City Commission the nomination of Reed Youngs to the Planning Commission. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

## **CITIZENS' COMMENTS**

None

### **CITY PLANNER'S REPORT**

Planner Hernandez suggested moving the Planning Commission Retreat to early June. He inquired as to the topics commissioners would like to discuss at the retreat.

Commissioner Cody advised that he had no conflict with having the retreat in June or April. He inquired as to when revisions would be made to the strategic plan.

Planner Hernandez advised that city staff is working on a strategy for the Comprehensive Plan update for the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of this year. Commissioner Cody mentioned that the current members of the Planning Commission have not been through this before, but city staff is familiar with the process. Commissioner Cody inquired if city staff wanted input from the Planning Commission. He suggested that this could be a subject for the retreat. Commissioner Cody inquired as to how much input the Planning Commission has had in the past. Planner Hernandez stated that he was uncertain as to the past level of involvement by the Planning Commission with regard to the Comprehensive Plan.

Planner Bauckham advised that the subcommittee of the Planning Commission works closely with city staff on the strategic plan. The last time it was updated was in 1998. There were many public meetings in neighborhoods specific to the plan. A consultant was also hired to help with the process. A committee of the Planning Commission will be appointed to work on the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Kuseske mentioned that the Planning Commission held a work session last year, which proved to be a good opportunity to have discussions. He suggested that the work session and the retreat could be held at the same time.

Commissioner Fawley suggested having a Planning Commission orientation session for the benefit of the new commissioners. It is helpful to have city staff go through the "dream to reality" scenario. It would also be helpful to have city staff go through the steps that applicants are required to take during the planning process. Commissioner Fawley suggested a mock presentation to add efficiency to the process. The presentation could provide examples of problems that have arisen. He also suggested having a refresher course at the retreat regarding basic duties of the Planning Commission.

Planner Hernandez advised that he attended a meeting with SARA (Stuart Area Restoration Association) to follow up regarding the proposed overlay. He clarified some issues with the residents and presented possible solutions. The proposed solutions would allow property owners to transition between single-family and duplex uses for their homes, but the residents were still anxious. On May 15, 2007, Leslie Decker will be hosting a meeting at the Stuart Avenue School to further discuss the concerns of the Stuart neighborhood residents. Planner Hernandez stated that he would not have anything significant to report before that meeting.

Commissioner Kuseske stated that he appreciated the bus tour at the last retreat. It was a good opportunity to become familiar with the neighborhoods. Commissioner Cody added that he thought it might not be appropriate to have a bus tour every year at the retreat. He indicated that it took time away from other issues that were more important. He suggested having a bus tour every other year. Commissioner Kuseske suggested having the retreat in June and a work session in August to work on other things. The work session provided a good opportunity to talk about issues that the Planning Commission was facing at the time.

Commissioner Wienir suggested that it might be beneficial to have David Thomas talk with the Planning Commission about the different neighborhoods in the City of Kalamazoo. It might be helpful to hear from a professional who know what's going on in the neighborhoods.

Planner Bauckham stated that the next Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for April 5<sup>th</sup>, which coincides with spring break for some schools. He inquired if any of the commissioners had a conflict with that date. After a brief discussion it was determined that April 11<sup>th</sup> would be a possible alternate date for the next Planning Commission meeting. A potential topic for the April meeting will be the wellhead protection ordinance overlay.

Commissioner Fawley thanked the Edison Neighborhood Association for hosting the March Planning Commission meeting.

Commissioner Kuseske mentioned the large pile of dirt at the Tekna facility in the BTR park. He inquired as to what was happening at that location. Planner Bauckham stated that a building addition was shown in the original site plan and that was approved. They would have to obtain permits for the building addition. Planner Bauckham advised that he would follow up on this information. Commissioner Kuseske added that three Oak trees have been planted at the front of that site.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The March 1, 2007 Planning Commission meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Keith Hernandez, AICP  
Deputy Director/City Planner  
Community Planning and Development