

## **PLANNING COMMISSION**

Minutes  
August 2, 2007

The City of Kalamazoo Planning Commission meeting was called to order by Commissioner Kuseske at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room of City Hall, 241 W. South Street, Kalamazoo, MI 49007.

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Terry Kuseske, Chair; Sonja Dean; Merilee Mishall; Linda Wienir; Reed Youngs

### **MEMBERS EXCUSED**

Frank Cody, Vice Chair; Casey Fawley; Bertha Stewart; James Kneen

### **CITY STAFF**

Robert Bauckham, Assistant City Planner; Amy Thomas, Recording Secretary

### **GUESTS**

Barb Miller, City Commissioner; Davis Nesius, Environmental Concerns Committee; Ann Terry, ISAAC.

### **AGENDA (August 2, 2007)**

There were no changes to the agenda.

**Commissioner Youngs, supported by Commissioner Dean, moved approval of the August 2, 2007 Planning Commission agenda. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

### **MINUTES (July 10, 2007)**

Commissioner Wienir requested the following changes to the July 10, 2007 Minutes: Page 9, paragraph 6, "support" not "supported", add "As President of the WEB Neighborhood association," "she" (omit "stated that she") spoke to the county....., "encouraged" not "encourage."

**Commissioner Mishall, supported by Commissioner Wienir, moved approval of the July 10, 2007 minutes as amended. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

### **COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None

### **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

None

### **CITIZEN'S COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

David Nesius, Environmental Concerns Committee and Ann Terry, ISAAC (Interfaith Strategy for Action and Advocacy in the Community) task force introduced themselves.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

None

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **General discussion and continuation of retreat topics**

Commissioner Kuseske stated that he met with Keith Hernandez and Jeff Chamberlain regarding the Comprehensive Plan. They are addressing the Allied Paper site since that may affect when changes can be made to the Comprehensive Plan. The last Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1998. Ideally, the Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed every five years. The cost for the last Plan update was \$450,000. However, that was a major update which required a lot of work since the plan had not been updated in many years. Consultants were hired to help with the last update and Planning Commissioners attended many neighborhood meetings in the City of Kalamazoo and many other meetings to determine priorities for the city.

The budget for the new Plan update is \$150,000. There is a large file of community data collected from the last rewrite and much of the data needed for the new update can be obtained online. Accordingly, there should be less time involved in collecting data. There has been discussion about approaching the rewrite by reviewing one section of the Plan at a time. This approach may be helpful since there are a limited number of city staff people to work on the plan.

Commissioner Kuseke inquired if the Planning Commissioners would like to be involved with the Comprehensive Plan rewrite. The Planning Commission did a lot of work on the last rewrite. Commissioner Kuseske urged the Planning Commissioners to think about questions they would like to ask pertaining to the Plan. He suggested the following topics for further discussion: What has changed since the last revision was made?: economic issues, the Kalamazoo Promise, environmental issues, housing issues. How do these issues play into the Comprehensive Plan?

Commissioner Youngs inquired as to when work would begin on the rewrite. Planner Bauckham advised that city staff is hoping to start work on the plan before the end of 2007. It is up to the Planning Commission, city staff and administration as to how and when the rewrite is started. In 1998 there were hundreds of hours of neighborhood meetings held in conjunction with the rewrite. The current budget is less than half what it was in 1998, but it would still be possible to conduct some meetings pertaining to the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Bauckham stated that the first Plan was written in the 1970's and the current plan was put into effect about 25 years after that. The state wants the Plan to be updated every 5 years. The city has the option of totally rewriting the Plan, re-endorsing it as is, or just making updates.

(7:15 – Commissioner Mishall arrived.)

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Commissioner Youngs suggested dividing the nine members of the Planning Commission into three groups of three. Some of the commissioners have strong connections to their neighborhood organizations. There are 22 neighborhood organizations. Commissioner Youngs estimated that it would probably take at least five months to complete the neighborhood meetings. He pointed out that ten years ago there were no programs regarding brownfield redevelopments, the trailway, the Kalamazoo Promise, the Allied Paper site landfill, wellhead protection and the riverfront overlay. These could all be possible subjects for discussion during the rewrite.

Commissioner Kuseske suggested a review of the Plan introduction as well. Also, Chapter 3 (Goals & Objectives) is an important category, and he suggested paying particular attention to that chapter. Commissioner Kuseske commented that the BTR park and Davis Creek Business Park are new since the last rewrite. The following topics might also be considered when revising the Plan: transportation and infrastructure, transformation of the U.S. 131 business loop into a full interchange, widening of I-94, development and traffic, identifying the next area of growth in the city, and studying the need for a gateway in the vicinity of Sprinkle Road in the Milwood Neighborhood.

Commissioner Youngs mentioned the new gateway project at the I-94 business loop in Kalamazoo Township. Planner Bauckham advised that the City of Kalamazoo has also been involved with that project. A plan for the gateway has been finalized and funds are being sought to complete that project.

Commissioner Kuseske advised that he and Commissioners Stewart and Wienir were on the subcommittee that reviewed the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) two years ago. There had been some question in the past as to the degree of involvement the Planning Commission should have regarding the CIP. Concern was expressed that the Planning Commission should be more involved in the CIP process since they are expected to endorse the plan and then recommend to the City Commission that it be approved. Commissioner Kuseske stated that he met with city department heads on a regular basis last year to discuss the CIP. City staff puts together a list of projects and points are allotted to each project in order to help determine where funds are most needed.

Commissioner Kuseske encouraged the members of the Planning Commission to attend the CIP meetings, which will begin on Monday, August 6<sup>th</sup> in the Community Room at City Hall.

Commissioner Kuseske mentioned that as of July 5<sup>th</sup>, Keith Hernandez has been with the City of Kalamazoo for two years. He commented that Planner Hernandez has been an asset to the Planning Commission. Commissioner Wienir concurred and praised Planner Hernandez for his work.

Commissioner Wienir advised that she attended a meeting of the Kalamazoo River Clean-up Coalition. Redevelopment of the former Allied Paper site and revitalization of the surrounding area were main topics of conversation.

Commissioner Kuseske commented that another topic for consideration during the Comprehensive Plan rewrite would be the need for intergovernmental cooperation. It is important to consider how the City of Kalamazoo communicates with surrounding jurisdictions such as Portage, Texas Township, Kalamazoo Township, etc. and how that might be written into the Plan updates.

### **CITIZEN COMMENTS**

David Nesius advised that he has concerns with walkability, transportation and greenspace in Kalamazoo. He suggested working with other communities to make sure the plans are cohesive.

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

Planner Bauckham advised that city staff have processed 47 site plans so far this year. On average, city staff would have processed only 35 site plans by this time of year. There have been many permits issued in Kalamazoo in 2007 due to an increase in the number of developments; this has not been the case in outlying areas.

There are two special use permits scheduled for review at the September Planning Commission meeting. There will be a standing agenda item regarding the Comprehensive Plan rewrite, and city staff will provide more information for the Planning Commission to review. A timeline will also be provided for the projected completion of the Comprehensive Plan rewrite. Discussion followed with regard to the Comprehensive Plan and the new retail projects on Stadium Drive, including an Arby's Restaurant, Centennial Wireless, Griffin Pest Control and a Starbucks Coffee shop.

Commissioner Youngs mentioned that KATS (Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study) is working on their 20/30 plan for overlays. This pertains to what they are projecting for federal funds coming in for infrastructure projects. Planner Bauckham advised that there is a transportation component in the Comprehensive Plan. Commissioner Kuseske advised that there is no Planning Commission or planning organization at the county level. The county planner deals directly with KATS. Commissioner Youngs stated that KATS is not just working in the county. It is a separate entity that involves the MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization), which involves urban and rural areas including Richland and Vicksburg.

Commissioner Kuseske mentioned that there has been some discussion at the state level with regard to eliminating townships. There was discussion at the inter-jurisdictional governmental meeting at Western Michigan University regarding which municipalities are the most important; they are all important. Commissioner Kuseske mentioned the recent changes with the Damon's Restaurant on Westnedge and the Century Buick car dealership that has moved from Stadium Dr. to Westnedge. Issues with Drake Rd., Stonebrook and Sage Streets are also topics to consider when reviewing the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Youngs referred to transportation enhancement funds that became available a couple of years ago to be used for signalization. The funds were used on Oakland Dr. between Kilgore and Howard Streets for videocams at those intersections. That is one method of improving traffic flow.

Commissioner Wienir commented that the Plan rewrite might be a good opportunity to initiate communication between planning commissions in neighboring jurisdictions. She suggested bringing in outside consultants and grants to help with the Plan rewrite.

Ms. Terry inquired if the Planning Commission was responsible for the Comprehensive Plan rewrite. Planner Bauckham stated that the current plan was written by consultants. The current rewrite will likely be a collaboration between city staff, the Planning Commission and consultants.

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In response to a question from the Planning Commission, Planner Bauckham advised that there would be five city staff people to work on the Plan, but each person would have a limited amount of time to spend working on the Plan.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Commissioner Mishall, supported by Commissioner Wienir, moved to adjourn the August 2, 2007 Planning Commission meeting. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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