

**PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**Minutes**  
**January 3, 2008**  
***DRAFT***

The City of Kalamazoo Planning Commission meeting was called to order by Commissioner Kuseske at 7:05 p.m. in the City Commission Chambers, 241 W. South Street, Kalamazoo, MI 49007. There were approximately 20 additional people in attendance.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Terry Kuseske, Chair; Sonja Dean; Casey Fawley; Merilee Mishall; Linda Wienir

**MEMBERS EXCUSED**

Frank Cody, Vice Chair; James Kneen; Bertha Stewart

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Reed Youngs

**CITY STAFF**

Keith Hernandez, Deputy Director/City Planner; Robert Bauckham, Assistant City Planner; Amy Thomas, Recording Secretary

**ROLL CALL**

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

**AGENDA (January 3, 2008)**

There were no changes to the agenda.

**Commissioner Wienir, supported by Commissioner Dean, moved approval of the January 3, 2008 Planning Commission agenda. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**MINUTES (December 6, 2007)**

Commissioner Kuseske referred to the last page of the minutes and advised that the funding information for 2009 referred only to the I-94 business loop project, not the entire CIP.

**Commissioner Wienir, supported by Commissioner Dean, moved approval of the December 6, 2007 Planning Commission minutes as amended. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

## **COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

### **P.C. #2007.23: Consideration of a request from the Bible Baptist Church of Kalamazoo for a special use permit to allow an addition to be constructed onto the west side of the existing church building located at 1700 N. Drake Road.**

Planner Bauckham gave the staff report, which is incorporated in these minutes by reference hereto. The subject property is located between Grand Prairie and Beech Ave. in the Westwood Neighborhood. The church building is located near the center of the site. Parking is located to the north and east of the church. There are two separate garage buildings on the same property, and an athletic field on the east side of the property. The church is proposing a 15,500 square foot addition on the west side of the building, which will nearly double the building space. The addition will contain a new worship area for the church. The existing sanctuary will be transformed into a multi-purpose facility. No parking will be lost as a result of the addition. The existing lot contains 235 spaces; 88 spaces are required based on the number of seats in the sanctuary. The architecture of the addition will complement the existing architecture. The trees at the south and east portions of the site will remain; some of the trees on the west will be removed. Additional plantings will be added near Drake Road. Lighting for the addition will be shielded. The setbacks will be met for the addition. Planner Bauckham advised that 74% of the property will remain as open space; 55% open space is required. There are single-family homes to the north and northeast of the site, the Friendship Village duplexes are to the east, an apartment complex is located to the south, and a cemetery is located to the west. This property is currently in the RS-5 zoning district, and is designated on the future land use map as low-density residential. City staff believes this project meets the requirements for a special use permit. The Site Plan Review Committee met on December 27<sup>th</sup> and a few changes were recommended. City staff is recommending approval of the special use permit with the condition that a final site plan be submitted with the changes that are required by the committee.

Commissioner Mishall requested further details about the changes that were recommended. Planner Bauckham provided the following information: 1. The dumpster on the east side of the existing building needs to be screened. 2. Two to three trees need to be planted within the existing parking lot. 3. A silt fence should be installed to protect the neighboring properties from soil erosion. 4. A tree inventory needs to be completed for the west side of the property. 5. An estimated daily trip generation calculation should be provided for the addition.

Commissioner Mishall inquired about the trees that are to be removed. Planner Bauckham stated that most of the trees to be removed are scrub vegetation. Many of them are not substantial in variety or size.

Jamie Dyer, Wightman Ward, and Pastor Kevin Lavender were present to answer questions. Mr. Dyer advised that the plan has already been amended to include the required changes, with the exception of the traffic count data. The seating capacity is less than the current building. A number of the trees to be removed are lesser varieties such as Elm and Wild Cherry. Over 20% of the trees coming out are already dead. Trees will be salvaged when possible, and the ordinance language will be fulfilled with additional plantings. A fountain sign has been proposed for this area of the property.

Commissioner Dean inquired as to how much the traffic would increase after the addition is constructed. Pastor Lavender advised that there are currently 350 people in the congregation; the church is anticipating an increase of 20 to 25%. The parking is already sufficient for the increased number, and there is a plan in place to deal with traffic issues if that becomes necessary.

Commissioner Mishall inquired if the applicants were aware of any opposition or support from the surrounding neighbors. Pastor Lavender advised that he has not heard any opposition to the church's application.

### **Public Hearing**

No one spoke at the public hearing.

**Commissioner Mishall, supported by Commissioner Wienir, moved to close the public hearing on P.C. #2007.23. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

Commissioner Mishall mentioned that the drawings indicate that the church is connected to the municipal sewer. However, Kalamazoo County advises they have no record of septic service for the church. Mr. Dyer stated that no further information is currently available regarding the sewer. The City's Engineering Department and Public Services Department have discussed the possibility of running a T.V. camera in the sewer to obtain more information. Mr. Dyer advised that he went to the Records Department and looked at a number of drawings on microfilm but they were mostly illegible. There is no indication on the drawings regarding the septic system or the connection. The applicants do not have a complete set of drawings for the mechanicals. Planner Bauckham advised that this subject came up during the site plan review. City staff believes the sanitary sewer system is there, but there's no record of it. If this application is approved, the City of Kalamazoo Engineering staff will be on site to look at the sewer system and confirm if it is adequate.

**Commissioner Mishall, supported by Commissioner Dean, moved approval of P.C. #2007.23, the request from the Bible Baptist Church of Kalamazoo for a special use permit to allow an addition to be constructed onto the west side of the existing church building located at 1700 N. Drake Road, with the condition that the final site**

**plan be approved prior to construction. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

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

None

**OLD BUSINESS**

None

**NEW BUSINESS**

**P.C. #2007.24: Consideration of a request from the I-94 Business Loop Planning Group to endorse the I-94 Business Loop Gateway Plan.**

Planner Bauckham gave the staff report, which is incorporated in these minutes by reference hereto. Planner Bauckham advised that the applicant is the I-94 Business Loop Planning Group, which is comprised of staff from the City, the Township and the County of Kalamazoo. This project was initiated in 2005. A grant was received from the Land Information Access Association to create the plan. A 20% funding match was provided by the 3 participating governments. This is one of 13 such grants that were provided to Michigan Municipalities in 2005. The Gateway Plan recommends improvements to the I-94 business loop corridor between Sprinkle Road and E. Michigan Ave. The plan was initiated by identifying the physical boundaries of the corridor, which includes portions of the three municipalities. The corridor was divided into three separate sections including the rural zone at the southeast portion, the industrial zone in the center area, and the downtown business section in the northwest portion. A physical survey of the land uses and conditions was completed along the corridor, and from this survey a set of recommendations was created to enhance the corridor. The recommendations are as follows:

1. Creation of a non-motorized pathway along the corridor.
2. Improve the pedestrian crosswalks though the street intersections and in the medians.
3. Provide a uniform and aesthetically pleasing lighting system on the corridor.
4. Add landscaping enhancements along the corridor with emphasis placed at the street intersections.
5. Establish improved directional, informational, and welcoming signage along the corridor.

It is estimated that the improvements will cost 1.6 million dollars. The planning group will request monetary assistance from each of the three participating municipalities and

grant funding will also be pursued from a variety of sources. The improvements will be implemented over the next several years as funding is secured. Significant public input was obtained from area neighborhoods and business owners during discussion group meetings. Also, two public meetings were held, as well as a meeting with the officials of each of the three municipalities. The planning group is seeking a recommendation from the Planning Commission to endorse the Gateway Plan. The City Commission will review the plan. They will also be asked to endorse it and contribute a certain amount of funding. Planner Bauckham introduced Pete Eldridge, the Project Coordinator from the City's Community Planning and Development Dept. to provide a PowerPoint presentation detailing the plan.

Mr. Eldridge provided copies of the plan for the Planning Commission to review. The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is also involved with the formulation of this plan. The boundaries of the plan are Sprinkle Road to Kings Highway and Michigan Ave. This area is in the jurisdiction of MDOT. Members of the planning group drove around the area several times to formulate a plan. The median on the business loop is currently capped with asphalt; mortared fieldstone is being considered as a more aesthetically pleasing replacement for the asphalt. It has been suggested that the 3 municipalities should assist MDOT with maintenance of the business loop. Alignment of the roads had also been studied; some of the present situations don't meet current MDOT specifications. The planning group met with the Lakewood and Edison Neighborhood to obtain feedback from those organizations. There was a separate meeting for business owners adjacent to the business loop. One of the main concerns expressed by business owners was the possibility of increased assessments. Community meetings were held in the Hazel Gray building at the Kalamazoo County Fairgrounds. The plan looks at pedestrian improvements at certain intersections, a paved path to connect area homes and businesses to the river trail, handicap accessible sidewalks, elimination of sewer odor near Lake St., new zoning regulations to create more consistent corridors, etc. Mr. Eldridge provided a brief review of the safety improvements, aesthetic improvements, and convenience and utility improvements suggested in the plan.

Commissioner Mishall commented that the suggestions would be a great improvement over what currently exists. She inquired if city staff would do the mowing and take care of the flower beds. Mr. Eldridge advised that the plan calls for mostly trees and large shrubs to be planted. The plan does not include flower beds so there shouldn't be too much maintenance. Responsibility for maintenance of the landscaping might be divided between the City of Kalamazoo and the Township of Kalamazoo.

Commissioner Kuseske mentioned that the Parks and Recreation Department will need to receive additional funding to cover the expense of maintaining the new landscaping.

Commissioner Mishall mentioned the sewer smell in the Lakewood area. She inquired if this presents any health issues. Mr. Eldridge advised that he was unaware of any health issues associated with the sewer smell. Sewage aroma coming down the main trunk lines

for Portage is sometimes noticeable in the Lakewood Neighborhood. Improvements made by the City of Kalamazoo Engineering Department have helped alleviate the problem. Commissioner Kuseske suggested to Planner Hernandez that this issue might be studied as part of the updates to the Comprehensive Plan. Planner Hernandez advised that the City of Kalamazoo alerts surrounding communities when the Comprehensive Plan is updated so the neighboring areas will be part of the process.

**Commissioner Fawley, supported by Commissioner Dean, moved to endorse the I-94 Business Loop Gateway Plan. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

### **CITIZENS' COMMENTS**

None

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

Planner Hernandez referred to the Portage Creek Corridor Plan. He stated that city staff is currently sending out letters to stakeholders giving them the schedule that will be followed for finding a consultant. The request for proposals for planning consultants will go out this month. An environmental assessment is in progress now, and as soon as that is completed, the planning consultant will be selected. Selection of a planning consultant will be a public process involving stakeholders. Planner Hernandez referred to the information that was printed in the newspaper stating that the planning process was already underway. That was incorrect, the planning process is still forthcoming. City staff will probably be interviewing consultants within the next month, and the top 3 consultants will be interviewed by the stakeholders.

Commissioner Kuseske advised that the PCB clean-up is also upcoming. He mentioned the importance of staying on track with upcoming projects, the need to have environmental data pertaining to these projects, and the importance of having a reuse plan for the property.

Commissioner Mishall inquired as to the boundaries for the Portage Creek Corridor project. Planner Hernandez advised that the boundaries are as follows: Stockbridge, Cork St., Portage Rd. and the railroad property. There were paper mills and other chemical-intensive industries that left pollutants. The hope is to reuse the properties without disturbing the chemicals. The brownfield team is assisting with this plan.

Planner Bauckham advised that he is working on the annual report for 2007. The Planning Commission reviewed 24 official requests in 2007. The average is 20 to 30 requests per year. Also, 71 site plans were submitted to city staff for review. On average, there are normally about 60 site plans submitted per year.

Tentatively scheduled for the February 1<sup>st</sup> Planning Commission meeting is a rezoning for Maggie's restaurant on W. Michigan Ave. between Lafayette and Euclid Streets. The applicant wants to rezone those parcels from a commercial neighborhood district to a general commercial zoning district. If the rezoning is passed, the applicant would like to remove the existing business and homes, and construct a mixed-use building with apartments on the upper levels.

Commissioner Mishall inquired as to why the middle school and the Arboretum Road had not been reviewed by the Planning Commission. Planner Bauckham advised that the middle school is a public institution so it is exempt from zoning rules in the city. The Arboretum Road is a public road, so it would not come before the Planning Commission unless it is part of a PUD or residential plat. The Arboretum Road will service the middle school. Commissioner Mishall inquired if businesses locating in that area would be reviewed by the Planning Commission. Planner Bauckham advised that if the project was a permitted use, it would not be reviewed by the Planning Commission. However, special use permits and rezonings would be reviewed by the Planning Commission. He added that the west 30 acres of the site on Drake Rd. has been rezoned commercial and the Planning Commission was involved in that.

Commissioner Kuseske reminded everyone that the Comprehensive Plan rewrite should begin shortly and he looked forward to an update from city staff with regard to that subject.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Commissioner Fawley, supported by Commissioner Mishall, moved to close the January 3, 2008 Planning Commission meeting. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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