

City of Kalamazoo  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
Minutes  
April 13, 2017  
FINAL

Third Floor, City Hall  
Third Floor Conference Room  
241 W. South Street, Kalamazoo, MI 49007

Members Present: Rachel Hughes-Nilsson, Chair; Charley Coss, Vice Chair; Josh Cook; Emily Greenman Wright; Gregory Milliken; James Pitts; Sakhi Vyas; Derek Wissner; Alfonso Espinosa

Members Excused: None

City Staff: Rebekah Kik, City Planner; Rob Bauckham, Senior Development Planner; Beth Cheeseman, Recording Secretary; Clyde Robinson, City Attorney

Guests: Matt Milcarek, City Commissioner

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

Commissioner Hughes-Nilsson called the meeting to order at 7:04 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 the items under F. (P.C. #2017.02 & P.C. #2017.03) be removed from the agenda due to further outreach to the neighborhood being needed for the planned use. **Commissioner Wissner, supported by Commissioner Milliken, moved approval of the April 13, 2017 Planning Commission agenda as amended. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Commissioner Pitts, supported by Commissioner Milliken, moved approval of the March 3, 2017 Planning Commission minutes as presented. With a voice vote, the motion carried.**

**E. COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None

**F. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

The Public Hearings were removed from the agenda this evening.

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

None

## **H. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Planner Kik offered an Imagine Kalamazoo project update. She wanted to thank the Commissioners for volunteering their time for the April 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> meetings. Over 100 people attended each meeting. The Mayor's presentation will be available on Public Media Network, and Planner Kik will share the link to the presentation as soon as it is provided to her. The next steps in the process will be during the months of April and May with focus groups scheduled to discuss the input received from the Imagine Kalamazoo process and devise goals. By the third week in May it is hoped to have a draft of the Master Plan to present to the City Commission. It will be requested that the City Commission approve having the plan sent out for public comment. The draft plan will hopefully be presented to Planning Commission on June 1<sup>st</sup>.

Commissioner Milliken asked what would happen to the designers' sketches from the event. Planner Kik shared it had been requested that the sketches be displayed somewhere within downtown. She is working with DKI to come up with a space to display these for a week or two.

Commissioner Espinosa asked what the criteria would be for members of the focus groups. Planner Kik stated it would be based on the needs of the group. An example would be the Affordable Housing focus group will include members who have or are currently providing affordable housing within Kalamazoo. The lists can be shared with the Commissioners and their suggestions taken in case any potential members need to be added to a focus group.

Commissioner Milliken wanted to give kudos to Planner Kik and her team for a great two day meeting. He suggested having one designated space for residents to review the results from Imagine Kalamazoo. He suggested City Hall would be a great space. Planner Kik also stated the results would be online.

## **I. NEW BUSINESS**

### **Annual Meeting:**

Planner Bauckham provided a summary of the yearly report for the Planning Commission and Planning Division for 2016.

**Commissioner Coss, supported by Commissioner Wissner, nominated Rachel Hughes-Nilsson to continue as Chair of the Planning Commission. With a voice vote, the motion carried.**

**Commissioner Hughes-Nilsson, supported by Commissioner Wissner, nominated Charley Coss to continue as Vice-Chair of the Planning Commission. With a voice vote, the motion carried.**

Commissioner Coss has praised Commissioner Greenman Wright on her job as Secretary of the Planning Commission. **Commissioner Coss, supported by Commissioner Greenman Wright, nominated Derek Wissner for Secretary of the Planning Commission. With a voice vote, the motion carried.**

Planner Bauckham summarized the site plan review process including the role of the Planning Commission. There is currently a two-week turn around period for the review of site plans and meeting with the Site Plan Review Committee. Developers have come to expect such a turn around period for their projects. The Zoning Ordinance allows the option for the Planning Commission to conduct reviews of site plans. Planner Bauckham asked the Commission if they would like to see the review process stay the same, or if they would like to review site plans during Planning Commission meetings.

Commissioner Greenman Wright asked if there could be a combination of both options. Planner Bauckham indicated that Planning Commissioners can request that a specific plan be presented to the Commission at a meeting for review. He suggested that when the project list is sent to the Commissioners in their meeting packets that they email or call him to discuss a specific plan including the possibility of bringing it to the regular meeting. The Commissioners are also invited to attend the Site Plan Review Committee meetings to discuss a specific plan.

Planner Kik asked if when projects that have gone through site plan review are going to City Commission if they could be vetted through Planning Commission first. City Attorney Robinson suggested coming up with a criteria for these types of projects. Planner Bauckham stated that in the last 24 months the only project he remembers being applicable would be the Exchange Place project.

Planner Bauckham stated he could email the list more frequently, and include more descriptive information regarding the projects.

#### **J. CITIZENS' COMMENTS**

A resident asked when the public hearings that were removed from the agenda for this meeting would be rescheduled. Planner Kik responded that they will be addressed at the next meeting on May 4, 2017.

#### **K. CITY COMMISSION LIAISON COMMENTS**

Commissioner Milcarek spoke regarding the uses of the Foundation for Excellence funding . He said the first round for use of the funds has been approved, and he outlined the schedule for upcoming meetings on the funding for which the public will be encouraged to attend.

City Attorney Robinson gave a report regarding the regulation of medical marijuana. He stated that the State of Michigan will open the window for approval of certain uses and license applications on December 15, 2017. The state licensing agency, LARA, is responsible for creating the rules regarding medical marijuana facilities. There are five types of uses/facilities that can be approved for medical marijuana business: growers, processors, distributors, transporters and laboratory. The community is not compelled to support all or any of the these types of businesses.

Attorney Robinson explained that the city will have the responsibility to regulate how many facilities will be allowed within Kalamazoo and where they can be located. There are considerations involved with where processors should be located due to the “skunk” smell that is often associated with the processing of marijuana using butane.

Commissioner Milliken stated that it would be good for the Planning Commission to stay in step with the City Commission and suggested joint meetings regarding this issue. Planner Kik suggested that the Planning Commission create a work plan at the May meeting for a potential work session on June 26<sup>th</sup>.

#### **L. CITY PLANNER'S REPORT**

Planner Bauckham gave the City Planner's Report. Some of the highlights of the site plan program included:

- Parking lot expansion for Life EMS on E. North Street
- Main Street Properties is building three new townhouse units on Euclid Avenue

- New parking lot and building use change on Thompson Street for the new Kalamazoo College Welcome Center
- New apartment complex for Parkway Flats on Arboretum Parkway

**M. MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS BY PLANNING COMMISSIONERS**

Planner Kik announced she received a promotion to Community Planning and Development Director. There will be interviews soon for a new City Planner.

Commissioner Cook requested information regarding the closing of the Black Owl Café on Walbridge Street and associated condemnation. Planner Kik responded that the Community Planning and Development Department followed up on a phone call received from the Health Department about the facility. Staff inspected it, found several code violations, and needed to take this action. The city is working with the owners to correct the violations so that they can re-open as soon as possible.

**M. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



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Rebekah Kik,  
City Planner  
Community Planning & Development