

**City of Kalamazoo  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
Minutes  
FINAL  
February 1, 2018**

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

Present: Rachael Hughes-Nilsson, Chair; Charlie Coss, Vice Chair; Alfonso Espinosa; Emily Greenman-Wright; Gregory Milliken; James Pitts; Sakhi Vyas; Derek Wissner

City Staff: Christina Anderson; City Planner; Rob Bauckham, Senior Development Planner; James Baker, Public Services Director; Clyde Robinson, City Attorney; John Kneas, Assistant City Attorney; Amy Thomas, Recording Secretary.

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**B. ROLL CALL**

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

**C. ADOPTION OF FORMAL AGENDA**

There were no changes to the agenda.

**Commissioner Greenman Wright, supported by Commissioner Wissner, moved approval of the February 1, 2018 Planning Commission agenda as submitted. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (January 4, 2018)**

There were no changes to the Minutes.

**Commissioner Vyas, supported by Commissioner Espinosa, moved approval of the January 4, 2018 Planning Commission Minutes as submitted. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**E. COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None

**F. Public Hearings**

**P.C. #2018.01 Cave's Court – Vacate the north segment of Cave's Court.**

The Senior Development Planner's Report is incorporated in these minutes as if fully set forth herein.

Commissioner Vyas inquired if the property to be vacated overlaps with the Kalamazoo River Valley trail. Planner Bauckham advised that the trail is not directly within the segment of the property being vacated.

Attorney Kneas advised that the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority is requesting the vacation of Caves Court. There is a 30-inch sanitary sewer line and a 6-inch water line under the property for the vacation, and there are reciprocal easement agreements for these utilities. The northern portion of Caves Court has been repaved and access to Gull Road has been improved. Drainage on that site was also improved. The owner of Precision Heat Treating will be the owner of the vacated property and the easement will go to her.

There was no public comment on the request.

Commissioner Milliken inquired if the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority is requesting the vacation but the adjacent property owner is paying for the acquisition. Attorney Kneas advised that half of the vacated property will go to one of the adjacent property owners, the other half of the vacated property will go the other adjacent property

owner. The street vacation would provide Precision Heat Treating with better access to their property and they will pay fair market value for that half of the vacated property.

**Commissioner Milliken, supported by Commissioner Coss, moved to recommend to the City Commission approval of P.C. #2018.01, the request from the City of Kalamazoo Brownfield Redevelopment Authority to vacate the northern segment of Caves Court, with the condition that an easement be granted for access of underground utilities in the vacated area. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

Commissioner Milliken stated that he thought the motion was consistent with the Planning Commission's policies and that the recommended changes will allow the land to be put to better use.

#### **G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

#### **H. NEW BUSINESS**

##### **1. Presentation on the proposed Veterans' Memorial Barrier-Free Ramp for the Riverside Cemetery**

Mr. Baker advised that an ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) access ramp is being proposed for the Veterans' Memorial at Riverside Cemetery. The memorial was originally constructed with no ADA facilities. Visitors have to walk down several flights of stairs to get to the memorial and the ceremonies that are being held there. City staff looked at the possibility of locating the parking lot closer to Gull Rd., but determined that was not a viable option due to the limited site distance on Gull Rd. and MDOT restrictions.

The current proposal represents a collaboration between the Westwood Garden Club, City of Kalamazoo Engineering staff and members of the community. The proposed plan allows parking near a ramp and the creation of a ramp to the memorial. Cemeteries overall are not generally ADA complaint and there are no plans to address that issue at this point. Many cemeteries were constructed in 19<sup>th</sup> century, prior to ADA requirements. The Westwood Garden Club obtained local funding and grants to fund this project.

In order to construct the ramps, footings will be added under the existing rock wall, which does not have the standard foundations that would be required today. Required footings are 42" to 60" deep. A portion of the wall will be removed to accomplish the required updates. The proposal includes the addition of handrails, to code, and fencing if the wall is over 4' in height.

Construction of the ramp can begin once the building permit is issued by the Community Planning and Development Department. This project could begin this year or at some point in the future when the Westwood Garden Club obtains the necessary funding. It is estimated that the project will cost \$75,000-\$125,000. The Commission supported the project.

##### **2. Recommendation to re-nominate Commissioners Hughes-Nilsson, Pitts and Greenman Wright to each serve an additional term on the Planning Commission.**

Planner Bauckham advised that terms are expiring for Commissioners Hughes-Nilsson, Pitts and Greenman Wright. All three Commissioners are eligible for and have agreed to an additional term. If approved by the Planning Commission, the recommendation for additional terms will be presented to the City Commission for approval.

**Commissioner Coss, supported by Commissioner Wissner, moved recommendation of an additional term on the Planning Commission for each of the following Commissioners: Greenman Wright, Hughes-Nilsson and Pitts. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

#### **I. CITIZENS' COMMENTS**

None

**J. CITY COMMISSION LIAISON COMMENTS**

None

**K. CITY PLANNER'S REPORT**

Planner Bauckham advised there were 54 site plans submitted to City staff in 2017. Site plans submitted in 2017 included a new multi-tenant commercial building behind Gallagher's Restaurant on Stadium Dr.; the Vine Shops, a multi-tenant building near Westnedge and Vine Streets; On the Rocks, multi-tenant, commercial building on Portage St.; Walden Woods Phase 4 condominium project; redevelopment of the former Harding's Market on Crosstown Parkway; reuse of the former Illinois Envelope building on Bryant Street for County offices; and the Parkway Flats apartment complex on Arboretum Parkway.

There were two site plans reviewed in January 2018 and there are eight other site plans in various stages of review.

The Blue Beam program has been implemented by City staff in 2018 for electronic review of site plans. Comments on site plans will be sent electronically to applicants in an effort to save paper and provide more efficiency.

The Planning Commission recently recommended the vacation of a public alley between Cooley and North Park streets. That recommendation will be on the City Commission agenda on Monday for a first review.

The Annual Planning Commission meeting date has been changed to April 10<sup>th</sup> due to spring break. The annual meeting agenda will include a discussion regarding the site plan review process; elections for Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary of the Planning Commission; and presentation of the annual report for 2017.

Planner Anderson advised that the July meeting has also been moved to the following Tuesday, July 10th. Changes to the Planning Commission meeting scheduled have been placed on the city-wide calendar.

**Commissioner Greenman Wright, supported by Commissioner Vyas, moved approval of the proposed changes to the April and July Planning Commission meeting schedule. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**L. MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS BY PLANNING COMMISSIONERS**

None

**M. ADJOURNMENT**

**Commissioner Greenman Wright, supported by Commissioner Wissner, moved to adjourn the February 1, 2018 Planning Commission meeting. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Christina Anderson,  
City Planner  
Community Planning & Development