

City of Kalamazoo  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
SPECIAL MEETING  
FINAL Minutes  
November 15, 2017

Riverview Launch  
1523 Riverview Drive, Kalamazoo, MI 49004  
3:00pm

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

Members Excused:

City Staff: Christina Anderson, City Planner; Robert Bauckham, Senior Development Planner; Clyde Robinson, City Attorney; Katie Riley, Neighborhood Activator; and Beth Cheeseman, Code Administration Clerk and Cashier

#### **A. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

Planner Bauckham called the meeting to order at approximately 3:15 p.m. and then reviewed the agenda. Planner Anderson introduced Neighborhood Activator, Katie Riley, and informed the Commissioners that Amanda Coeur, recording secretary, had her baby and began her maternity leave. Planner Anderson stated that they would get clean copies of the Master Plan to the Commissioners soon and copies of the Strategic Plan.

#### **B. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN AND MEETING NOTICE PROCEDUES**

Planner Anderson reviewed the process for the Planning Commission's public hearings. The applicant reaches out to the affected neighborhood including possible presentation at a neighborhood meeting; the required public hearing notices following the State Enabling Act are completed; questions and comments are received by phone, email, or in-person by the Planning staff; the Planning Commission public hearing is conducted; and the issue goes to a City Commission meeting as required.

For the City Zoning Board of Appeals, the process is similar. The applicant reaches out to neighbors; the required notices are completed; questions and comments are received by phone, email, or in-person by staff; and the Zoning Board of Appeals meeting is held.

Planner Anderson stated that the Site Plan Review Program is administered by a staff committee process that comes after approvals from the Planning Commission, the Zoning Board of Appeals, or the Historical Board are received by the applicant. The applicants are told to meet with the neighborhood about their project. Notice is given via email to neighborhood directors when site plans are received. They are provided with the date in which their comments on the project need to be provided to staff.

Planner Anderson said they will talk with the City Clerk to see what other options there are for the noticing process.

A discussion took place regarding possible alternative means for noticing the public. The pros and cons of using the internet, email lists, webpages, newspaper, and text messages was discussed, along with the role of community partners and the possibility of Planning Commissioners attending informational meetings. Planner Bauckham suggested asking the Neighborhood Associations to share more information on the Planning Commission and site plan requests with their neighborhoods. The the time-frame for notices was also discussed. Planner Anderson indicated there is a 'sweet spot' for noticing a meeting, usually no more than three weeks prior to the meeting.

Planner Anderson reminded Commissioners that they cannot have more than four Commissioners attend a community/neighborhood meeting because they don't want to have a quorum of the Commissioners at them. They could come to the meetings, but shouldn't congregate or talk with each other at them. She also told them that staff can only inform the Commissioners of meetings if they are facilitated by the City instead of by an applicant.

Planner Anderson encouraged Commissioners to speak with staff ahead of time if they want more information or have concerns about a case. She also indicated that they will be more diligent about tracking all citizen feedback - positive and negative.

### **C. MASTER PLAN AS GUIDEBOOK FOR REVIEW AND CITY ACTIONS**

Planner Anderson spoke about the new 2025 Master Plan. She stated that the Master Plan is clear and comprehensive, and all of the boards in the City should review it and make sure their decision making is in compliance with the stated concepts and goals for the community. She also brought up the idea that Commissioners could possibly train other boards on the Master Plan. Planner Anderson asked the Commissioners for ideas to make the implementation of the Master Plan easier for them and for the public. After some discussion, it was agreed that staff reports will identify if a request meets certain goals from the Master Plan and/or Strategic Plan. It was also suggested to make sure there are descriptions of the goals that provide meaning and support to the requests.

Planner Anderson stated that they will be moving forward with formulating several new Neighborhood Plans starting next year, and they already have had some discussions with certain neighborhoods about the topic. She informed the Commissioners that an AmeriCorps volunteer will start soon in the Planning Division and will assist with neighborhood engagement.

New Neighborhood Plans will come to the Planning Commission as an amendment to the Master Plan. Staff will likely conduct noticing once per year for the review of the new plans (a 63-day adjacent jurisdictional notice) and amend the Master Plan to include them.

Planner Anderson clarified the steps for creating new Neighborhood Plans: 1) make sure there is a clear path of communication with the citizens, 2) review plans that may already be in existence, 3) build a coalition, 4) create a draft plan using citizen input, 5) conduct public meetings. The City will be the author of the plan. Two public meetings need to be held on the plans, and a draft is given to the Planning Commission for review and approval.

Planner Anderson clarified for the Commissioners why City staff will be writing the Neighborhood Plans. Staff will take what information and comments are provided by the citizens and create a shell document that has formatting similar to the Master Plan. They will respect the concerns and desires of the citizens, and write the document to reflect such comment.

Planner Anderson talked about efforts to bring City zoning into compliance with Imagine Kalamazoo and the Master Plan, and what that means for the Planning Commission. She stated that they will need the same kind of outreach and engagement as was implemented for the Imagine Kalamazoo program when they begin the process of creating a new zoning ordinance. Planner Anderson said they will need to account for some new things in the zoning code such as Air B&Bs.

Commissioners discussed the various methods to conduct outreach for the zoning code changes. Ideas included implementing the changes yearly as part of an ongoing process, holding informal work sessions, reaching out to the neighborhoods involved in the zoning, using pictures, poster boards, and a blog.

Planner Anderson asked Commissioners to weigh in on whether they would be able to go to other boards (ex: ZBA, ECC, CDAAC, Traffic, City Commission) and train them on how to use the Master Plan. Commissioner Coss suggested assigning regular liaisons to these boards from the Planning Commission, and that the other board Chairs or members should attend Planning Commission meetings. Planner Bauckham suggested that the other board Chairs could come to the Planning Commission meetings and give updates on their boards. Planner Anderson suggested the possibility of the board Chairs getting together more informally to discuss requests and actions.

#### **D. ROBERT'S RULES REVIEW AND OPEN MEETINGS ACT**

City Attorney Clyde Robinson reviewed the Michigan Open Meetings Act PA 267 of 1976. He cautioned Commissioners to be careful of how they handle emails and subcommittees. Attorney Robinson stated that they need to do all City business as publicly as possible so they do not violate the Open Meetings Act.

City Attorney Robinson also reviewed Roberts Rules of Order for running meetings. He gave directions such as: 1) use 'second' instead of 'support,' 2) the chair should repeat the request before the vote is taken, 3) every Commissioner needs to have the opportunity to speak once on the discussion of the request before a Commissioner speaks a second time. The Commissioners asked questions to clarify the process of making motions and amending or adding motions. Attorney Robinson clarified that the person who made the motion has the right to be the first to speak to it, but cannot speak against it. The person who seconded it has the right to speak against it.

He told the Commissioners that the public hearing officially opens with the staff report. First there is the staff report, then the applicant report/comments, followed by the public comment period. Commissioners then can ask any questions or seek clarification from the staff or public. A motion is made, then there is

discussion on the motion, and finally a vote on the motion.

**E. CITIZEN COMMENTS**

None

**F. DINNER AND GENERAL DISCUSSION**

Meeting ended at approximately 6:45pm

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christina Anderson". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a solid blue horizontal line.

Christina Anderson,  
City Planner  
Community Planning & Development