

City of Kalamazoo
PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes
March 7, 2019
Final

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

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

Members Excused: Jack Baartman

City Staff: Christina Anderson, City Planner; Robert Bauckham, Senior Development Planner; Jennifer Gutierrez, Community Investment Secretary; Clyde Robinson, City Attorney; Pete Eldridge, Zoning Administrator

A. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Hughes-Nilsson called the meeting to order at approximately 7:01 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL

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

C. ADOPTION OF FORMAL AGENDA

Ms. Anderson informed the Commission that the Natural Features Overlay item will be under the New Business section of the agenda.

Commissioner Coss, supported by Commissioner Greenman Wright, moved approval of the March 7, 2019 Planning Commission agenda. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Wissner, supported by Commissioner Vyas, moved approval of the February 7, 2019 Planning Commission minutes. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

E. COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

F. PUBLIC HEARINGS

P.C. #2019.01: Request from the Westwood Plaza, LLC to rezone 604 N. Drake Road from Zone RS-5 (Residential, Single-Dwelling District) to Zone CC (Commercial, Community

District). **[Recommendation: motion to recommend to the City Commission to approve the rezoning.]**

Planner Bauckham explained the details of the proposed zoning change for the parcel in question. He indicated that a new fast food restaurant known as “Chick – Fil – A” is being planned for the west portion of the Westwood Mall on N. Drake Road. The subject parcel for the rezoning is located at the northwest corner of the mall, is undeveloped, and formerly contained a house. The applicant would like to relocate the current north Drake Road driveway for the mall onto the subject parcel in order to accommodate the restaurant. The parcel is in a residential zone, and the applicant would like it to be changed to the CC zone to be compatible with the zoning of the overall mall property. The subject parcel is unlikely to be used for residential purposes in the future given the commercial usage and traffic levels in the area.

Mr. Bauckham described three rationales for the staff recommendation to rezone the parcel:

1. The parcel is owned by Westwood Plaza, LLC, which owns the adjacent mall property to the south.
2. The parcel is needed to allow the driveway for the complex to be relocated to accommodate the new restaurant.
3. The change in zoning will place the parcel in the same zone as the adjacent Westwood Plaza mall.

Attorney Pat Lennon from the Honigman Firm and Terry Patterson from Treystar mentioned that they believe this plan is a fantastic opportunity for the City. They believe the project will result in an excellent improvement to this area of the mall and City. They have been trying to find the right fit for the property and believe that the proposed restaurant will be the answer. A question was asked about the hours of the business and if it would be a 24-hour restaurant and drive thru. The applicant indicated it will likely be open until 11 pm each night, and closed on Sundays. A question was asked about the landscaping for the site. The applicant did not have the answer to that question. Landscaping would be required as part of the site plan review process for the project.

Commissioner Hughes-Nilsson opened the public comment portion of the hearing.

Nathan Maston, an adjacent property owner, spoke in favor of the project. His only concern was that they did not address all of the residential properties that were going to be affected by the project, including his parcel. He questioned where the storm water retaining area would be located since the new driveway would replace some of it.

Commissioner Coss, supported by Commissioner Espinosa, moved to close the public comment portion of the hearing. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Milliken, supported by Commissioner Wissner, moved to recommend approval of P.C. #2019.01: Request from the Westwood Plaza, LLC to rezone 604 N. Drake

Road from Zone RS-5 (Residential, Single-Dwelling District) to Zone CC (Commercial, Community District).

Commissioner Milliken is in favor of the project and sees no reason to reject the rezoning given the details and information provided. Commissioner Vyas reports that she is not in favor of opening a fast food restaurant on the indicated parcel in question. Her only concern is the environmental impact it will have for the area since the majority of the site area will become concrete and building space.

A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed by a vote of 7 to 1. Commissioner Vyas voted no.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

H. NEW BUSINESS

Natural Features Protection Overlay update

Ms. Anderson explained the three phases of the Natural Features Protection Overlay of the 2025 Master Plan, and updated the Commission on the progress on the project. The following topics were discussed:

1. Zoning Overlay (Moratorium)
2. Mapping Analysis
3. Stewardship

Ms. Anderson informed the Commission that they are working on phase one of the project, and have been working with a group of technical experts in the community including several with an environmental background. They have presented the project at two meetings in two different neighborhoods. There was a meeting at the Eastside Neighborhood and another meeting at the Oakland/Winchell Neighborhood. There was also a meeting with several environmental and conservation groups. The draft of the Overlay is available online for review.

Ms. Anderson explained the process of creating the guiding principles for the Overlay. She also explained the five zoning overlay standards and how they are being managed.

1. Natural Feature of: Wetlands and Water Resources;
2. Natural Feature of: The Trees.

3. Natural Feature of: The Woodlands
4. Natural Feature of: Slopes.
5. Natural Feature of: Natural Heritage Areas.

Ms. Anderson explained how trees and other natural features will be protected and identified some of the requirements for accomplishing this. There was information provided on the proposed site development standards. She explained that there are three pathways that need to be reviewed. Commissioners had questions on some of the requirements and the code regulations. Additional public information meetings will be held in the coming weeks, and the draft Overlay will be presented for approval at the April 9 Planning Commission meeting.

Annual meeting of the Planning Commission:

A. Review of annual report for 2018

Mr. Bauckham summarized the annual report for 2018 to the Planning Commission. He described the membership changes on the Commission during the year, and the number and types of requests that were reviewed. Mr. Bauckham mentioned the number and types of site plan projects that were processed, and discussed other Planning Division staff activities.

B. Re-nomination of Commissioners Wissner, Milliken, and Baartman for new terms

Mr. Bauckham mentioned that three existing Planning Commissioners have expiring terms at the end of the month. They are Commissioner Wissner, Baartman and Milliken, and each have agreed to serve an additional term.

Commissioner Greenman Wright, supported by Commissioner Vyas, motioned to recommend the re-nomination of Commissioners Wissner, Milliken, and Baartman for new terms.

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously

C. Election of officers for the Planning Commission

Commissioner Hughes–Nilsson informed the Commission that she is resigning from the Planning Commission.

A nomination was made for Commissioner Milliken to serve as the new Chair of the Planning Commission. There were no other nominations.

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed.

A nomination made for Commissioner Greenman Wright to serve as Vice-chair. There were no other nominations.

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed.

A nomination made for Commissioner Wissner to serve as Secretary. There were no other nominations.

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed.

Ms. Anderson mentioned that Mr. Bauckham will be retiring from the Planning Division this summer and that Mr. Eldridge will be taking over his duties for managing the Planning Commission.

D. Site Plan Review Program administration discussion

Mr. Bauckham mentioned that every year a decision needs to be made on whether the site plan program should be administered by the staff or by the Planning Commission. He provided a short history on the administration of the program and indicated if the Planning Commission desired to administer it, a second meeting would need to be held by the Commission each month in order to maintain the timely review of projects.

Commissioner Wissner, supported by Commissioner Greenman Wright, moved for the administration of the site plan program to remain with the Planning staff.

A voice vote taken and the motion passed.

I. CITIZENS' COMMENTS (Regarding non-agenda items)

Sara Nicholson, a member from First Congregational Church, provided a letter with signatures of those opposed to the development of the local historic district in the Bronson Park area and for the Nazareth campus on Gull Road. They feel it is unnecessary and a burden to the religious and nonprofit community in the two areas. They believe it would force their organization to relinquish authority over their buildings and their usage to a government commission.

J. CITY COMMISSION LIAISON COMMENTS

None

K. CITY PLANNER'S REPORT

Mr. Bauckham discussed the 2019 Site Plan Review Project List. Eleven projects have been processed to date. He also provided some detail on the significant projects that are currently under construction.

L. MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS BY PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

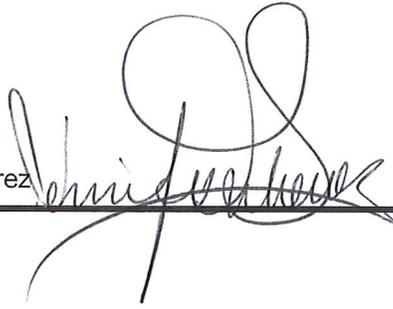
Commission Espinosa mentioned that he noticed two housing properties on Lake and Bank Street that were demolished. It was indicated that the houses were condemned and the plan is to adjust the intersection of the two streets.

Commissioner Greenman Wright expressed her appreciation to Commissioners Hughes–Nilsson for her leadership during her time on the Planning Commission.

M. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Green Wright, supported by Commissioner Pitts, moved to adjourn the meeting. A voice vote was taken and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8: 35 pm.

Recording Secretary: Jennifer Gutierrez



Date: 6/03/2019

City Staff Liasion:



Date:

6/4/2019
