

City of Kalamazoo
PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes
September 5, 2019
FINAL

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

Members Present: Gregory Milliken, Chair; Emily Greenman Wright, Vice Chair; Alfonso Espinosa; James Pitts; Sakhi Vyas; Coreen Ellis; Shardae Chambers

Members Excused: Derek Wissner

City Staff: Christina Anderson, City Planner; Clyde Robinson, City Attorney; Pete Eldridge, Assistant City Planner; Beth Cheeseman, Code Administration Clerk/Cashier

A. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Milliken called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL

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

C. ADOPTION OF FORMAL AGENDA

Commissioner Greenman Wright, supported by Commissioner Espinosa, moved approval of the September 5, 2019 Planning Commission agenda. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Greenman Wright, supported by Commissioner Vyas, moved approval of the August 1, 2019 Planning Commission minutes. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

E. COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Introduction of New Planning Commissioners: Coreen Ellis and Shardae Chambers

Planner Anderson introduced the two new commissioners. Commissioner Milliken welcomed them to the Commission.

F. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

H. NEW BUSINESS

1. P.C. #2019.07: Review of a site plan for parking lot expansions at Thermo Fisher Scientific, 4481 Campus Drive [Recommendation: Approve Site Plan]

Planner Eldridge stepped forward to give the Staff Report. Planner Eldridge explained that Thermo Fisher Scientific wants to add 54 parking spaces on the west side of the building. They also want to create parking stalls for trailers on the east side of the building near the loading docks. He stated that significant staffing has created the need for additional parking. Employees are currently parallel parking along the access drive on the west side of the building. Planner Eldridge said the staff recommends approval of the site plan. Thermo Fisher Scientific has gone through a preliminary Site Plan meeting and have submitted all paperwork for the Site Plan approval meeting. That meeting is scheduled later in September.

Commissioner Milliken asked why this particular site and zoning district needs to come before the Planning Commission. Planner Eldridge responded that the zoning ordinance states that all site plans in the CBTR zone district, which includes the BTR Park for Western Michigan University, is required to come before the Planning Commission for approval. He stated it is part of maintaining transparency with the public. Planner Eldridge informed the Commission that he has an approval letter from WMU Design Review Committee signed by the Director of Business Services.

Commissioner Pitts requested clarification of the Commission handing over the Site Plan Process to the City. Planner Eldridge stated the Planning Commission delegated responsibility for the Site Plan process to the Site Plan Review Committee. Planner Anderson stated that Site Plans are now available online and people can sign up to be notified when a new Site Plan arrives.

Commissioner Vyas asked about stormwater management for the site. Planner Eldridge said a stormwater management plan has been submitted and is under review by engineers and Public Services.

Mr. Chris Markham, Paradigm Design, came forward and asked for any questions. He indicated they provided all necessary documents to City regarding stormwater management. He said they are, "busting at seams for parking." Mr. Steve Bench, Director of Operations, came forward and said Thermo Fisher Scientific has been in this location since 2002 and is still growing. He said they have 3 shifts of employees and have come up against a capacity issue for parking and safety. He said they also need to resurface some areas of the existing parking lots.

Commissioner Espinosa, supported by Commissioner Vyas, moved to approve P.C. #2019.07: the proposed site plan for parking lot expansions at Thermo Fisher Scientific, 4481 Campus Drive.

Commissioner Espinosa said he thinks the request is straight-forward and is needed. He said his only concern is stormwater management so close to asylum lake.

A roll call vote was taken and passed unanimously.

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

None

J. CITY COMMISSION LIAISON COMMENTS

Commissioner Cunningham came forward and told the Commissioners he appreciates their work. He welcomed the new Commissioners and gave them the advice to continue to ask what acronyms mean as they come up.

K. CITY PLANNER'S REPORT

Planner Eldridge gave an update on two projects. He stated that Chick-fil-A is approved and will be moving along. He also shared that 2927 Millcork, a grow/processor, recently received Site Plan approval and an operating license from the City Clerk. He asked Commissioners to review the roster he sent them and get back to him with any changes.

Planner Anderson encouraged Commissioners to sign up for Site Plan notification for all neighborhoods.

She also stated they had their first meeting on 9/21/19 of the Street Design Project regarding the streets taken over with jurisdictional transfer and other priority areas. The second meeting will be a hands-on design meeting to be held on 10/23/19 at the Foundry from 6:30-8:30pm with an open house format. Planner Anderson said Wednesdays (starting on September 11th) will be Walking Wednesdays. They will have 1 or 2 guided walking audits. Participants will be able to go online and provide comments about the streets. She said they will also be arranging bike rides to help with the design project. Planner Anderson explained this is tied in with the Master Plan, Street Types and Connected City goals. More information is available on ImagineKalamazoo.com.

L. MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS BY PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Milliken stated the walking/biking tours were a great way to be more involved. He thanked the City for updating the Site Plan process and the website.

Commissioners Greenman Wright and Pitts welcomed the new Commissioners.

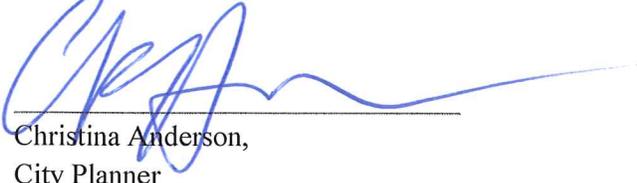
Commissioner Espinosa asked about editing choices of neighborhoods if someone had already signed up for Site Plan Notification. Planner Anderson said he could send her an email for which neighborhoods he would like notifications.

M. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Milliken adjourned the meeting at 7:28 pm.

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Respectfully submitted,



Christina Anderson,
City Planner
Community Planning & Development