

May 2017

Notes from the Chair

Kayla Coleman, Brad Strader and I had a meeting I asked for to discuss process and how to be effective as a commission. I found it very helpful, and we came up with a number of specific ideas as well as learning more about how a city commission works.

Some of them are already reflected in the current agenda, and a few I'll outline here. Of course, your input is welcome as we work together on learning about and also co-creating this new commission.

One of the most important is how to handle the many detailed questions and need for updates and clarification on a specific problem or place that may need focus. For items that are relevant to the Commission and within the scope of the Commission's role, Commission members should clearly and concisely identify questions and requests for follow-up. Kayla will keep a list of identified questions and follow-up requests, and contact city staff as needed to answer questions and either work them into future agendas for action or discussion. We can also look into what are existing plans and recommendations for issues that are brought up, subject to availability of staff time and relevance to the work of the Commission. This may be the simplest and most effective way to keep issues visible and learn more. For example, the question of blocking sidewalks during construction came up as a concern. There is updated information about how that is being handled, as well as recommendations in the Pedestrian Safety and Access Task Force Report. We can report on that at the May meeting. 7th Street calming was also mentioned, we may want to have more details and understand the progress on that long standing issue, but we can start with a simple update.

The part of the agenda at the end where commissioners report may then be focused on asking questions for future action. I'd very much like to see us in that working framework.

One of the more interesting issues and discussion I've been involved with – including at this meeting with Brad and Kayla - concerns Vision Zero. Interpreting the city council resolution supporting Vision Zero needs a bit more work, as well as providing ideas for implementation. And one question is should that be the city's and our commission's overarching statement and goal, or one of many goals and objectives? Can and should that idea be at the center of our work? It is certainly worth discussion and so that is in our future after we learn more about what it is meant to be and how other cities are implementing Vision Zero.

A lot of our training and ability to respond to future issues will be focused on existing plans and recommendations. That makes doing homework and reading before commission meetings even more important. I've asked Kayla to work with staff to highlight how we should prepare for each meeting, which is mostly reading

material. There is a lot to go over, staying current is important. Let us know if a conversation or hands-on in some way is more helpful to you as a way to stay up to date.

Bradley Parsons and I have talked a bit about using resolutions and process and format for that. I'm overdue to give him some examples, and can share that with anyone interested. He will be meeting with city staff before sharing a presentation with us later in the summer, which is likely to result in asking us to make recommendations.

That's it from me. I look forward to seeing you in a few weeks. Please let Kayla know if you are unable to attend for any reason, or have questions before the meeting.

Linda Diane Feldt
Chair, City of Ann Arbor Transportation Commission