



City of Ann Arbor

301 E. Huron St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
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Meeting Minutes City Planning Commission

Tuesday, June 18, 2013

7:00 PM

City Hall, 301 E. Huron Street, 2nd Flr.

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1 CALL TO ORDER

Chair Westphal called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm.

2 ROLL CALL

Rampson called the roll.

Present 7 - Bona, Mahler, Woods, Westphal, Giannola, Derezinski, and Briere

Absent 2 - Adenekan, and Clein

3 INTRODUCTIONS

4 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Bona, seconded by Mahler, that the agenda be approved as presented. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

5-a [13-0762](#) City Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of April 16, 2013

Moved by Mahler, seconded by Derezinski, that the minutes be approved by the Commission and forwarded to the City Council. One a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

5-b [13-0763](#) City Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of May 21, 2013

Moved by Mahler, seconded by Derezinski, that the minutes be approved by the Commission and forwarded to the City Council. One a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

6 **REPORTS FROM CITY ADMINISTRATION, CITY COUNCIL, PLANNING MANAGER, PLANNING COMMISSION OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES, WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS**

6-a **City Council**

Briere reported that on Monday, she attended a Michigan Municipal League workshop on place-making. She said one of the ideas she took away with her was that cities must work cooperatively and efficiently to market the region. The workshop focused on the value of regional planning and the value of form-based zoning as a tool for place-making.

Rampson reported that at the previous night's meeting, the City Council approved amendments to the Sign Ordinance that would ban billboards and allow for limited changeable digital content on signs, in addition to the State Street Center Site Plan, the 544 Detroit Site Plan and the associated Brownfield Plan (which will move forward to the Washtenaw County Redevelopment Authority for approval), an amendment to the Packard Square Brownfield Plan, the McMullen Annexation, and the Max Annexation. She noted that Councilmember Briere was re-appointed to continue serving on the City Planning Commission until November 2013 as Council representative, Bonnie Bona was re-appointed to serve on the City Planning Commission and Jeremy Peters was nominated to fill Tony Derezinski's position on the Commission.

6-b **Planning Manager**

Rampson requested that the Commission complete the poll on their availability during the summer to assure quorums during the vacation months.

Rampson reported that the Commission's request to meet with City Attorney, Kevin McDonald was targeted for the month of August.

She reported that the Design Review Board will be meeting tomorrow on a proposal at 319 North Main Street for an addition to an existing building to make it an owner-occupied, multi-family dwelling.

Rampson reported that the department is embarking on the e-Markup software installation, which will allow them to accept, review and approve plans in digital format.

6-c **Planning Commission Officers and Committees**

Bona reported that the North Main Huron River Task Force had its third and final public meeting last week, and the on-line survey is closed, but comments can still be provided directly to Sumedh Bahl's email (provided on the City's website). She added that their report is due to Council by the end of July.

Westphal said he would like to sneak in some words of appreciation to the departing

Commission members, Eric Mahler and Tony Derezinski. He said the Commission is honored by their service but saddened by their departure.

Bona said she felt like the Commission's ballast is leaving. She thanked them, adding that both attorneys have provided much common sense and practicality to the discussion.

Giannola agreed, and thanked them for the forward thinking that they both have shown in the Washtenaw Avenue and State Street corridor studies. She said she felt that they both think outside of the box and are more future driven than just trying to have the City stay the same. She said sometimes that is not always appreciated, but added that she has always appreciated it as a City resident. She said she would miss them a lot, and their legal orientation that has come through on the forum will be deeply missed. She noted that if they should follow future Planning discussions they should realize their input will be sorely missed.

Woods echoed the previous comments, adding that their comments and thoughts will be missed. She thanked them for their service and friendship.

Briere said she never really got to know Commissioner Mahler, but hopes to follow his service as he goes on to represent the City at the Ann Arbor Transportation Authority [AATA]. She said she got to know Commissioner Derezinski and his convictions during the four years they sat next to each other on the City Council. She thanked the Commissioners for their service on the Commission.

Westphal agreed, and thanked Derezinski for his collaborative efforts throughout the years both on the Commission and outside of the Commission, adding that his efforts will bear fruit in the long run.

Rampson said she values their leadership on the Commission that demands much of its members, which meets weekly throughout the year, and they have done this enthusiastically, without complaints. She said Mahler has shown eminent patience on the Commission and always knew when to bring comments that clarified issues, which has been very valuable. She added it has been great to see his commitment to the City and she looks forward to seeing him on AATA.

Rampson said Commissioner Derezinski is always good for a new idea and with that comes all the enthusiasm that he brings, along with his commitment to good government, transparency in government. She said his emphasis on regional planning has been a great guidepost that she feels they all should be looking towards, whether it be through bringing jurisdictions or generations together. She agreed that both Commissioners will be sorely missed.

Derezinski explained that he would regrettably be leaving the meeting early for a family commitment. He thanked the Commission for the pleasure of their company, adding that it has been a wonderful time, and a unique body that works together on tough decisions and respects each other, and never allowing personal feelings to get in the way; rather, works on a collegial level. He said collegiality and civility are very important to him, as well as friendship, and it works. He said bridging the gap on things when you don't agree helps keep the civility and makes government work well. He said he has a special relationship with each of the Commissioners as well as Wendy Rampson and her tremendous staff, whom have been great. He said he worked for a number of cities throughout Michigan when he worked in a law office, but this Planning Department in Ann Arbor is especially unique and has some incredibly smart and hardworking staff who really gave it all, adding that it isn't by accident, but through great leadership, goodwill and friendship. Upon leaving he

thanked all for the past four and a half wonderful years on the Commission.

Mahler thanked the Commission for their kind comments, stating that he really enjoyed every moment of every meeting on the Commission. He said it is incredible when he realizes how much the Commission and the staff have accomplished during the past 6 years. He said he can leave the Commission with one word, 'Pride'. He noted that what he sees and hears throughout the State is envy for the City of Ann Arbor; the way it is, the way it operates and a lot of that has to do with the Planning staff, the Planning Commission, and the Council.

Derezinski left at 7:32 p.m.

6-d Written Communications and Petitions

[13-0765](#)

Various Correspondence to the City Planning Commission

Received and Filed

ROLL CALL

Present 6 - Bona, Mahler, Woods, Westphal, Giannola, and Briere

Absent 3 - Adenekan, Clein, and Derezinski

7 AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (Persons may speak for three minutes about an item that is NOT listed as a public hearing on this agenda. Please state your name and address for the record.)

Steve Bison, 825 Tappan, said he had a number of questions. He said he is trying to educate himself because he wants to be of help. He explained that he had been reading an interesting and amazing book titled, 'Suburban Nation', which made him think about Ann Arbor, and how urban sprawl affects so many different factors, such as maintaining infrastructure, and federal funding to cities. He said that he is learning about zoning, and how communities use standardized coding. He said there are many unique ways to create space, and while people complain about taxes there might be variables that help people.

Noting no further speakers, the Chair closed the audience participation.

8 PUBLIC HEARINGS SCHEDULED FOR NEXT BUSINESS MEETING

[13-0764](#)

U-Haul Storage Buildings & Showroom Addition Site Plan for City Council Approval - A proposal to construct a 1,246 square foot addition to the front of the existing showroom building located at 3655 South State Street, and to construct two new storage buildings at the rear of this 4.68 acres site; a 4,994 square foot warehouse and a 11,696 square foot building containing individual storage units. The detention basin at the rear of the site will be expanded. Ward 4

Chair Westphal read the Public Hearing Notice as published.

9 UNFINISHED BUSINESS

[13-0766](#)

Master Plan Review - The Planning Commission is seeking comments about elements that should be studied for possible change or new elements that should be added to the master plan. This information is important to the Planning Commission in setting its work program for the upcoming fiscal year. The adopted plan elements can be found on the City's website, www.a2gov.org/planning <<http://www.a2gov.org/planning>>

Rampson presented the staff report.

Moved by Woods, seconded by Mahler:

RESOLVED, that the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby approves the "City of Ann Arbor Master Plan Resolution" and the "City of Ann Arbor Resource Information in Support of the City Master Plan Resolution" dated June 18, 2013.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION:

Bona said she agreed with the changes.

Moved by Bona, seconded by Mahler, that the Resource Information in Support of the City Master Plan Resolution be revised to include the Allen Creek Greenway Task Force Report.

Bona said she felt the Allen Creek Greenway report should be on the Resource List because there is on-going work on North Main that incorporates the greenway. She explained that 721 N. Main will have the first piece of the greenway going through it. She said she believes the report has options incorporated into it.

Rampson explained that the Allen Creek Greenway report covers the three City owned properties, with 721 N. Main Street being one of those, with three development options.

Westphal asked what value she felt it would bring to other planning issues if this was added.

Bona said 415 W. Washington and the site at William and First Streets are still undeveloped, and she felt the major piece is the concept of the connectivity along that path, which is also incorporated into the PROS plan. She said an ongoing discussion is how the adjacent parcels get developed.

Woods said she was in support of adding the additional resource document, and asked what year the Allen Creek Greenway Task Force Report was completed.

Rampson said 2007.

Briere said she was also in support of the addition, primarily for the impact on planning and zoning for those areas adjacent to the greenway, as it begins to form. She added that people are looking at the areas adjacent to the planned greenway flow as potential commercial or higher density housing. She said she felt it would be valuable for them to incorporate what they learned in the Calthorpe Plan, which also touched on the greenway, and how the City interacts with the proposed greenway is going to be a very valuable thing for the Commission to think about as they keep the Master Plan refreshed.

Westphal asked Rampson if she saw the report as an analogous with the Calthorpe Plan if she saw any conflict between them. He was in support of the addition if they weren't in conflict.

Rampson said she didn't see any conflict between the two documents as they provide base information giving a starting point for discussion on changing or modifying plans. She added that one might find conflict between the documents and the Master Plan, with the Master Plan always being the final word.

Woods asked if these documents would be available on the City's website.

Rampson said yes.

On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried and the resolution amended.

On a roll call on the main motion, the vote was as follows with the Chair declaring the motion carried and the resolutions approved as amended.

Yeas: 6 - Bonnie Bona, Eric A. Mahler, Wendy Woods, Kirk Westphal, Diane Giannola, and Sabra Briere

Nays: 0

Absent: 3 - Eleanore Adenekan, Kenneth Clein, and Tony Derezinski

10 **REGULAR BUSINESS - Staff Report, Public Hearing and Commission Discussion of Each Item**

(If an agenda item is tabled, it will most likely be rescheduled to a future date. If you would like to be notified when a tabled agenda item will appear on a future agenda, please provide your email address on the form provided on the front table at the meeting. You may also call Planning and Development Services at 734-794-6265 during office hours to obtain additional information about the review schedule or visit the Planning page on the City's website (www.a2gov.org.)

(Public Hearings: Individuals may speak for three minutes. The first person who is the official representative of an organized group or who is representing the petitioner may speak for five minutes; additional representatives may speak for three minutes. Please state your name and address for the record.)

(Comments about a proposed project are most constructive when they relate to: (1) City Code requirements and land use regulations, (2) consistency with the City Master Plan, or (3) additional information about the area around the petitioner's property and the extent to which a proposed project may positively or negatively affect the area.)

ROLL CALL

Present 7 - Bona, Mahler, Woods, Westphal, Giannola, Clein, and Briere

Absent 2 - Adenekan, and Derezinski

10-a [13-0742](#)

Hampton Inn and Suites Planned Project Site Plan for City Council Approval - A proposal to construct a new four-story, 72,000 square foot hotel on the west side of this 8.8 acres site located at 2910 Jackson Road, which contains an existing hotel. A planned project modification is requested to allow the new hotel building to exceed the

maximum setback of 50 feet; the building is proposed to be located on the previously constructed foundation, which is 72.5 feet from the Jackson Road right-of-way. A landscape modification is requested to provide the required bio-retention in one large area south of the building. A total of 337 parking spaces are proposed for the two hotels. Ward 5

Enter Clein at 6:57 p.m.

Thacher presented the staff report.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Andy Wakeland, PE, Giffels Webster, 6303 26 Mile Road, Suite 100, Washington, MI 48094, introduced the rest of the team, including the architect, developer and owners. He noted that this project started prior to 2008, with the installation of the infrastructure and foundation, and when the economy took a downward turn they lost the financing. He said the owners held onto the property and now want to proceed to build according to the plans, explaining that they would like to use the current foundation and underground utilities. He said they have revised the parking orientation and consolidated landscaping into the bioretention area that follows drainage pattern in order to collect as much water as they could. He said they had to meet new standards for parking lot landscaping and have incorporated as many green elements as possible to liven it up and not have it just look like a hotel.

Jeff Ryntz, 430 N. Woodward, Birmingham, MI 48009, architect, displayed a sample board of proposed materials. He said the building will have brick at the base, and EFAS at the top with metal trim topping it off. He said these materials are an upgrade from Hampton Inn standard materials.

Akram Namon, 27725 Greenfield Rd. Southfield, MI, owner of the project, said this presentation shows his firm commitment to this project and the City of Ann Arbor to proceed with this project. He explained that during the loss of financing in 2009, 2010, and 2011, he used his own finances and personal loans in an attempt to keep the project moving along. He added that Hampton Inn is a high scale brand and near the Hilton Hotel and he felt it will make a nice addition to the area and the City.

Steve Bison, 829 Tappan Street, Ann Arbor, stated that he didn't have anything specific to say about the project, but wanted the Commission to think about the aesthetics and the pedestrian experience when walking past a brick wall versus a parking area. He said it sounds like a good project and the proposed brick looks cool. He commented that developers will not come before the Commission without a guide.

Noting no further speakers, the Chair closed the public hearing.

Moved by Briere, seconded by Giannola, that the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve the Hampton Inn Planned Project Site Plan and Development Agreement; and

that the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve the proposed modifications to the interior landscape island bioretention requirements of Chapter 62 (Landscape and Screening Ordinance)

COMMISSION DISCUSSION:

Giannola asked staff if it is better to have the driveways across from another or offset.

Thacher said staff encourages having them opposite each other in order to lessen conflicting points.

Giannola said her concern is for vehicles cutting across from Weber's Inn.

Thacher said it will be posted as right turn only.

Briere asked about the lack of reference to maintenance of the new sidewalk in the Development agreement and what 'maintenance of the sidewalk' means.

Thacher said she is mostly concerned with snow removal, pointing out that the island is in the MDOT jurisdiction, and staff would like to have it clarified in the agreement who is responsible for what.

Briere asked if the frontage sidewalk connects with other sidewalks.

Thacher said no.

Briere asked if there was an expectation that when the vacant parcel becomes developed that the sidewalks would connect.

Thacher said, yes, if the vacant land is in the City.

Clein said in reviewing the plan it looks like the sidewalk is close to the road and the parking lot won't be a visual impact due to the landscaping and berm. He commented that it makes sense to allow the petitioner to use the foundation that was already started on. He asked if the proposed material on the bottom part of the building is split face block.

Ryntz said yes, and the brick will be standard size. He added that the building would be a wood frame building, and the building code allows for thin brick above 30 feet instead of the EFAS.

Clein asked if the building is fully sprinklered.

Ryntz said yes, and explained that the building plans, along with mechanical, electrical, and plumbing, had been reviewed earlier by the City's Building Department before the project initially began.

Clein asked if every room would have individual air conditioners.

Ryntz said yes.

Clein asked about the placement of mechanical equipment.

Ryntz explained that it would be located on the roof with parapet walls that shield it from view.

Woods asked how the site works, and if the two hotels work together.

Akim said he has been in the hotel business for many years and he believes the two hotels will complement each other perfectly. Clarion is a full service hotel with banquet, restaurant, conference and meeting space while the Hampton will have limited service, intended for transient and corporate business. He explained that the management is together and from a business standpoint it will work perfectly, when

looking at the economics of management, sales, and marketing.

Woods asked if they will maintain two separate names.

Akim said yes, this will be Hampton Inn by Hilton and the other is Clarion by Choice Hotels

Woods asked about traffic flow through the site, noting that it looks like traffic can go behind both hotels.

Wakeland showed a drawing with the proposed sidewalk (purple outline) and driveways, which connects to the other hotel site.

Woods asked about bicycle parking and if they plan on providing customers with bicycles.

Wakeland responded the bicycle parking is shown to meet City code and they don't anticipate too many bicycles but they want to be as intermodal as possible.

Rampson said their experience has been that bicycle parking facilities are mostly used by staff.

Woods asked how traffic will be stopped to get pedestrians across the street from the proposed AATA bus stop.

Thacher said MDOT has not mentioned any planning for special signalized crossing, noting that they are willing to allow it, but beyond that, there are currently no proposals.

Woods said this is one of the worst places for pedestrians to cross with people starting to head east, getting onto I-94, and others coming out from the hotel as well as those getting off I-94. She stressed that this site is one of the most challenging sites for pedestrians and while they want to encourage people to use the bus, it will require some thought from all involved, including AATA. She asked if the petitioner had any further thoughts on the matter.

Wakeland said they will be using the boulevard as much as possible which will provide for a safe harbor, adding that this is the best place in the area to cross. He explained that cars are already slowing down to make turn onto east bound I-94 entrance and with the freeway exit on the other side they won't have excessive speeds with the signal and turns.

Woods said it will be important as MDOT starts to look at the issue and possibly consider signage to alert the public to the crossing as well as posted speeds in the vicinity.

Bona asked staff about the standards for a Planned Development listed in the staff report and about the new sidewalk along Jackson Road.

Thacher clarified that the west sidewalk is on the site's property with it crossing onto MDOT's right-of-way.

Bona commented that it looks like the petitioner put a lot of thought into the vehicular access with the sidewalk as an after-thought. She said with Ann Arbor's bicycle traffic and the increasing retirement community using the bus service, the City can only expect it to increase with time. She stressed the need for the building site to be more

pedestrian and bicycle friendly than what is currently proposed. She asked the petitioner to demonstrate how a pedestrian gets into the building from the surrounding access points.

Wakeland demonstrated access on the site plan.

Bona said she cannot vote for a Planned Development since she didn't see a public benefit in how the sidewalks are laid out. She suggested that the design be made for the pedestrians first, with the parking fitting in around the sidewalks. She said she would like for the petitioner to take the matter on and return before the Commission with a site plan showing sidewalks that make sense.

Woods asked about the sidewalk along Jackson Road and how the slopes interact with it.

Thacher reviewed slides of the site showing elevation and topographical information.

Briere noted there are no connecting sidewalks shown on the plan, adding that sidewalks are not decorative, but should be useful and must lead to somewhere. She asked how much conference space is in the Clarion hotel.

Namon said 5,000-6,000 square feet.

Briere asked how many people would be expected to utilize that space.

Namon said 200-300 people.

Briere stated that the petitioner needs to decide if the sidewalks are an amenity for those utilizing the hotels.

Wakeland explained that they proposing to install sidewalk all along the front of the site, because that is where the City would like for them to install it and given the steep slope down to I-94 and the narrow width of land they don't foresee that strip of land being developed in the future. He suggested that they could add sidewalk from the east end of the site to the Clarion hotel entrance, if it would work with the grades.

Briere asked about proposed snow pile storage shown to be located on the side of the sidewalk.

Wakeland said the sidewalk will be much higher than the curb area so it might be a difficult location.

Mahler asked about proposed lighting on the sidewalks that will make them pedestrian friendly.

Wakeland said most of the lighting will be within the islands, and light poles along the parking lot per lighting standards.

Mahler said he would like to see an alternative proposal of the sidewalk layout with the sidewalks laid out first and the parking secondary, adding that he supports a postponement of the item to a future meeting.

Giannola agreed, adding that she too would like to see an attempt to follow Commission concerns. She said the building seems fine, but if there is a way to improve the walkability of the area, then she would support the petitioner showing an alternative plan.

Clein said he has no objections to having the petitioner show alternative plans, but felt they need to keep in mind the location of the car oriented site, which is between an MDOT business route and the freeway and the site doesn't connect well to other things. He said he didn't want the Commission to get hung up on the idea that everyone will be accessing the site through walking, when in the real world most visitors will most likely be accessing the site with their cars, and the employees will be the ones who use the bus stop. He said it might be helpful to see a wider sidewalk that can be used for more options than strictly pedestrians.

Westphal said while he is not a walkability expert, he couldn't help but notice that there was no acknowledgment of the Webers Hotel across the street, through sidewalk connections or consideration that people might use that destination. He asked if they had considered that connection.

Wakeland said since it is MDOT right-of-way, they would need their permission to stub in a sidewalk. He explained that they went through several iterations to get the bioretention area large enough to meet City code as well as meeting parking requirements, adding that they are willing to continue working with City staff to come up with alternative ideas.

Westphal said he is concerned about the direction of the sidewalks away from the two-way drive aisles. He asked if the City would require such layouts.

Rampson explained that the City has no standards for parking lot lay-outs except for aisle width and stall size requirements, and that staff looks at the safest and most logical areas for pedestrian crossings with the best visibility taking into consideration interior circulation. She offered staff to work together with System Planning in reviewing the crossing with their guidance or noted that the Commission could postpone taking action until further details had been considered.

Bona said she goes to hotels often through means of driving there and then going for walks or runs around the hotels. She acknowledged that sidewalks are expensive, and therefore often kept to a minimum, but noted that Briere's idea about making a loop around the site through a path that became an amenity for their patrons would be an improvement.

Woods asked if they had considered looping the sidewalk from the top of the ridge and around the pond, making it like a nature walk for their patrons as well as for the public in the area, reiterating that such a path didn't have to be concrete, but could be asphalt when located on their site.

Wakeland explained that the area is quite heavily wooded with steep slopes and a path would have to be side enough to safely facilitate bike riders as well.

Westphal said he was open to postponement as well as staff involvement if the Commission desired. He reminded the Commission that they have dealt previously with the three frontage issue at Plymouth Road.

Woods said she was not sure to what end a postponement would help, or just delay the project, since any added sidewalk would still need to go to MDOT for review and approval.

Wakeland requested that if the item is postponed, they could come before the Commission at their next meeting.

Bona asked whether the petitioner could get MDOT approval for a crossing to Webers in two weeks.

Thacher said no.

Clein commented that MDOT has approval rights of everything in their ROW.

Bona asked if MDOT has approved the proposed site plan.

Wakeland said, yes, MDOT has said it is approvable, and they won't give formal approval until they apply for permits.

Westphal said he wanted to explore a stub crossing street to Webers but didn't want to hold up the project strictly for that one item.

Moved by Bona, seconded by Briere, to postpone action on this item to the next meeting to allow the petitioner to address concerns about pedestrian access. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

Yeas: 7 - Bonnie Bona, Eric A. Mahler, Wendy Woods, Kirk Westphal, Diane Giannola, Kenneth Clein, and Sabra Briere

Nays: 0

Absent: 2 - Eleanore Adenekan, and Tony Derezinski

10-b [13-0743](#)

City Planning Commission/Staff FY2013-2014 Work Program

Rampson reviewed the FY2013-2014 Work Program with the Commission.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION:

Clein stated that he believed he was on the Master Plan Review Committee as well.

Bona asked if staff can support this list and if Rampson saw challenges in the program.

Rampson responded that the challenges that staff faces include the unknown of the development and permit review that they must attend to firsthand. She said she has had conversations with Sumedh Bahl regarding utilizing consultants to assist with programs.

Rampson noted that the Commission could add checkpoints quarterly to review the progress and amend it as needed.

Moved by Clein, seconded by Bona, that the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby adopts the City Planning Commission/Staff 2013-2014 Work Program. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

Yeas: 7 - Bonnie Bona, Eric A. Mahler, Wendy Woods, Kirk Westphal, Diane Giannola, Kenneth Clein, and Sabra Briere

Nays: 0

Absent: 2 - Eleanore Adenekan, and Tony Derezinski

11 **AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (Persons may speak for three minutes on any item.)**

None.

12 COMMISSION PROPOSED BUSINESS

None.

13 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 9:25 pm.

Kirk Westphal, Chair
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