



City of Ann Arbor

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

Tuesday, September 10, 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 7:03 pm.

2 ROLL CALL

Rampson called the roll.

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

Absent 2 - Adenekan, and Parekh

3 INTRODUCTIONS

4 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Unanimously approved.

5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

[13-1068](#)

July 2, 2013 City Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Moved by Clein, seconded by Giannola, that the minutes be approved as presented. On 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**

Councilmember Briere noted that there were no specific Planning topics that had been before the Council at their last meeting.

6-b **Planning Manager**

Rampson reported that there will be two Commissioners and four staff members going to the Planning Conference in Kalamazoo to be held in the beginning of October.

She reviewed the meeting calendar with the Commission, noting that staff would be attending the Washtenaw Avenue Joint Technical Committee meeting to review the Re-Imagine Washtenaw efforts and she hoped to be able to bring back a report on the design guidelines efforts being done by the neighboring townships of Pittsfield and Ypsilanti.

She further reported that the downtown zoning review has been in full gear and that the Ordinance Revisions Committee met the previous night to go over the workbook, which she also provided to the Commission. She gave an update on the ongoing study being conducted by Erin Perdu and Megan Masson-Minnock, explaining the work being done through focus groups and on-line surveys.

Rampson noted that there would be a Planning Commission working session immediately following today's regular meeting.

ROLL CALL

Paras arrived at 7:12 p.m.

Present 8 - Bona, Woods, Westphal, Giannola, Clein, Briere, Parekh, and Peters

Absent 1 - Adenekan

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

Bona reported that the City Council reconstituted the R4C/R2A Committee and she has been asked to attend to answer questions about the City Planning Commission's intent.

6-d **Written Communications and Petitions**

[13-1069](#)

Various Correspondences to the City Planning Commission

Received and Filed

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.)**

8 PUBLIC HEARINGS SCHEDULED FOR NEXT BUSINESS MEETING[13-1070](#)

Traverwood Apartments Rezoning, Site Plan and Wetland Use Permit for City Council Approval - A proposal to rezone a vacant 3.88 acre parcel at the rear of 2025 Traverwood from ORL (Office, Research, Limited Industrial District) to R4D (Multiple-Family Dwelling District) and attach it to the adjacent 17.96 acres parcel to create a 21.84 acres development parcel. A proposal to construct 255 one and two-bedroom apartments in 14 buildings, accessed by two new driveways from Traverwood Drive. A total of 196 structured parking spaces and 257 exterior spaces will be provided. A community building, pool and play areas will also be provided. A wetland use permit is requested to allow disturbance of three small wetlands, totaling 0.27 acres. Ward 1

Chair Westphal read the notice as published.

9 UNFINISHED BUSINESS**9-a** [13-1071](#)

U-Haul Moving and Storage of Ann Arbor 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. Staff Recommendation: Approval

Kowalski presented the staff report.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Samantha Keating, Amerco Real Estate Company, 2727 North Central Avenue, Phoenix, AZ, was present to respond to any enquiries.

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

Moved by Peters, seconded by Clein, that the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve the U-Haul Moving & Storage of Ann Arbor Site Plan and Development Agreement, subject to approval of the plan by the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner prior to City Council action on the site plan.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION:

Briere asked how the crosswalk would be indicated.

Kowalski responded that it would be a marked pavement crosswalk.

Briere commented that it might be a good idea to think of a marking for the crosswalk that would not wear away with time.

Bona asked if the sidewalk that runs along the building is barrier free or raised and how it will work.

Kowalski said he believes it is raised and there is barrier free access.

Bona said she felt that the proposed addition looked vulnerable without anything around it to protect it, adding that her concern was with the thought of inexperienced drivers handling large vehicles in the parking lot and around the front corner of the building.

Keating explained that there is currently an at-grade entrance and there will continue to be an at-grade entrance, and the sidewalk is flush with the pavement. She explained that they currently don't have issues with vehicles encroaching into that area so they don't believe they will have issues once the building is built.

On a roll call, the vote was as follows, with the Chair declaring the motion carried.

Yeas: 8 - Bonnie Bona, Wendy Woods, Kirk Westphal, Diane Giannola, Kenneth Clein, Sabra Briere, Paras Parekh, and Jeremy Peters

Nays: 0

Absent: 1 - Eleanore Adenekan

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.)

- 10-a** [13-1072](#) Master Plan Amendment: 2013 Update to the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan - The City of Ann Arbor Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on an amendment to the 2007 Non-motorized Transportation Plan. This amendment includes a section on best practices pertaining to planning and policy which includes issues such as updated design guidelines, signage, bicycle parking, and funding. The amendment also includes near-term and long-term non-motorized recommendations for major transportation facilities in Ann Arbor. Copies of the draft plan can be reviewed at: www.a2gov.org/NTPUpdate <<http://www.a2gov.org/NTPUpdate>>.

Staff Recommendation: Approval

Eli Cooper, City Transportation Systems Manager, presented the 2013 Update to the Non-motorized Transportation Plan.

PUBLIC HEARING:

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

Moved by Clein, seconded by Bona, that the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby adopts the 2013 Update to the Non-motorized Transportation Plan as an amendment to the City Master Plan, and

Moved by Clein, seconded by Bona, that the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommends that the City Council adopt the 2013 Update to the Non-motorized Transportation Plan as an amendment to the City Master Plan.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION:

Bona asked how many individuals might have participated in this planning process.

Cooper responded that there were several hundred that participated in the public workshops and approximately 90 individuals who were involved in the focus groups, adding that they interacted with hundreds of people at various table events over the two-year period that they worked on this plan.

Bona asked Cooper how that compared with the 2007 planning process in regards to public participation.

Cooper deferred to Rampson on the 2003-2005 period, noting that when he started with the City in mid-2005 the public participation process had already reached 85% completion.

Rampson stated that this community has really valued non-motorized transportation for a long time, so even before the 2007 Plan was adopted there was the Northeast Area Transportation Plan, where the on-lane bike lanes were vetted with lively debate whether bikes even belonged on the streets. She said she believed the volume of participants have been the same during previous public participations as during this current process, with the participants being different ones. She noted that they have seen an increase in pedestrian advocacy during this planning process versus what there experienced 5-6 years ago.

Bona asked why the City had a Non-motorized Transportation Plan and not just a transportation plan integrated together, that would include the Complete Streets policy.

Cooper explained that the City adopted the first comprehensive transportation update in 2009, which was the first since the 1990's. He said that in that plan, they incorporated the entire Non-motorized Plan. He said that he feels the need to keep the two plans separate since the City has an Alternative Transportation Committee that looks at means of transportation that do not include the motor vehicle. This separate and discrete plan allows the City to celebrate their efforts of non-motorized forms of transportation throughout the City.

Briere said that she had met with a former Commissioner who asked how sufficient funding could be ensured for sidewalks. She said that City Council had allocated \$75,000 towards planning efforts of sidewalks, but she was unaware of any funds

allocated towards implementation. She asked how the implementation would happen.

Cooper said that the Plan sets in place philosophical goals and acts as a template, noting ways in which these goals can be implemented. He said the actual funding comes through the Annual Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), which is reviewed and discussed by the Planning Commission and then moves forward to the Council. He further explained that the City's Project Management staff and the road resurfacing program use the plan to its fullest to bring about the goals outlined in the plan whenever they are working on streets or infrastructure projects throughout the City. He pointed to Stadium Boulevard and how they were able to get added bike lanes when they re-did the water main project and resurfacing of the road. He said it comes down to everyone in the City working together to bring about the goals when the opportunity arises, using all available funding as approved by Council.

Clein thanked Cooper for the report and all the hard work in putting the plan together and for having it in one place on the City's website. He said he feels that there has been an increase in non-motorized activities in the last 5 years in the City, and encouraged people to continue moving in that direction.

Peters thanked Cooper and staff for their efforts on the plan and asked what opportunities were available for amendments to the plan, should such arise.

Cooper responded that the plan remains open for amendments and that the City has added several regional stakeholders, with the topic remaining as an on-going conversation and on-going process.

Peters said that a member of the public, whom had previously brought her concerns before the Commission, had reiterated her concerns with the need to have safe routes to schools, and he wondered if there was a City wide review done of the schools and if there was any collaboration with the schools on this matter.

Cooper explained the different elements; 'Safe Routes to School', being a Federal transportation program that has come through the Michigan Department of Transportation [MDOT] with a distinct definition. He said that there was an important acknowledgement of consideration very early on with the Non-Motorized Plan to recognize pedestrian and bicycle access to all of the schools. He explained that the Michigan program has received high praise in that it requires grassroots involvement, and applications have to be submitted and supported by the school and the parents of the children interested in requested improvements. He further explained that the City may provide support for such improvements but they are not permitted to initiate them and go out and do the work; however, he stressed that the City is always ready to work with their partners, citizens and parents on specific school access issues.

Rampson asked if the plan included a specific reference to the access to schools.

Cooper responded that the 2007 Non-Motorized Plan does.

Rampson asked Peters if he would like to see more in reference to the school access issue than what is noted in the plan.

Peters said he didn't know if the matter required further action in regards to the plan; however he had been made aware of the grassroots interest on this topic in Ann Arbor.

Briere stated that it would be helpful if the Alternative Transportation Committee meetings were listed on the City's website.

Cooper said he would get with the Communications Department to make sure they get added, pointing out that the [ALT] meetings typically meet the second Thursday of the month at 2:30 p.m. in the DDA offices. He said the meetings are open to the public and they often have specific groups who come to make presentation on various topics of interest.

Briere said that she is aware that City staff, Council members and the City Administrator and others have been meeting for the past 18 months to discuss access issues, and that the sidewalk gap completion program came out of those meetings. She said that homeowners, parents and schools need to be the ones to work with the City to request certain sidewalk gaps to be filled and that the program prevents the City to operate in a pro-active way on collaborating with the schools, and worked supportively on filling the needs. She said the news needs to get out that there is a program available and that there is a concerned, organized group who cares about the issue.

Parekh thanked Cooper for putting together the plan with recommendations and ideas, adding that it is enlightening to see where Ann Arbor is in comparison to other cities. He asked if the latest comments had been included in the version provided to the Commission.

Cooper said, yes, that the September 10th version did include their comments.

Rampson pointed the Commission's attention to the memo included with their plan. She also read an email, received late in the day from Evan Pratt, that included some comments on recommendations to the plan that also included the CIP [Capital Improvement Plan]. She asked Briere if she had met with Pratt to discuss his suggestions.

Briere said yes, and that the document made reference to the City Council budget and timeline for the matter.

Rampson asked if she felt the issue had been addressed through the document.

Briere said that it only addressed the planning but not the implementation and Pratt's suggestion was that it be added to the CIP and thereby the implementation would be taken care of.

Rampson explained that once something is added to the Master Plan it can then be incorporated into the CIP, and becomes part of the City's process.

Westphal asked if the implementation would then fall into the CIP prioritization system as to what gets funded. He asked about the suggestion of separate funding for the sidewalks.

Rampson responded that that is part of an on-going study being conducted by the City's Systems Planning Department.

Cooper explained that they had framed the possibility of separate sidewalk funding two years ago when they began the process, and they are now taking a closer look at the overall need, implementation and funding.

Westphal gave staff accolades for putting the plan together and including the public process document as well. He said the charts on page 7 were truly helpful. He said when the facilities of added bike lanes are added, the comfort levels have gone way

up and the increased usage verifies that. He said it would be helpful if conversion data and road diets could be included, if available.

Cooper explained that the City's Complete Streets program with bike lanes and pedestrian crossings with road diets [i.e., waiting space in between lanes] is so much more effective when looking at crash reduction data. He said he would provide the requested data to the Commission.

Westphal said it was incredible to see how well the road -share was working in Ann Arbor. He noted the general desire for people to expect responsible behavior on the part on non-motorized users and that going hand-in-hand with responsible motorists.

Cooper commented that the intent of enforcement is not to write tickets, rather to bring attention to the fact that there are rules that we, as a local government, are enforcing those rules. He said he felt comfortable that in a few years into the future, they will look back and be happy that they took steps to up the program.

Giannola asked Cooper to explain the plan's amendment.

Cooper replied that the amendments to the plan will be incorporated once they are adopted, and each word in the report will carry the same policy weight as the others in the document. He said that it was deemed that 60-70% of the 2007 plan remains valid and in effect and the amendments is intended to freshen up the plan and incorporate some new policy issues and outline more thoughtful recommendations for geographic locations.

Bona commented that the CIP prioritization process is very sophisticated and asked if the proposed planning study would be approved by Council, if it would include a prioritization of the 80 gaps, adding that it would be interesting to see if our CIP prioritizes them in the same way. She referenced Evan Pratt's concerns and said that in looking at the CIP one would expect these items to be prioritized higher.

Cooper said that his sense was that often when items are prioritized they get lumped into their broader group and sidewalks probably are viewed as more of a local improvement element without a dedicated funding source, and at the end of the day, they remain a priority but on an unfunded list.

Briere pointed out CIP funding criteria for prioritization of City and community improvements.

Rampson noted that CIP funding criteria have been established by staff in the past and blessed by the previous City Planning Commissions, adding that the Commission, as the reviewing body, has the ability to suggest that different criteria be used or added. She noted that this is an 'off' year for the CIP, but that it is a timely discussion given that Deb Gosselin begins putting the CIP together in October. Rampson offered to convene a meeting for the CIP committee.

Westphal asked for an update on proposed bicycle parking.

Cooper said he hasn't heard of parking being an issue. He said that private developments are working with Planning staff on retro-fitting their sites to manage the needs of bicycle parking.

On a roll call, the vote was as follows with the Chair declaring the motions carried.

Yeas: 8 - Bonnie Bona, Wendy Woods, Kirk Westphal, Diane Giannola, Kenneth Clein, Sabra Briere, Paras Parekh, and Jeremy Peters

Nays: 0

Absent: 1 - Eleanore Adenekan

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

Kathy Griswold, said she has been advocating for sidewalks and non-motorized plans for 20 years. She said the first sidewalk she was involved in establishing was along Pemberton, where children were forced to walk in the street to get to school. She said it was a simple project in 1980's but hasn't been that easy since then. She said the sidewalk gap strategic plan has been prepared by staff, and that the committee met with Council members. She showed maps that had been created showing sidewalks and gaps. She said she was involved in the process to identify sidewalk gaps through the School Transportation Safety Committee, adding that she felt it was despicable that we are not committed to getting children safely to school. She said that former City Manager Roger Frasier was not supportive of sidewalks and she had documentation received through FOIAs on the matter.

12 COMMISSION PROPOSED BUSINESS

13 ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Kirk Westphal, Chair
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