

City of Ann Arbor Environmental Commission

December 4, 2014

Action Meeting

G.C. Larcom, Jr. Municipal Building, Basement Conference Room
301 E. Huron, Ann Arbor, MI

Call to Order:

7:08pm

Roll Call:

Present – 8

Wayne Appleyard, Sabra Briere, John German, Chris Graham, Katherine Hollins, Allison Skinner, Missy Stults, Benjamin Muth

Absent - 3

Mike Anglin, Susan Hutton, Patti Smith

Open position for Planning Commission and one vacant position

Quorum present

Staff Present:

Jamie Kidwell-Brix

Matthew Naud

Approval of Agenda:

Motion by Commissioner Muth, second by Commissioner Appleyard
Added Elections of Chair and Vice Chair to the agenda

Motion Approved on Voice Vote

Approval of Minutes:

Action Meeting Minutes – October 23, 2014

Motion by Commissioner Muth, second by Commissioner Appleyard

Motion Approved on Voice Vote

Public Commentary:

Linda Peck

Spoke in support of working to change state and local laws controlling herbicide and pesticide use. Shared materials with Naud and commissioners. Asked commissioners to get in touch with her if interested in working on this.

Unfinished Business:

Elections for Chair and Vice Chair

Motion by Commissioner German, second by Commissioner Stults to nominate Commissioner Hutton for Chair

Motion by Councilmember Briere, second by Commissioner Muth to nominate Commissioner Graham for Vice Chair

Motions Approved on a Voice Vote

New Business:

DDA Streetscape Project Presentation – Amber Miller, Downtown Development Authority
Amber Miller from the DDA, Connie Pulcifer, systems planner at the City of Ann Arbor, and Oliver Kiley from Smith Group JJR provided an overview of the A2Downtown Street Design Manual.

- Project started in January 2014 and expected to be completed in early 2015
- Collaborative project between the City and the DDA
- Streets, sidewalks, and alleys make up 30% of downtown district
- Street typologies approach to planning that balance function and context-based design
- Project will lead to a user guide and action plan for the downtown district that is applicable to DDA, City, private development, and special events

Discussion: *Miller, Pulcifer, and Kiley responded to comments and questions from the commission.*

- Potential for overlap with commission work plan. For example, construction and waste demolition ordinance, incentives for sustainable buildings, tracking local air quality data, assessing urban heat island.
 - Document will be a living document and nice to see the overlap.
- What is the next opportunity for the commission to share comments on the draft?
 - Expected to have draft this month, and will seek input from advisory groups first. Will work with Naud and Kidwell to flag interest areas for the commission.
- Once the draft is issued and integrated into the orange book, will the recommendations be requirements or suggested guidelines?
 - Both. Depends on the elements being looking at.
- Is this a DDA implemented requirement or City ordinance?
 - It will be incorporated in the orange book, which is approved by City Council. Project is a collaborative City and DDA project.
- Do additional requirements of the project already exist elsewhere in city code?
 - No. Can provide handout that gives a sense of the breadth of elements that could be considered within certain areas of the downtown. Not all elements will be requirements.
- Will this document help streamline certain processes, like bike share?
 - Yes, this document is a guidance document that will help with coordination.
- How will the proposed solutions in the example guidebook work in Ann Arbor?
 - Are looking for solutions that work within the context of downtown Ann Arbor. For instance, downtown has narrow streets and bike buffers may not work in certain areas.
- How will this plan facilitate traffic through town (e.g., moving from north to south)?
 - Plan is acknowledging that some streets are designed for moving traffic, but recognizes the need to accommodate other modes of transportation. Are looking to at both the Non-Motorized and Motorized Transportation Plan. Project works closely with the Pedestrian Safety and Access Task Force.
- Does the plan account for modifications for future development?
 - Plan intended to be forward looking and will need to be a living document to account for changes in zoning and other potential changes. City and DDA are

looking to designate staff that is charged with updating plan and its relation to land use and changes in development and character.

- Is there a stated review mechanism for the plan?
 - Will be part of the written document

Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) Presentation – Deb Gosselin, City of Ann Arbor Systems Planning

Deb Gosselin, systems planning engineer at the City of Ann Arbor, provided an overview of the CIP and its approval process. Gosselin is working to chart how projects relate to the Sustainability Framework to track progress in CIP process.

- CIP is a state-required plan completed for a six-year cycle that deals with infrastructure projects
- Plan is organized around 13 asset categories
 - 50 staff members are part of these teams and 11 different service units
- Three overarching asset areas
 - Municipal facilities –city buildings, parks and recreation, solid waste
 - Transportation – airport, alternative transportation, bridges, new street development, other transportation projects, parking facilities, and street construction
 - Utilities - sanitary sewer system, stormwater system and water system
- CIP Process
 - 1. Assess project needs and enter in CIP database
 - 2. Prioritize projects using prioritization tool that includes the Sustainability Framework goals
 - 3. Program projects into six-year plan based on needs, funding, and staff capacity
- CIP is reviewed and approved by Planning Commission
 - Plan to be reviewed at Planning Commission public hearing at 7pm on December 16th

Discussion: *Gosselin responded to questions and comments from commissioners.*

- How does the City deal with the difficulty of getting construction materials, such as concrete or asphalt?
 - Cannot always control. Check with contractor to see what materials are available.
- Does concrete or asphalt cost more and which needs more maintenance?
 - Concrete lifespan is longer, but is more expensive to replace. City will be investigating rehabilitating and maintaining as opposed to complete resurfacing. Need to look at both environmental and financial cost.
- Durability of roads is a concern.
 - Looking to start recording the mix of asphalt used in certain projects.
- Crowning of roads is a concern.
 - Delaying reconstruction can lead to problems with this. Slope of roads need to be addressed.
- Is every number in 2016 funded in draft CIP?
 - Projects that depend on general fund often will shift around. Funding sources are available in CIP documents posted online (<http://www.a2gov.org/departments/systems-planning/capital-improvements/Pages/FY2016---2021-Capital-Improvements-Plan.aspx>)
 - Projects go into the CIP process even if projects are not currently funded

- Next City Council meeting council will consider acceptance of state dollars for road construction

Sister Lakes Discussion – Commissioner Stults

- \$250,000 set aside in CIP for First Sister Lake
- Commissioner Stults brought forward a resolution that Park Advisory Commission approved to bring in front of Environmental Commission

Motion by Councilmember Briere, second by Commissioner Skinner

Motion Approved on a Voice Vote

Train Station Discussion – Commissioner Muth

- Looking to gauge whether other commissioners are interested in environmental impacts of the train stations
 - Could have impacts on transit, forestry, non-motorized transportation
- Consultant was hired to conduct environmental assessment of potential train station site locations
 - Narrowed down to two locations – current location and Fuller
- Public vote occurs regardless of the site location
- Connector Study is looking at transit north to south
- Potential to make recommendations about the process and policy recommendations
- Potential to make recommendations to include in the environmental assessment process
 - Naud will look at where in the process this is and is based on federal NEPA requirements
- University of Michigan working to protect the burr oak trees on the VA parking site

Commissioner Hollins proposed working with Commissioner German and other interested parties to work on air quality monitoring.

Report from Staff:

Staff Update by Naud and Kidwell-Brix

- Compiled survey results with priority items from commission work plan
- Sustainable Ann Arbor Forums starting in January with forum on sustainable buildings
- Still working on solar installation
- Ann Arbor not selected as 100 Resilient Communities recipient

Items for Next Agenda:

- Train station
- Solid Waste Subcommittee (Commissioner Skinner)
- Idling and Air Quality Tracking (Commissioner Hollins)

Next Scheduled Meeting:

January 22, 2015

Public Commentary:

None

Adjournment:

Adjourned 9:15pm