



**City of Ann Arbor**  
**Formal Minutes - Draft**  
**City Planning Commission**

301 E. Huron St.  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104  
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Tuesday, December 4, 2012

7:00 PM

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

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**9-4 12-1534** Master Plan Amendment: 2012 Sustainability Framework - A proposal to adopt a framework of 16 overarching sustainability goals as a new city-wide element of the City Master Plan.

*Thacher presented the staff report.*

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

*Noting no speakers, the Secretary declared the public hearing closed.*

**Moved by Briere, seconded by Clein, that the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby adopts the 2012 Sustainability Framework, as revised, as a citywide element of the City of Ann Arbor Master Plan,**

**and further,**

**that the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommends that the City Council adopt the 2012 Sustainability Framework, as revised, as a city wide element of the City of Ann Arbor Master Plan.**

**COMMISSION DISCUSSION:**

*Bona clarified the motions.*

*Mahler said congratulations to staff. He said it seemed like it was just recently that they were meeting at Cobblestone Farm to brainstorm about these ideas. He said the proposed text change to the Climate and Energy goal does not call for increased efficiency in existing buildings. He asked if it would be possible to add language that would call for it.*

*Thacher said the intent was to increase efficiency in existing buildings while preserving their architectural integrity.*

*Mahler asked what if the two issues conflict, noting that there could be some inherent conflicts involved.*

*Thacher said this is an issue that the Historic District Commission has to grapple with, and they have to work to find alternate solutions to the*

*easiest or cheapest route. She said there may be other ramifications to preserving architectural integrity, but they are trying to avoid doing harmful things to existing buildings.*

*Clein said there will be conflicts, and there is a need to look at each situation on a case by case basis. He said the language might read, "integrity of historic buildings and neighborhoods".*

*Giannola asked if such language would be needed, since the Historic District Commission already covers the issue. She whether this language could prevent sustainable updates of any old house.*

*Briere said she speaks from her experience on the Environmental Commission, adding that there are lots of older neighborhoods that aren't in a historic district. She said she doesn't see any conflict in preserving architectural integrity and increasing energy efficiency. She said that one can do terrible things to a house in the name of energy efficiency and negatively affect the neighborhood.*

*Bona said she was struggling with the issue from a different direction. She said the issue of an existing building being green is a result of its embodied energy, not its architectural integrity, which is more so preserving community and a sense of place, not energy. She said she does agree that preserving the architecture is important to preserving the building.*

*Briere suggested adding this goal under the section on diverse housing.*

*Thacher responded that the word 'historic' was intentionally not used, since the historic districts are covered through the Historic District Commission, and the idea with the Sustainability Framework is looking at a broader, citywide view. She said the reasoning behind the placement of the wording, 'architectural integrity' is because the greatest impact for this is coming through retrofitting of older buildings. She said the document is meant to raise discussion in order to make a project better and is not intended as a rule, or restricting anyone from doing anything.*

*Bona said even an ugly building will conserve energy if it is not torn down. She explained that when a building is torn down, it takes 50 years to make up for embodied, lost energy.*

*Derezinski said overall, this document is a masterful job, noting that there is a balance between economic vitality potential and preservation. He said the document is intended to be used to guide the creation of the master plan and zoning ordinances of the City. He said it is important to keep in mind that the goal isn't growth at any cost; rather rational*

*planning and rational economic vitality in order to make the community sustainable over the long period of time.*

*Clein thanked staff for all the work that went into the document. He agreed with Derezinski on his comments regarding development balance. He said he knows, as an architect, there are buildings that are unfortunately built not to last and will need to be removed and replaced at some point. He said several months ago he had brought comments on the proposed document related to the words "high performance buildings" which he explained refers to specific construction standards within the architectural field, and are typically applied to brand new buildings, and he had suggested that the wording be changed to move away from that specific phrase.*

*Giannola said if high performance buildings are new buildings then it makes it confusing to include this language in the document. She noted that it could be a compromise that may do nothing.*

*Bona said high performance buildings are possible to obtain in existing buildings, but very difficult. She said this plan tries to get us thinking bigger, for example, zero waste. She said she would not want existing buildings removed from the high performance goal.*

*Briere said she visited a staff person who had a copy of the Sustainability Framework on their desk in preparation for the Council retreat. She noted that even though it hasn't reached the stage of an action plan, it is being integrated into City decisions and she counts that as a real plus. She said there are so many ways of increasing energy efficiency within an existing building, within the existing building envelope or materials. She said she sees the document as a guide to Council and staff, as they look at the permit and requirement process. She said she doesn't see it as something restrictive, but an opportunity to look for new ways of doing things.*

*Mahler asked if the words "high performance buildings" could be changed to "highly efficient buildings".*

*Clein said it would be moving in the right direction, since the language doesn't speak to existing standards.*

*Mahler said, as discussed, it is difficult to make the leap from older buildings to high performance buildings, so exchanging the wording to highly efficient buildings might still capture the vernacular of what the intention is within the sustainability framework.*

*Rampson advised that the Commission shouldn't feel obligated to make*

*language changes at this evening's meeting if they felt they needed further discussion time. She said there was no deadline for adoption of the document.*

*Mahler said he proposes changing "high performance buildings" to Highly Efficient Buildings.*

*Thacher suggested the words "High Performing Buildings".*

*Derezinski asked if High Performance has a set meaning.*

*Clein said it does. He explained that it defines how buildings are constructed in terms of the envelope, heat loss, efficiencies; using specific performance characteristics, such as LEED. He said the new Justice Center is a High Performance Building.*

*Derezinski said that while the standard is a tough goal, it might be the intention of using it to set the goal high.*

*Bona said sustainability is a lot more than energy efficiency, and high performance is a lot more than energy efficiency. She said it becomes a bit like defining sustainability.*

*Giannola asked if including the language makes the sentence conflicting, and if the goal could realistically be achieved.*

*Bona said architectural integrity does not have a lot to do with energy efficiency.*

*Rampson suggested that staff review the document along with tapping into the expertise of the Commission in coming up with possible language that will address the community effort vs the energy component..*

*Bona suggested that they might want to separate new vs existing building in two separate statements.*

**Moved by Briere, seconded by Adenekan, to postpone action on the plan until the January 3, 2013 meeting. On a roll call, the vote was as follows, with the Secretary declaring the motion carried.**

**Yeas:** 7 - Bonnie Bona, Eric A. Mahler, Diane Giannola, Eleanore Adenekan, Kenneth Clein, Tony Derezinski, and Sabra Briere

**Nays:** 0

**Absent:** 2 - Wendy Woods, and Kirk Westphal