



City of Ann Arbor
Formal Minutes
Design Review Board

301 E. Huron St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
<http://a2gov.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

Wednesday, April 15, 2015

3:00 PM

City Hall, 301 E. Huron Street,
Basement Conference Rooms

A **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Tamara Burns called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m.

B **ROLL CALL**

Staff Present: Alexis DiLeo, Megan Masson-Minock (ENP & Associates)

Present 6 - Chet Hill, Richard (Dick) Mitchell, Tamara Burns, Paul Fontaine, William Kinley, and Shannan Gibb-Randall

Absent 1 - Geoffrey M. Perkins

C **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The meeting agenda was revised to switch G-2 (Downtown Premium Prioritization Info & Input) and F (Revisiting Amendments to the Bylaws), and unanimously approved.

D **INTRODUCTIONS**

E **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

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The minutes were unanimously approved by the Board. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

F **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

F-1 **15-0472** Revisiting Amendments to the Bylaws

Alexis DiLeo explained that the City Attorney's Office advised against the proposed amendments to the Bylaws made by the Board at its last review of the Bylaws in August 2015. The Board must decide if it would approve

the Bylaws without any amendments or would still recommend to City Council that the Bylaws be amended.

The Board unanimously approved the Bylaws without any further amendments. On a voice vote, the motion was carried.

G NEW BUSINESS

G-1 [15-0443](#) Approval of the FY2015-2016 Design Review Board Meeting Schedule

The proposed FY2015-2016 meeting schedule was unanimously approved. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried.

G-2 [15-0444](#) Downtown Premium Prioritization Information and Input - Discussion with staff about a planning initiative to evaluation the Downtown Zoning Premium options. Staff will review the premium options currently offered and seek feedback on whether the premiums, especially those dealing with historic preservation, are effective, and what changes if any should be considered.

Megan Masson-Minock of ENP & Associates lead a discussion with the Design Review Board about the current downtown zoning premiums offered and how they may be improved as part of a planning initiative to reevaluate the downtown zoning premiums. Masson-Minock began the discussion with background information and an explanation of premiums, then opened the discussion to questions and comments.

Dick Mitchell noted he and the rest of the Board were nervous about becoming a mandatory process. He felt the Board was effective in its current format, emphasizing its collegial and cooperative nature. He would prefer improving the design review process with a second, follow-up meeting rather than implementing mandatory compliance. Several other Board members offered other ways to improve the current process as Mitchell suggested.

Bill Kinley commented that zoning, including floor area ratio, is the responsibility of the Planning Commission and not the Design Review Board. He would not want the Board to be responsible for determining the appropriate FAR of a development.

Chet Hill said that design is so subjective; it is very difficult to define good design. He wondered what other communities were able to legislate and if they were successful.

Kinley warned of less creativity if design was mandatory as most designers would only propose the required designs. He noted that Seattle has mandatory design requirements and has dozens of building clones across the city.

Paul Fontaine noted that some things are better as mandatory requirements and offered affordable housing units as an example. But, he said, other things are better when incentivized such as higher quality materials and first floor activity. He cautioned that it's a developer's nature to follow the path of least resistance to approval.

Reviewed and Filed

H PLANNING COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS - STAFF REPORTS

I COMMUNICATIONS

[15-0445](#) Various Communications to the Design Review Board

Received and Filed

J PUBLIC COMMENTARY (3 MINUTE MAXIMUM SPEAKING TIME)

Ethel Potts, 1016 Elder Boulevard, thanked the Board for discussing the downtown zoning premiums and recommended the Board look again at the design guidelines. She is particularly concerned about the definition of context.

K ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 4:40 p.m.