



# City of Ann Arbor

## Meeting Minutes - Final

### City Planning Commission

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

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Tuesday, May 19, 2020

7:00 PM

Electronic Meeting

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This meeting will be broadcast live on CTN Cable Channel 16, ATT Channel 99, and online at [a2gov.org/watchCTN](http://a2gov.org/watchCTN)

To speak at public comment call: 877 853 5247 (Toll Free) or 888 788 0099  
Meeting ID: 975 0054 2638

**1**      **CALL TO ORDER**

*Chairperson Alex Milshteyn called the electronic meeting to order at 7:04 pm.*

**2**      **ROLL CALL**

*Planning Manager Brett Lenart called the roll.*

**Present**    9 -    Woods, Briggs, Mills, Milshteyn, Gibb-Randall, Ackerman, Sauve, Abrons, and Hammerschmidt

**3**      **INTRODUCTIONS**

*None*

**4**      **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Moved by Sarah Mills, seconded by Sara Hammerschmidt, to Approve the Agenda as presented. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried unanimously.**

**5**      **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**5-a**      **20-0686**    May 5, 2020 City Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

**Moved by Erica Briggs, Seconded by Sarah Mills, to approve the May 5, 2020 meeting minutes as presented. On a voice vote, the Chair declared the motion carried unanimously.**

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

**6-a** **City Council**

*Ackerman reported that Council had before them, once again the A2 Zero Carbon Neutrality Plan which aims to get us from where we are today to be a net neutral carbon emissions City over the next decade; Council also received some preliminary financial planning and governance instructions on how to keep the plan a living document to better reflect advances in technology, changes in our community, and also changes in the economic environment and what funding mechanisms may be available to us. Action was postponed until Council's first meeting in June. He said the Plan includes Engineering specifications that will affect the Planning Commission's role in implementation to help us get to carbon neutrality like alternative energy sources, solar energy, electric vehicles, as well as different ways we structure our built environment. He further reported that The Garnet Planned Unit Development and Supplemental Regulations were both approved; Council approved the \$460 Million budget for the next fiscal year. He noted that the budget was largely created before anyone knew of the sweeping, dramatic effects the Covid-19 virus would have on the world, the State, and Ann Arbor. The estimated shortfalls of about \$10 Million across our budget which means we will need to find ways on an ongoing basis to revise our budget to better reflect the economic realities that we have and will mean shared sacrifice across the board in our municipal government and in our lives as public servants and as neighbors and residents are yet to be fully known. He noted that Council reduced the budget by \$1.2 Million. Ackerman reported that one of the ways the Council might reduce the budget, which affects the Planning Commission, is to postpone the Master Plan revamp which is a 3-5,00,000 project. He said no action has been taken in this direction yet.*

**6-b** **Planning Manager**

*Brett Lenart added that Shannan Gibbs-Randall and Wendy Woods were re-appointed to the City Planning Commission for another term.*

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

*Commissioner Shannan Gibb-Randall reported she had met with the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) partners where they learned how different folks are handling the current pandemic crisis that is far reaching*

*everywhere. She said, AAATA reported their ridership is down 90 percent and they have cut their routes 25 percent and have furloughed a decent amount of employees as well.*

*Commissioner Wendy Woods reported that the Transportation Committee has not met for the past couple of months but will be meeting tomorrow via an electronic meeting.*

**6-d Written Communications and Petitions**

[20-0691](#) Various Communication 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**

**8-a** [20-0692](#) Public Hearings Scheduled for the June 2, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting

*Brett Lenart reported on upcoming agenda items for the next business meeting.*

**Received by the Commission and Filed.**

**9 UNFINISHED BUSINESS - Staff Report, Public Hearing and Commission Discussion**

**9-a** [20-0697](#) Sign Ordinance Amendments for City Council Approval - Proposed amendments to Chapter 55 - Unified Development Code, Section 5.24 Signs, to update and modernize requirements for signage. Proposed sign amendments were postponed at the December 17, 2019 City Planning Commission Meeting to give staff time to address their comments. Staff Recommendation: Approval

*Brett Lenart provided a full review of the ongoing Sign Amendments.*

*PUBLIC HEARING:*

*Kirk Westphal, 3505 Charter Place, Ann Arbor, called to thank the*

*Commission and Staff for their diligent on-going work on signage. He was concerned with the small sample size on one and two-family structures that was provided from the City sign survey because it ended up contravening the feedback that the consultant got. He said his feeling on signage on homes, particular student rentals, is quite negative because it feels like a self-fulfilled prophecy when you drive down residential streets and see rental signs on plastered on house after house because he doesn't feel it lends itself to a mixing of uses and a diverse community. He noted that a lot has changed in terms of technology and what we expect out of our City and the degree of urbanization we're seeing; we start out with Geographic Positioning Systems and now we have smartphones, so was surprising to find that the sizes of permanent signs really hadn't changed measurably at all. He expressed concern that the temporary signage will be abused because people can basically deploy them for two months on and then take them down for a month and then cycle back and there is no permitting involved.*

*Seeing no further public speakers, Chair Milshteyn closed the public hearing*

**Moved by Woods, seconded by Mills, the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve the amendments to Chapter 55 Unified Development Code, Section 5.24.**

**COMMISSION DISCUSSION:**

*Wendy Woods asked about signs that are painted on buildings, other than murals and artwork, as well as directional signage painted on sidewalks or set in right-of-ways.*

*Lenart said signs on buildings is considered signage and subject to size restrictions of that business. He said directions on a sidewalk would depend on what and where specifically such directions were referencing. He said murals are always viewed if they depict a commercial message and if so would be considered signage.*

*Erica Briggs was fine with language in the sign ordinance for fully shielded fixtures to stay consistent with draft lighting ordinance. She enquired about light trespassing as part of this ordinance and how it would impact upcoming lighting ordinances that are being discussed. She said lit signs should be turned on and off 30 minutes before and after business hours.*

*Sarah Mills added that she felt the business signage should go off before the parking lots to indicate the business is closed.*

*Abrams inquired why residential signs had different standards from 1-2 units, 3-4 units and 5 or more units.*

*The Commission generally agreed on signs being on/off before and after business hours and agreed on standards for permanent residential wall signs should be the same if under 7 dwelling units on a site.*

*Milshteyn expressed the need for larger real estate signs, than the proposed 12 square feet, and they can remain up longer than 65 days in case. Staff will research how other communities handle real estate signs.*

**Moved by Hammerschmidt, seconded by Mills, to postpone until a future meeting.**

**Yeas:** 9 - Wendy Woods, Erica Briggs, Sarah Mills, Alex Milshteyn, Shannan Gibb-Randall, Zachary Ackerman, Elizabeth Sauve, Ellie Abrons, and Sara Hammerschmidt

**Nays:** 0

**10      REGULAR BUSINESS - Project Presentation, Staff Report, Public Hearing and Commission Discussion**

- 10-a**      **20-0699**      2800 Jackson Road Hotels Rezoning and Site Plan for City Council Approval - A proposal to rezone this 4.48-acre vacant parcel from R5 (Motel-Hotel) to C3 (Fringe Commercial) zoning classification and construct two new hotels with 132,737 square feet of new floor area. One hotel proposes 128 rooms, the other, 107 rooms. A total of 237 parking spaces, storm water improvements, water main construction, and sanitary main construction are proposed as part of the project. Staff Recommendation: Approval

**PROJECT PRESENTATION:**

*Susan Bowers, Mowers and Associates, presenting the petitioner provided the proposed project.*

**STAFF REPORT:**

*Matt Kowalski, City Planner, provided the staff report.*

*PUBLIC HEARING:*

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

**Moved by Mills, seconded by Ackerman, that the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve the 2800 Jackson Avenue Hotels Development rezoning from R5 to C3 (Fringe Commercial), and**

**that the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve the 2800 Jackson Avenue Hotels Development Site Plan and Development Agreement.**

*COMMISSION DISCUSSION:*

*Ackerman said time has shown there is a need for more flexible space in Ann Arbor, as this type of rezoning would provide; he expressed support for the rezoning.*

*Ackerman expressed concern with architectural details as it relates to frontage views of this parcel. He said it feels like the Home2 hotel orientation doesn't respect the gateway passage to the City, rather an emergency escape that exits out onto Jackson Avenue. He also asked about the two curbcuts to the site.*

*Scott Bowers reviewed the elevation plan details with the Commission as they relate to orientation, and explained that the City's Fire Marshal had requested two access points to the site. He also explained that the two hotels are two separate franchises so they've tried to divide up the site accordingly.*

*Gibb-Randall agreed with the comments about the façade lacking in terms of orientation. She provided suggestions on planting and care of the stormwater bio-swale first-flush retention areas on site. She requested staff verify the review comments.*

*Woods asked about traffic back-ups, eastbound, that occur on Jackson Avenue, as vehicles wait to turn left onto the Interstate 94 service drive. She said during certain times of the day it can be difficult making it through that area due to traffic coming from residential homes located in that direction.*

*Kowalski confirmed that Jackson Avenue at this location is under Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) control which limits and restricts what the City can do.*

*Briggs said she felt one of the reasons why it didn't feel like the front of the building was connected to the street was because the front sidewalk wasn't connected to the sidewalk along Jackson Avenue. She enquired about the under-canopy lighting and foot-candles intensity.*

*Scott Bowers explained there is a 3-5 foot grade difference between Home2 and the sidewalk, which is why they couldn't connect the sidewalk in that area. He said they could probably connect off the driveway where the new sidewalk is going to go through the muffler shop.*

*Bowers said the intensity of the light is only a glow when you are directly under the light. He verified that the shown tower lighting would not be lit since the neighborhood groups had specifically requested it not be and they will honor that request.*

*Sauve also had concerns with the two curbcuts, and would like to see one, if it was supported by the Fire Marshal. She expressed that the added impervious surface an extra sidewalk would add to the project wouldn't be considered worth it. She asked if the petitioner had discussed a connection access point with the adjacent C3 zoned retail site, noting that could be used for emergency vehicles.*

*Susan Bowers said no they had not discussed parking lot connection with the adjacent neighboring site.*

*Andy Wakeland said MDOT would be installing an intersection in this area with some traffic calming so it won't be that cars are zipping by as currently, but slowed down by queueing up.*

*Sauve asked about the transformer screening.*

*Scott Bowers explained it would be screened with evergreen pine trees.*

*Hammerschmidt agreed with Commission comments regarding doing our best to make Jackson Avenue as pleasant as possible for walkability. She asked about the grade changes and retention walls proposed for the site.*

*Milshteyn said, having lived in the area, he was very well acquainted with creative turns into nearby driveways, by vehicles having missed the I-94 eastbound onramp, so he was very concerned with the two curbcuts being used by people for turning purposes. He agreed with the importance of*

*the curb appeal of the hotel noting that more and more pedestrians walk along the Jackson Ave corridor.*

*Gibb-Randall expressed concern with the proposed Sky-Rocket Junipers that are proposed to be planted near the entrances where vehicles are exciting. She said they will cause cars to drive too far because of the Juniper's sight limitation once they reach maturity.*

*Mills agreed with Ackerman that the re-zoning proposed is a better use for this site, and she supports it. She appreciated the added sidewalk.*

*Abrons agreed with other Commissioners on their comments, adding they might want to consider a right-turn only for exiting. She asked if landscaping could do what architecture can't do on that Jackson Avenue facing façade.*

*Gibb-Randall felt there could definitely be landscaping features installed in the area that could give it more of an interesting feel.*

*Briggs asked if discussion had begun with MDOT on the traffic situation in the area.*

*Kowalski said yes. He provided communication with the City's Traffic Engineers that MDOT will be adding a traffic light to that eastbound I94 traffic lane, with a crosswalk at that onramp.*

**Moved by Ackerman, seconded by Woods, to postpone agenda item until June 16th, 2020 or a later date as necessary.**

**Yeas:** 9 - Wendy Woods, Erica Briggs, Sarah Mills, Alex Milshteyn, Shannan Gibb-Randall, Zachary Ackerman, Elizabeth Sauve, Ellie Abrons, and Sara Hammerschmidt

**Nays:** 0

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

*None*

**12 COMMISSION PROPOSED BUSINESS**

*None*



**13      ADJOURNMENT**

**Moved by Briggs, seconded by Mills to adjourn the meeting at 10:45 pm. The meeting was unanimously adjourned.**

Alex Milshteyn, Chairperson  
/mg

eComments for the Commission may be left via our Legistar calendar page (column to the very right)  
<http://a2gov.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

Commission public meetings are held the first and third Tuesday of each month. Both of these meetings provide opportunities for the public to address the Commission. All persons are encouraged to participate in public meetings. Citizens requiring translation or sign language services or other reasonable accommodations may contact the City Clerk's office at 734.794.6140; via e-mail to: [cityclerk@a2gov.org](mailto:cityclerk@a2gov.org) ; or by written request addressed and mailed or delivered to: City Clerk's Office, 301 E. Huron St., Ann Arbor, MI 48104. Requests need to be received at least two (2) business days in advance of the meeting. Planning Commission meeting agendas and packets are available from the Legislative Information Center on the City Clerk's page of the City's website (<http://a2gov.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>). Agendas and packets are also sent to subscribers of the City's email notification service, GovDelivery. You can subscribe to this free service by accessing the City's website and clicking on the 'Subscribe to Updates' envelope on the home page.

(If an agenda item is postponed, it will most likely be rescheduled to a future date. If you would like to be notified when a postponed agenda item will appear on a future agenda please contact Planning staff. 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](http://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.)

These meetings are typically broadcast on Ann Arbor Community Television Network Comcast 16 / AT&T 99 live at 7:00 p.m. on the first and third Tuesdays of the month and replayed the following Saturdays at 8:00 PM. Recent meetings can also be streamed online from the CTN Video On Demand page of the City's website <https://a2gov.org/watchctn>. The complete record of this meeting is available in video format at <https://a2gov.org/watchctn>, or is available for a nominal fee by contacting CTN at (734) 794-6150.