PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
June 20, 2012
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER
7:00 P.M.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: R. Johnson, R. Murphy, C. Zuellig, G. Clark, D. Lautenbach, M. Bullard, P. Hollifield

Absent: B. Lenart (excused) K. Weger (excused)

Staff: Teresa Gillotti, City Planner
Nan Schuette, Executive Secretary

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – May 16, 2012

Commissioner Clark moved to approve the minutes of May 16, 2012 as read (Support: C. Zuellig) and the motion carried unanimously.

IV. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None

V. OLD BUSINESS

1. Climate Action Plan Presentation

Commissioner Murphy recused himself from this issue since he is an employee of Michigan Suburbs Alliance and has been involved with the team in preparing the plan.

A slide presentation was made by Valerie Beiberich, Michigan Suburbs Alliance, who was accompanied by Melanie Piana. This project kicked-off in September 2010 and the hope is to have an achievable goal of 25% by 2020. This completed report outlines a plan to guide

Ypsilanti into a more sustainable future by coordinating municipal and community efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address climate change. Ypsilanti has already established itself as a leader in energy conservation and related issues, with the community taking a lead on sustainability. The Climate Action Plan is a way to aggregate many of these efforts, support them through the City in the form of a more formalized process and collectively move forward toward City and community goals related to climate change.

After the plan was reviewed, the Planning Commission had the opportunity to provide their comments or suggestions, i.e. tree maintenance and efficient city vehicles. Chairman Johnson recommended that recycling bins be located at the Recycling Center for the convenience of residents who are unable to coordinate times to drop off their recycling that is not picked up by the City.

Commissioner Lautenbach moved that the Planning Commission recommend the Climate Action Plan to City Council incorporating changes recommended by the Planning Commission (Support: P. Hollifield) and the motion carried unanimously.

2. Study Item – Proposed Parkridge Center Expansion

Ms. Gillotti gave an outline of this project stating that staff had received an application for a Master Plan amendment and rezoning of the south side of the 700 block of Harriet Street in order to accommodate a 10,000 to 12,000 s.f. proposed expansion of Parkridge Center. Currently, the block is anchored by Parkridge Center to the west and Perry School to the east, with Parkridge Park to the south.

This request is being presented as a study item in order that the Planning Commission will have time to review existing documentation and have adequate time for dialogue before the application is presented for a decision, hopefully at the July meeting.

Parkridge is proposing to purchase two properties on Harriet Street, directly east of the existing center for an addition to the center. The addition would feature a museum of African-American Art, and offices and classroom/training space to be utilized by WorkSkills Corporation for workforce development training. These partners are requesting that the City of Ypsilanti demolish existing structures and do some basic site preparation for the addition. They are also requesting either transfer of ownership or a long-term lease of the existing facility. The two requests have been separated into phases, representing the partners' interest in prioritizing the expansion – Phase I Parkridge addition and Phase II Parkridge transfer of control.

Rod Jones, WorkSkills – stated that their corporation was founded to provide rehabilitation services to people with disabilities. They have since broadened their mission to include a full range of employment and training programs and services to anyone who can benefit and optimize human potential. He gave some history on the company as well as past accomplishments and future endeavors.

Tommy Frye, Director of Parkridge Community Center – gave an update on the center, how it operates and where the funding comes from. He added that the current facilities are inadequate and no longer meet the needs of the community or the City. The Parkridge Cultural and Job Training Center will be formed as a joint venture between Work Skills Corporation and the Parkridge Community Center.

While Board members are very supportive of the project, there is concern that all bases be covered and everything is totally vetted, prior to any zoning changes since there are many questions to be asked and answered.

VI. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (Climate Action)

None

VII. OLD BUSINESS

1. Water Street recreation Center Update

Ms. Gillotti informed the members that guided tours of local recreation facilities are scheduled for June 26th beginning at 9:00 a.m. She will forward this information to all board members to determine if they would be able to participate.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Study Item: Potential Master Plan revisions/rezoning – Superior Road

Ms. Gillotti stated that in this year's annual report, the Planning Commission stated their desire to assist City Council achieve their goal of property disposition by looking into a policy, and potential master plan amendment and rezoning, for existing City-owned property available for sale. Superior Road Property is one of two properties, which staff wished to present.

This property is approximately 5.34 acres, has Huron River access and is currently zoned R1, the designation of which may be due to a previous deed restriction limiting development to single-family; however, the City Attorney has challenged this and there is a ruling that the restriction no longer applies. The riverfront is considered a protected land per the city's ordinance and staff recommends establishment of an access easement along the frontage. Staff recommends potential consideration of R3 or RO.

Much discussion was held with various opinions because of R1 zoning across the street. Sub-dividing into single family lots would be cost prohibitive and in this current climate, it is doubtful that there is a great push for building single family homes. In terms of flexibility, the board agreed on R3 or RO, however, in the meantime, Ms. Gillotti would do further research and get back to the board on other possibilities or recommendations.

2. Study Item: Boys and Girls Club property - 220 N. Park

Ms. Gillotti stated that this property had previously been engaged in a long term lease with the Boys and Girls club, but the lease was broken in Dec. of 2010 is back in City control. The property is currently R4. Staff would like to consider what the potential is for this property. It is approximately 3.8 acres and is located on Park Street along Railroad right-of-way, adjacent to CI, Commercial Industrial, and R1, Single family residential zoning districts. The property still has a dugout, and large building with full-sized gym, youth-sized locker rooms, classroom and other space, as well as a breezeway connecting to a small office/garage space. The structure is built into a hill and the site has significant grade changes. Staff is recommending WS, Workshop Studio or CI, Commercial Industrial or the parcel could be divided into smaller parcels. Chairman Johnson stated it is an extremely difficult property because of the various boundaries, commercial, historic district, residential. Washtenaw County is interested in using it as a kitchen incubator and food training center; other parties are interested in using it on a smaller scale, i.e. programs after school or day care center, similar to what its previous use was for the Boys/Girls Club. Staff is looking for direction.

It is the opinion of Commissioner Zuellig that this is a single family neighborhood and if we rezone either side of those streets other than single family, that area will deteriorate quickly. She will not be supportive of CI on any piece of that property. She suggested the potential of R1 with the possibility of considering something different for the area along the railroad. Both Commissioner Clark and Chairman Johnson concurred. Chairman Johnson added that it is an oddly shaped lot and that having the ability to split it may be advantageous to the city but if it is going to be used as is, he suggested that we try to limit the parking and access to Park Street. Commissioner Murphy stated that the current use does not encroach into the current residential.

Ms. Gillotti stated that the reason for considering WS Workshop Studio was because it is less intensive. After further discussion with various opinions, Ms. Gillotti stated that she will do more research and get back to the board.

3. Master Plan and Rezoning Rewrite – Draft RFP

Ms. Gillotti stated that the city had received $180,000 grant to pay for staffing and bring on a consultant to redo the Master Plan. The draft includes various items, which we have discussed in the past and staff hopes to get out in July. Some discussion was held with input from board members on their concerns and what our specifications should be. Commissioner Zuellig added that we would like some creative solutions and staff knows better than anyone what our expectations should be, what would be the best way to assess our requirements and what we would like besides baseline.

Commissioner Zuellig stated that we already have a lot of information and encourages staff to provide specifics as to what staff's role would be so that consultants know they don't need to add prices for what staff would be responsible. This would be practical for the consultant up front. There have been many plans done already and they should not be re-inventing anything that we have already done, i.e. non-motorized, etc.

Ms. Gillotti added that she would like to take the contract for the grant to council in July and give them whatever draft she would have at that time. She will try to get the draft to the board prior to that council meeting. The process will go through the sub-committee.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Master Plan Update Committee – Murphy, Lenart – no update

- Ordinance committee (Bullard, Lautenbach, Weger) – no update
- Non-motorized transportation committee (Johnson, Murphy) Minutes of meetings held in May and June were included in packets.
- Capital improvements plan committee (yet to meet)

IX FUTURE BUSINESS DISCUSSION/UPDATES

Special Use for the growth facility on N. Mansfield may be on the July agenda along with the Master Plan.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Since there was no further business, Commissioner Murphy moved to adjourn the meeting (Support: D. Lautenbach) and the motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:37 p.m.