PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
March 21, 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, K. Weger, C. Zuellig, G. Clark, B. Lenart, D. Lautenbach, M. Bullard, P. Hollifield

Absent: R. Murphy (excused)

Staff: Bonnie Wessler, City Planner I
Nan Schuette, Executive Secretary

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 15, 2012 and March 14, 2012

Commissioner Lenart moved to approve the minutes of February 15, 2012 as read (Support: G. Clark) and the motion carried unanimously. Commissioner Bullard moved to approve the minutes of March 14, 2012 as read (Support: P. Hollifield) and the motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Johnson acknowledged Vice Chair Murphy for filling in for a very efficiently run March meeting.

IV. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None

V. OLD BUSINESS

1. Water Street Recreation Center Update

City staff has been meeting regularly with the Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation (WCPRC) on creating a timeline for moving the project forward, as well as determining appropriate milestones for the project. WCPRC is looking to create several committees to help coordinate several components of the project. The various committees are: Steering Committee, Architecture & Site Planning, Greenway/Border-to-Border Trail, Infrastructure & Environment, and Partnerships & Funding. Three Planning Commission members volunteered to be on the sub-committee for the Architecture & Site Planning and Border to Border committees: Kelly Weger, C. Zuellig and G. Clark.

2. City Council Water Street Work Session

CBRE Contract expansion was approved by City Council.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. 301 W. Michigan

Ms. Wessler stated that this request is for site plan approval for the Key Bank Building parking lot at the south-east corner of Michigan and Hamilton for significant renovation of parking lot, including capital improvements to the right-of-way. The applicant is requesting site plan approval for renovations of the existing parking lot, closure of two existing curb cuts along S. Hamilton Street, one of which is not in use, the reconstruction of existing sidewalks and pedestrian crossing ramps, the relocation of the dumpster, burying of utility lines, significant changes to landscaping and an overall reduction in the number of parking spaces to 190.

The foundation landscaping beds will be retained but they will be adding some trees and shrubs. They will be re-using some of the lighting on site, rearranging a couple of poles. One of the planting beds on the northeast is currently made of timber, which will be replaced with brick.

Chairman Johnson noted that staff had recommended approval of this request and proposed capital improvements for the site, granting a waiver to accept proposed foundation landscaping since it would be cost prohibitive to add more landscaping, and they are surrounded on all sides with parking area. Staff also listed various conditions that are required.

Commissioner Lautenbach asking about a lighting plan and Ms. Wessler responded that this was not necessary since they will be using existing lighting. Commission Zuellig had a number of concerns on planting requirements along Hamilton and Ferris.

Ms. Wessler added that due to the location of the Farmer's Market on Ferris during the summer, this was one of the reasons for keeping the landscaping to a minimum.

Todd Ballou, architect for the project - had no presentation but was willing to answer any questions by board members. Chairman Johnson referred to aisle 17, south of the building, adding that apparently there is no protection there and staff is asking for a reasonable curb or island. Mr. Ballou had no problems with the loss of one parking space for an island at the north end. Chairman Johnson also referred to the discussion on adding landscaping along S. Hamilton, which is not up to code and would like more.

Ed Berch, Franklin Realty - stated that they have difficulty with snow removal in the winter and need a place to stack the snow and typically, it has been at the southwest end of the lot.

Commissioner Lenart had no problems granting the waiver for the required screening since it would drastically improve the site. He was also of the opinion that continuous screening all the way around the site would be unnecessary.

After much discussion, Commissioner Lenart moved to approve the request for site plan approval for significant renovation of parking lot at Key Bank Building, 301 W. Michigan Avenue including capital improvements to the right-of-way with the following findings:

Findings:

1. The application substantially complies with Sec. 122-127.

Waivers:

1. Planning Commission grants waiver requested to accept proposed foundation landscaping, with the finding that the benefit intended to be secured by Sec 122-706 will exist with less than the required landscaping or screening.
2. Planning Commission grants waiver requested to accept the perimeter parking lot screening as provided as opposed to in full compliance with Sec 122-704 (b)(2) with the proposed site plan amendment between staff and applicant to focus more of the plantings along the south property line to the residential area adjacent to the site.

Conditions:

1. Show size, location, and lighting of existing monument signs and building sign.
2. Indicate the sizes of directional signs, which may not exceed two square feet per sign.
3. The nine proposed angled parking spots along the east end of the site are verified with staff to acceptable maneuverability of the travel lane.
4. Addition of a parking lot island at the north end of the easternmost north/south aisle with raised curbed island.
5. Existing and proposed calculations shall be provided for the net increase/decrease of impervious surface.
6. All stormwater plans are to be reviewed by staff and City's consulting engineer.
7. Documentation of existing overhead utilities being relocated underground to be a viable and feasible option.
8. All permits be sought and received from MDOT for work within the Michigan Avenue and Hamilton Street right-of-way.

The motion was supported by Commissioner Hollifield. A roll call vote was taken and carried unanimously.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

- Ordinance committee (Bullard, Lautenbach, Weger)

  Minutes of meeting held on February 8, 2012 were included in packed.

- Non-motorized transportation committee (Johnson, Murphy)
  Ms. Wessler provided some information on the speed study that took place involving a number of Michigan trunk lines and the possibility of raising the speed limit. She listed the proposed speed limits on the various streets in the city that will likely take place within the next 2-3 months.

  Minutes of meeting held February 2, 2012 were included in packet
  Annual Report for 2011 was included.

- Capital improvements plan committee (yet to meet)

IX FUTURE BUSINESS DISCUSSION/UPDATES

None

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Since there was no further business, Commissioner Lenart moved to adjourn the meeting (Support: G. Clark) and the motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.