

**PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
November 19, 2014
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, C. Zuellig, H. Jugenitz, N. Sandberg, A. Bedogne, S. Straley

Absent: P. Hollifield (excused) Cheryl Zuellig (excused)

Staff: Bonnie Wessler, Planner II
Nan Schuette, Executive Secretary

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Minutes of October 15, 2014

Commissioner Sandberg moved to approve the minutes of October 15, 2014 as read (Support: H. Jugenitz) and the motion carried unanimously.

2. Minutes of October 22, 2014

Commissioner Sandberg moved to approve the minutes of October 22, 2014 as read (Support: A. Bedogne) and the motion carried unanimously.

3. Minutes of October 29, 2014

Commissioner Sandberg moved to approve the minutes of October 29, 2014 as read (Support: S. Straley) and the motion carried unanimously.

IV. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Roberta Woczik Andrews, 7 N. Normal – applauded the work of the commission on completion of the zoning ordinance revision, taking note of the thought, consideration and time that went into making this possible.

She had attended the City Council meeting the previous evening for the first reading of the revised zoning ordinance. She is very concerned about the CN neighborhoods and deterioration of the neighborhoods as well as the lack of better quality rental housing in the city. The new designation is going to become homogenized and overshadowed by the group living and everything else will leave over time. The one shining example of what would be more affordable, allow less transient and more stable and higher quality housing, is the cooperative. Cooperative living makes sense since it allows someone with little means to make a small investment, which we should encourage, but she does not agree it should be “by right”, i.e. fraternity houses. It is her opinion that we do not need more fraternities in her neighborhood and the city. She also noted that in the new ordinance, the requirement for a fraternity to be registered to a national fraternity and that they be affiliated with the university, is no longer included, making them less accountable to any particular body.

When one looks at the definition of family, a group of six people can already live together on a long term basis under the current code and proposed zoning so there is no need for a separate designation of “group living”. The definition of “group living” is people who live together on a weekly basis or longer, which are highly transient and it should not be made as a right and should not encourage transient people. Under the current ordinance for rooming houses it states the requirement of a “resident manager”. The terminology of “resident manager” is undefined and does not require that they reside on the property. Living there would be an important factor. It is her opinion that “group living” should be a special use. While she realizes that changing this designation will be difficult, she is recommending that we leave cooperatives as a primary use and take out the fraternities and group living.

It is also her opinion that people who are looking for a single family residence will not buy if they see that the property next door could be used as a fraternity. Once it is a “right”, it cannot be taken back.

Chairman Johnson responded by thanking her for her input and her attendance at all the various meetings and participation as a resident. He added that the Planning Commission has already turned over the document to City Council and it is now their decision to approve of the final document.

V. PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

- Capital Improvements and complete streets review of Prospect Road and Grove Road
Non-motorized improvements

Ms. Wessler introduced Marcus McNamara, our engineer from Orchard, Hiltz & McCliment. Mr. McNamara gave an update of the proposed project on the significant work that the city is proposing on Prospect and Grove Streets in calendar year 2015. This includes repaving Prospect from Holmes south to Michigan Avenue; performing safety improvements at Prospect and Michigan Avenue; installing improved bicyclist and pedestrian facilities on South Grove from approximately 130 S. Grove to Spring/Factory; and improving the pedestrian/bicyclist experience at South Grove./South Prospect/Tyler Road. Although these projects draw from various funding sources and will be bid and constructed separately, they are presented as one item for Planning Commission's review for an accurate “big picture” view.

He did an overview presentation on Prospect from Holmes to the railroad bridge. No lane reconfigurations are proposed for this stretch, however, engineering staff are currently exploring the option of installing “sharrows,” as widening the curb-to-curb distance to accommodate bicycle lanes which would have a significant negative impact upon existing trees and would like remove the buffer between the street and the sidewalk in many places. He also reviewed the various crosswalk improvements and potential relocation of vehicle sensors, reducing vehicle encroachment into the pedestrian crossing. Striping will be consistent for all crossings.

Mr. McNamara proceeded to review the crossing at Prospect at Michigan adding that significant crossing upgrades are being proposed. Pedestrian signals should provide countdown timers and clear signage regarding whether they are on timed operation (pedestrian by-right) or activated through a pushbutton.

On Grove at Prospect/Tyler, he reviewed the improvements to guide the pedestrian or bicyclist south on Grove, using Haab Brothers Memorial Parks as a refuge island, directing them to the east side of Grove. From there, they can use the recently installed crossing to get back to the west side of the road and the Ypsilanti Township Park at that location. This configuration is made necessary by the poor condition of the drive immediately north of the bridge over I-94. There is not sufficient room on the west side of the bridge for safe, accessible pedestrian and bicyclist traffic.

Grove Road from 130 S. Grove to Factory/Spring, the sidewalk along the west side of Grove is being widened and cleared of brush. Pull-off ramps are being provided for bicyclists.

Mr. McNamara summarized his presentation by stating that overall, the plans take into account non-motorized modes of transportation adequately and after numerous meetings with city staff, approval is recommended. He was prepared to respond to any specific questions from board members.

Commissioner Sandberg noted that the visibility for drivers is tricky at Grove/Tyler and asked about striping in the street. Mr. McNamara responded that there will be striping as well as giving a more detailed explanation of that particular area. Commissioner Jugenitz asked about a start date. Mr. McNamara responded that a bid will be going out after the New Year for the Grove/Prospect/Bridge since that is controlled by the city with no federal funds involved and hopefully begin in the spring. Commissioner Bedogne asked about striping on the west side of Prospect at Cross and Mr. McNamara agreed that there will be striping at that location.

Mr. McNamara added that he will probably be back in front of the commission in a couple of weeks to discuss construction for Adams from Pearl to Cross, which is also on the list for next year.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- None

VII. OLD BUSINESS

- None

VIII. FUTURE BUSINESS DISCUSSION/UPDATES

- Commissioner Jugenitz stated that she attended a training seminar on Day 1 and Commissioner Bedogne attended the seminar on Day 2. They went through a series of Best Practices for Long Range Planning. Commissioner Jugenitz stated that the three Best Practices she was in attendance for were Participatory Planning, Zoning Regulations and Procedures. There was a wealth of information and she took notes which she will pass along to all the board members. One of the exercises included the exchange of zoning ordinances. The other attendee she exchanged with found it difficult to facilitate utilization of our zoning ordinance so this might be something that we want to consider.

Commissioner Bedogne noted the three Best Practices he was involved in – Marketing, Economic Development and Training, with a reminder that when people attend these seminars that it is important upon return to share with other board members what they had learned. Another item was economic development that actually used the Shape Ypsilanti Master Plan, talking about the importance of putting together a plan identifying different pockets of a community and pointing businesses towards where you want them to look.

Commissioner Bedogne also asked about Redevelopment Ready Communities and Ms. Wessler gave him a short explanation of what is involved in being a Redevelopment Ready Community for the benefit of businesses that are interested in locating to our community with unnecessary roadblocks.

- Capital Improvement Plan – December meeting

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Since there was no further business, Commissioner Sandberg moved to adjourn the meeting (Support: H. Jugenitz). The meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.