

**PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
May 17, 2017
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER
7:00 P.M.**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: C. Zuellig, A. Bedogne, M. Dunwoodie, P. Hollifield
J. Talaga, T. Dennis, C. Madigan

Absent: H. Jugenitz (excused) L. MacGregor (excused)

Staff: Bonnie Wessler, City Planner
Cynthia Kochanek, Associate Planner
Nan Schuette, Executive Secretary

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Hollifield commented that he did his own study on trees and it was his opinion that there was no cause and effect as stated by the students from EMU who did a presentation at the last meeting. Commissioner Hollifield moved to approve the minutes of April 19, 2017 (Support: M. Dunwoodie) and the motion carried unanimously.

IV. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None

V. PRESENTATION AND PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

None

VI. NEW BUSINESS

None

VII. OLD BUSINESS

1. 539 S. Huron

C. Kochanek, Associate Planner, stated that staff did not have anything to add to the report included in the agenda recommending denial of this request.

Commissioner Bedogne moved to take this item off the table (Support: P. Hollifield) and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Bedogne moved that the Planning Commission deny the site plan request for 539 S. Huron based on the following findings:

- a. Applicant did not modify the plans as recommended at the February Planning Commission meeting, nor any submission of updated plans have been received.
- b. Applicant failed to respond to the issues discussed in February to provide additional information or follow-up to staff on issues identified in the review and no further communications have been received.

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

2. Non-Motorized Staff Report

Earlier in the year, Planning Commission received a number of letters sent by the Non-motorized Commission to MDOT requesting action be taken on certain areas of signage and ADA ramps. Planning Commission received a staff review of these items in April and requested staff recommendations.

1. An addition of a crosswalk at Hamilton at Ferris

Staff does not think it is the best idea since people would not use it – currently people with mobility disabilities are crossing at the driveway to the former alley/curb cut on the east side of the road, not on-Ferris, to-Ferris. Between the bus stop and the crossings to the north or south are popular unofficial crossings, and both have better visibility to the Michigan intersection than the Ferris intersection.

Recommendation: Staff looked at another half-way point, i.e. a signed, ramped, and potentially signalized Buffalo or Catherine crossing would provide a safe crossing where one does not exist, provide additional connectivity between the Historic South Side, many neighborhoods to the west, and be a strong visual reminder to motorists that the area is a neighborhood and pedestrians may be present. Staff suggests that MDOT and the City work together to perform vehicle and pedestrian counts at this location and evaluate for signalization and/or pedestrian improvements.

2. **Non-Motorized Crossing Improvements at West Cross/Huron, West Cross/Washington**

The Non-Motorized Committee has recommended to MDOT that they provide improved pedestrian crossing warns at the following locations:

- a. North Huron at West Cross, due to the high volume of traffic and slip-lane traffic; recommending either pedestrian crossing ahead signage with a single flashing yellow light, or a Rapid Rectangular Flashing Beacon (RRFB) light, signaling pedestrians crossing the left-turn lane on the Huron leg.
- b. West Cross at Washington, due to the high volume of vehicle traffic making lane and speed adjustments after the Huron/Cross intersection; pedestrian crossing signage and continental stripe markings overlaid on the stamped concrete crosswalk; potentially also an RRFB light.

Recommendation: Staff recommends that a traffic study be performed, and that MDOT fund such a study, based on extensive history of sideswipe crashes in this three-block span. Such a study could look at improvements or changes at both the micro level, such as gateway treatments; the macro level, such as two-way local streets north of Cross; or somewhere in between, such as signalizing Adams.

3. **Non-Motorized Crossing Improvements at North Huron and Pearl**

Due to the volume of traffic and pedestrian attractions on both sides of the street; pedestrian crossing signage, continental marking of the crosswalk; and an RRFB are requested.

Staff noted that generally, pedestrian signage is not considered for downtown applications; crosswalks are generally obvious and signalized. This is an interesting location, largely because it is the point at which travel on Huron goes from two lanes to three, generally prompting an increase in speed and some lane shifting. It is unlikely that signage will be effective. A potential challenge here is also the bus-turning movements; buses turn left on to Pearl from Huron with frequency; a gateway treatment may not be able to stand the test of time.

Recommendation: Request that MDOT request pedestrian signage, pavement markings and installation of a gateway treatment on Huron at Pearl.

4. **Hamilton at Michigan**

Due to the challenging placement of the crosswalk and the propensity of vehicles to ignore the “no turn on red” signage; two additional “no turn on red” signage and “stop here on red” signage is requested on both Hamilton and Michigan.

It was agreed that additional signage is unlikely to provide much benefit here. Stop bars are clearly marked, as is the crosswalk. Driver compliance is the issue, no awareness.

Recommendation: Request MDOT to add a “no turn on red” sign to the light guide wire signage on southbound Hamilton at Michigan and eastbound Michigan at Hamilton.

5. Huron at I-94

Due to the future (not yet programmed) installation of the pedestrian crossing; installation of more and differently placed “share the road” signage. The physical improvements proposed for this intersection would, at the earliest, be installed around 2022.

Recommendation: Request MDOT to add pedestrian and bicyclist awareness at I-94 and Hamilton/Huron including “share the road” bicycle signage where practical.

Commission Dunwoodie moved to approve the following resolution on the non-motorized transportation as follows:

“Whereas, one of the primary goals of the 2013 Master Plan is that “anyone can easily walk, bike, drive, or take transit from anywhere in Ypsilanti and to anywhere else in Ypsilanti and beyond; and

Whereas, one of the primary goals of the 2010 Non-motorized Transportation Plan is to “Provide a safe transportation system for both motorized and on-motorized users: and

Whereas, the Michigan Department of Transportation is an important partner in implementing these goals; and

Whereas, the Planning is charged with the implementation of the goals of the Master Plan and the Non-motorized Transportation Plan;

Now therefore be it resolved that the Planning Commission recommends to City Council that they coordinate with the Michigan Department of Transportation on the issues of accessibility and mobility along the trunk lines within the City as outlined in the staff report, to wit:

- Installation of an improved pedestrian crossing of Hamilton at a midpoint between Harriet and Michigan, treatment and location to be determined based on additional study;
- Crash reduction and pedestrian safety treatments in the area of the intersection of Cross and Huron, due to the high incidence of sideswipe crashes and high levels of pedestrian traffic, to be determined based on additional study;
- Improved pedestrian signage and pavement markings including installation of a gateway treatment at Huron at Pearl;
- Additional “No Turn on Red” signage on southbound Hamilton at Michigan and eastbound Michigan at Hamilton;
- Additional pedestrian and bicyclist awareness signage at I-94 and Hamilton/Huron incorporating where practical a “bikes may use full lane” sign

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

VIII. FUTURE BUSINESS DISCUSSION/UPDATES

- C. Kochanek, Associate Planner, referred to 2100 Washtenaw and her memo to the Planning Commission regarding her conversation and fire response to Whittier curb cut. Site plan submitted for review by the Planning Commission for the addition at 2100 Washtenaw included a new curb cut off of Whittier. At the January 18, 2017 meeting, the Planning Commission approved the site plan with the condition that the Whittier access driveway be removed contingent on emergency services review and approval.

Staff emailed the Fire chief shortly after the meeting and received a response that indicate the access drive on Whittier must remain. Chief Anthouard stated the following:

“The access on Whittier needs to stay open. NFPA 1 Chap 18.2.3.4.4 and the International Fire Code 503.2 both state “Dead end in excess of 150 ft shall be provided with an approved turn around”. The closest hydrant is on Whittier at approximately 100 ft. The second hydrant on Washtenaw is over 300 ft. away. The access road to the building shall be marked as fire line”.

Ms. Wessler added that the applicant had recently submitted detailed engineering plans and it is strictly an administrative approval at this time.

- Ms. Wessler stated that the Thompson Block plan will probably come before Planning Commission next month.
- Jared Talaga announced that July will be his last meeting on the Planning Commission since he will be moving out of the city.

IX. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Non-motorized Advisory Committee – April minutes were included in packet. Commissioner Bedogne stated that the Planning Commission is trying to put together a non-motorized session on Wednesday, June 24th at 6:00 p.m. to get stakeholders involved. He asked board members to notify any stakeholders they know of this meeting.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Since there was no further business, Commissioner Hollifield moved to adjourn the meeting (Support: T. Dennis) and the motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.