

**PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
July 19, 2017
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER
7:00 P.M.**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: H. Jugenitz, L. Dahl MacGregor, M. Dunwoodie, P. Hollifield, C. Madigan, J. Talaga, C. Zuellig

Absent: T. Dennis (excused) A. Bedogne (excused)

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

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Hollifield moved to approve the minutes of June 21, 2017 (Support: J. Talaga) and the motion carried unanimously.

IV. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None

V. PRESENTATION AND PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

1. 206-210 N. Washington Special Use

Ms. Wessler gave a brief synopsis stating that the reason this is coming back to us. The applicant had requested a special use to rebuild multiple units after a fire. As part of the condition at the time, we requested that they make two of the units' barrier free. At the time, we thought it was feasible, however, the applicant has had time to gather quotes, look at the structure and look at regulatory issues providing barrier-free access and it looks like it would be very expensive to do this and would change the character of the exterior of the building quite a bit. They would have to go through the Historic District Commission and comply with HDC standards. It would require widening the entrances. The most doable would be in the lower part of the building. The load bearing of the walls where the plumbing, etc. is would require gutting that entire side of the building. The cost to the renovation would be approximately \$50,000. The applicant is now asking that we remove the barrier-free condition.

Chair Jugenitz confirmed that staff is recommending that the Planning Commission remove the condition that the two units are barrier free and waive the other requirements. Ms. Wessler added that there were two conditions as part of the site plan approval; provide barrier free entry to the building from the parking area and provide one barrier free space, asking that these both be removed. Chair Jugenitz asked in terms of the parking lot design, if all of these spaces are intended for residents, to which, Ms. Wessler responded in the positive. Ms. Wessler added that this building had been designed in a much different era, making it difficult to invest in these added renovations by investing in an additional \$50,000 to add a barrier free unit.

Commissioner Dunwoodie moved to open the public portion of the hearing (Support: P. Hollifield) and the motion carried unanimously. Since there was no public comments, Commissioner Hollifield moved to close the public portion of the meeting (Support: J. Talaga) and the motion carried unanimously.

Some discussion was held by board members. Chair Jugenitz agreed that the extra \$50,000 estimate is quite prohibitive in terms of what would be required by the applicant. She is interested in thoughts of other board members of whether or not there is any justification in asking for a barrier free entrance when we would not have a barrier free unit. Commissioner Dunwoodie stated it is difficult to put a dollar value as a trade-off between acceptable and unacceptable units but if we are going to have accessible units in the city, there would be an easier option to do it in newer buildings. Commissioner Talaga stated that we are lacking a lot of accessible housing in the city. Commissioner Zuellig agreed it is difficult to agree on adding an estimated \$50,000 but appreciates it was a consideration. She questioned if the barrier-free parking space would be OK. She also asked about the paving, to which Ms. Wessler responded that it would need to be replaced and explained this in more detail as well discussing specifications on barrier-free parking spaces.

Commissioner Dunwoodie moved that the Planning Commission modify the special use requirement for the Phoenix Apartments Restoration permit at 206-210 N. Washington to remove condition #2 of "barrier free access into the structure and barrier-free units are not addressed. Applicant to make two units barrier-free, add barrier free access to the structure, and provide two barrier-free parking spaces". The motion was supported by Commissioner Zuellig. A roll call vote was taken and carried unanimously.

Commissioner Dunwoodie moved that the Planning Commission modify the Site Plan for the Phoenix Apartments Restoration project to remove condition #2 "that the applicant provide barrier-free entry to buildings from parking areas." and condition #4 (a) "that the applicant provide one barrier-free parking space". The motion was supported by Commissioner Hollifield. A roll call vote was taken and carried unanimously.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

None

VII. OLD BUSINESS

None

VIII. FUTURE BUSINESS DISCUSSION/UPDATES

Ms. Wessler stated that we have an application for a rezoning for next month.

Commissioner MacGregor asked about the update on Bell/Kramer. Ms. Wessler responded that she will check into that and get back with her. Ms. Wessler referred to the feasibility of re-visiting the Master Plan and added that there are funds included in this year's budget for an update of the Master Plan. Planning Commission does not have an update on the testing.

IX. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Non-motorized Advisory Committee – Public Input Session

Chair Jugenitz stated that two board members and the Associate Planner attended the public session. There was an overview of where the plan is at this point in time. WATS group stated they have money for transportation and roads. Commissioner MacGregor asked the city planner if the Washtenaw County Parks & Rec could put money into bike paths at Riverside Park trails.

Commissioner Dunwoodie asked about a presentation on affordable housing and wondered when this would be held. Ms. Wessler responded that there has been an on-going discussion on gentrification in the City of Ypsilanti and overall conversations about affordable housing in the County for the last three years. At the last meeting, there were some people who spoke in regard to the item of the Thompson Block project who would like to see some of these units tied to Affordable Housing and spoke quite passionately about this. Council might be looking into the creation of some kind of affordability Task Force possibly within the next 3-6 months. She encouraged members to look at the County Website on Affordable Housing which is very informative.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Since there was no further business, Commissioner Zuellig moved to adjourn the meeting (Support: J. Talaga) and the motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.