Meeting Minutes - APPROVED
Planning Commission
Wednesday, 20 May 2020 – 7:00 P.M.
Virtual Meeting

Please be advised that due to COVID-19, City Hall will not be open to the public. This meeting will be held electronically on a video conferencing application in accordance with Governor Whitmer's Executive Order. The access code is posted in the Public Notice on www.cityofypsilanti.com and attached in the packet. The public may choose to participate during Audience Participation or the Public Hearing through the video conferencing application, or may submit e-mailed comments to aaamodt@cityofypsilanti.com by 4 pm, May 20.

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call

Matt Dunwoodie, Chair	P
Jared Talaga, Vice-Chair	P
Eric Bettis	P
Michael Borsellino	P
Mike Davis Jr.	A
Jessica Donnelly	A
Phil Hollifield	P
Heidi Jugenitz	P
Michael Simmons	A

Chair Dunwoodie explained the Zoom Meeting participation details.

III. Approval of Minutes

- May 6, 2020 Special Meeting

Motion to approve
Offered By: Commissioner Talaga; Seconded By: Commissioner Jugenitz. Approved: Yes – 6; No – 0; Absent – 3 (Davis Jr., Donnelly, Simmons)

IV. Audience Participation

Open for general public comment to Planning Commission on items for which a public hearing is not scheduled. Please limit to five minutes.
N/A – No one spoke.

V. Presentations and Public Hearing Items

- Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment: Drive-through financial services as special land uses in Center zoning districts.

  Staff presentation by City Planner Andy Aamodt. Mr. Aamodt summarized the request, submitted by Eastern Michigan University Credit Union. Mr. Aamodt then explained what a drive-through financial services facility may look like and how it is presently interpreted. There are other zoning districts, HHS, HC, NC, and GC, in which drive-through financial services are permitted as a special land use. A map spatially representing these districts was shown.

Staff does not believe drive-through facilities should be allowed, special land use or not, in Center districts. This is based on the Master Plan's vision for Center "City Framework", which is in other words the Master Plan's Land Use Plan. Zoning changes need to be backed by this Master Plan. In the zoning ordinance, drive-throughs clearly contradict the Center zoning district's stated purpose and intent. Additionally, there are concerns from an environmental sustainability planning standpoint if Center districts are overwhelmed by vehicle travel rather than alternative modes of transportation such as walking, bicycling, and transit. An increase of drive-throughs could mean increased emissions from vehicles, and increased impervious surface which could mean both stormwater runoff problems and heat island problems. There is the potential for safety issues with possible pedestrian-vehicle conflict if a drive-through facility is implemented in a walkable, Center district.

Staff does not believe the standards for a zoning ordinance text amendment are met. Mr. Aamodt lists the standards that this request violates. Therefore, staff recommends Planning Commission recommend City Council deny the text amendment.

Commissioner Dunwoodie asked if Center districts allow drive-throughs of other types. Staff is not aware of any, as fast food restaurants do not allow for drive-through facilities in Center districts either.

Commissioner Dunwoodie wondered about the history of the corridor and if it had always been a similarly zoned district. Staff later confirmed it had been a central business district zone, zoned B-3 in the past.

Commissioner Dunwoodie asked if there are zoning ordinance safeguards dealing with pedestrian to vehicle traffic. Staff replied that one section to look at is the traffic visibility section. Staff also emphasized that an increase in curb-cuts in a walkable urban district is discouraged.

Commissioner Hollifield asked about the nonconforming use nature of the bank drive-through downtown.

The applicants, Bob Hoida of Hobson Black Architects, and DeAnne Ramos of EMUCU spoke about the request. They presented their thoughts on the property EMUCU now owns at 611 W. Cross St. They have another drive-through on Carpenter Road in Pittsfield Township, which has a full service drive-through that is much appreciated by their clients. The applicants understand a Center district and the Master Plan, but do not think they can help their clients properly without a drive-through. They stress they are re-developing a site in a sustainable way rather than creating a new site, and believe sites should be examined individually on a special use basis.

Commissioner Bettis inquired about the customer base- about both the preferences of the customer base as well as the traffic that a drive-through facility might demand.

Motion to open the public hearing.

Offered By: Commissioner Jugenitz; Seconded By: Commissioner Hollifield. Approved: Yes – 6; No – 0; Absent – 3 (Davis Jr., Donnelly, Simmons)

John Franks- spoke about the drive-through, prefers drive-throughs, and believes this is a good idea. Mr. Franks also emphasizes the credit union use the name EMUCU rather than UMCU.

Amy- inquired about the Sustainability Commission. Staff suggested Amy contact Department of Public Services for Sustainability Commission details.

Motion to close the public hearing.
Offered By: Commissioner Jugenitz; Seconded By: Commissioner Hollifield. Approved: Yes – 6; No – 0; Absent – 3 (Davis Jr., Donnelly, Simmons)

Commissioner Talaga expressed concerns about the potential conflicts of pedestrians and vehicles in a Center district, especially relevant on W. Cross with EMU students. Commissioner Jugenitz echoed these thoughts and expressed concern of reducing walkability in Center districts if allowed.

Commissioner Dunwoodie expressed concerns about opening drive-throughs up across all Center districts. There might be more automobile focus on W. Cross than Downtown or Depot Town, but this request is for the entirety of Center district. This may make the zoning ordinance less consistent seeing the zoning ordinance doesn't allow for other drive-through facilities for other uses such as restaurants.

Commissioner Hollifield expressed that even though we should encourage walking and bicycling, automobiles should still have some consideration. Does not want to further outlaw the automobile in certain areas of these Center districts. A mixture of transportation modes should be considered. Some sites, including this one, have multiple curb-cuts.

Commissioner Talaga and Commissioner Bettis worried about setting a standard if a Center district site would be given a special use permit, and what that would mean for future sites going forward.

Commissioner Bettis also expressed there could be potential for bicyclist collisions and automobiles if the automobile traffic is increased.

Motion that the Planning Commission recommend denial of the proposed text amendment to Chapter 122: Article IV, Division 3, Subdivision II (§122-446), with the following findings:

(1) The proposed amendment is inconsistent with the guiding values of the Master Plan;
(2) The rezoning is inconsistent with description and purpose of the proposed district;
(3) The proposed amendment is inconsistent with the intent of this Zoning Ordinance;
(4) The proposed amendment will not enhance the functionality, transportation network or character of the future development in the City;
(5) The proposed amendment will not preserve the historic nature of the surrounding area and of the City;
(6) The proposed amendment will not enhance the natural features and environmental sustainability of the City;
(7) The proposed amendment will not protect the health, safety, and general welfare of

the public;
(8) The proposed amendment will not address a community need in physical or economic conditions or development practices;

Offered By: Commissioner Talaga; Seconded By: Commissioner Jugenitz.
Motion Passes: Yes – 5; No – 1 (Hollifield); Absent – 3 (Davis Jr., Donnelly, Simmons)

Mr. Aamodt reiterated that this action is a recommendation to City Council; the case will go before Council at an upcoming meeting.

VI. Old Business N/A

VII. New Business N/A

VIII. Future Business Discussion / Updates

Andy Aamodt stated the goal is to have the Master Plan draft update, the 50 Ecorse revised site plan, and conflict of interest research as items at the next meeting, June 17th.

IX. Committee Reports

- Non-motorized Committee Report
  - N/A – No recent meeting
- Master Plan: Housing Affordability and Access Committee report
  - The Committee met last week virtually. Will meet again. They are updating a list of recommendations and will hope to present this and a report to Planning Commission soon.

X. Adjournment

Offered By: Commissioner Hollifield; Seconded By: Commissioner Jugenitz.
Approved: Yes – 6; No – 0; Absent – 3 (Davis Jr., Donnelly, Simmons)