



DRAFT MINUTES
Planning Commission
Wednesday, August 16, 2023 @ 7:00 PM
City Council Chambers
One South Huron Ypsilanti, MI 48197

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Matt Dunwoodie, Michael Simmons, Amanda Smith, Eric Bettis, Mike Davis Jr, Brian Jones-Chance, Carl Schier, Phil Hollifield

Absent: Jessica Donnelly

III. AGENDA APPROVAL

Motion to approve the agenda.

Offered By: Michael Simmons; Seconded By: Phil Hollifield; Approved: Yes – 8; No – 0; Absent – 1 (Donnelly)

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve the May 17, 2023 Minutes with an amendment to remove typo “michael eric” from Line Item IV.

Offered By: Phil Hollifield; Seconded By: Eric Bettis; Approved: Yes – 8; No – 0; Absent – 1 (Donnelly)

V. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Motion to open the audience participation.

Offered By: Eric Bettis; Seconded By: Amanda Smith; Approved: Yes – 8; No – 0; Absent – 1 (Donnelly)

None.

Motion to close the audience participation.

Offered By: Michael Simmons; Seconded By: Eric Bettis; Approved: Yes – 8; No – 0; Absent – 1 (Donnelly)

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Committee discussion

Non-Motorized Committee Report given by Commissioner Davis Jr and NMAC Chair, Dylan Goings. Goings announced updates on the Pedestrian Education Campaign Pilot Program and partnership with Michigan Fitness Foundation, MDOT and SEMCOG, including disseminated data from the public survey circulated in June, crash sites and data collected, public opinion and awareness gauged, and a marketing campaign to launch Pedestrian Safety Week in October.

VII. PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

A. Right of Way Vacation Application Review | Troy Street Staff

Report by City Planner Holli Andrews

The owners of three properties – 715 E Forest, 829 E Forest, and 750 Holmes – petitioned the City of Ypsilanti for the undeveloped, platted street known as Troy Street to be vacated. The applicant and fellow petitioners cite safety concerns, vandalism, and illegal dumping as cause for vacating the public right-of-way.

Motion to open the public hearing.

Offered By: Michael Simmons; Seconded By: Brian Jones-Chance; Approved: Yes – 8; No – 0; Absent – 1 (Donnelly)

1. Applicant Robert Rumberger, owner of 713 E Forest **made the case for vacating** Troy Street.
2. Fellow petitioner, Sue Sweeney and owner of 706 Troy Street **in support of vacating** Troy Street –
 - Worried about losing access if the right of way conditions do not change.
 - Asked for property to be cleaned, and for perpetrators to be fined for dumping.
3. Dave MacGill, owner of 715 E Forest and 703 Troy Street (former Green’s Subdivision) spoke **against** vacating Troy Street –
 - Expressed frustration and difficult relations with neighbors.
 - Identified his property as the former Green’s Subdivision.
 - Completes mowing and general maintenance of the property.
4. Marilyn Clark, co-owner of 715 E Forest and 703 Troy Street pleaded **case against vacating** the Troy Street ROW –
 - Doesn’t want 703 Troy Street (her property) to become landlocked from future development.
 - Granted by the City to use the property as our own.
 - Referenced the Land Division Act.
5. Terry Sweeney, co-owner of 706 Troy Street and fellow petitioner **to support vacating** Troy Street
 - Described damage to properties and street.
 - Described parking behaviors that block access to the street.
 - Unwanted uses referenced as impacts by neglected public right of way.

Motion to close the public hearing.

Offered By: Michael Simmons; Seconded By: Brian Jones-Chance; Approved: Yes – 6; No – 0; Approved: Yes – 8; No – 0; Absent – 1 (Donnelly)

Planning Commission Discussion –

- Vacating Troy Street public ROW – ends up going to court. Concern is that this won't solve anything. Some kind of due process required – goal here is to have a definitive property line.
- Condition #2 of the Staff Recommendation and Review is a reasonable direction.
- Should be decided by the District Court. Let it move up the process.
- Currently have a public road being used as a private road. Prescribe as little as possible.
- Dispute over a public street. Cited the standards for vacating a right of way are being met. The road as a right of way is not a benefit to the city.

Motion that the Planning Commission recommends the vacation of Troy Street to City Council with the following findings and conditions:

Findings –

1. The street closure will not alter existing traffic patterns.
2. The Troy Street right-of-way is already being maintained by the residents who share frontage of the street.
3. The vacation will eliminate the confusion of who can access and use the right of way.
4. The vacation will prevent the use by troublemakers parking and such at the dead end by removing public access.

Condition –

The parties shall maintain private access easements to parcels along Troy Street.

Friendly Amendment #1 – Strike Finding #4. Friendly amendment #2 – Planning commission is recommending that the case be reviewed by city Council – change language.

Motion that the Planning Commission recommends the vacation of Troy Street to City Council with the following findings and conditions (reiterated without Finding #4):

Findings –

1. The street closure will not alter existing traffic patterns.
2. The Troy Street right-of-way is already being maintained by the residents who share frontage of the street.
3. The vacation will eliminate the confusion of who can access and use the right of way.

Condition –

The parties shall maintain private access easements to parcels along Troy Street.

Offered By: Mike Davis Jr; Seconded By: Phil Hollifield; Approved: Yes – 7; No – 1; Absent – 1 (Donnelly)

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

None.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. Officers Election – Chair and Vice Chair

Nominations

1. Chair

- a. Motion to nominate Matt Dunwoodie to serve another term as Chair.

Offered by: Amanda Smith; Seconded by Mike Davis Jr; Nomination Accepted by: Matt Dunwoodie.

- b. Vote from Floor

Voted: Yes – 8; No – 0; Absent 1 (Donnelly).

2. Vice Chair

- a. Motion to nominate Michael Simmons as Vice Chair.

Offered by: Matt Dunwoodie; Seconded by Mike Davis Jr; Nomination Accepted by: Michael Simmons.

- b. Vote from Floor

Voted: Yes – 8; No – 0; Absent – 1 (Donnelly).

- 3. Matt Dunwoodie to serve another term as Chair, and Michael Simmons to serve as Vice Chair.

B. Announcements | Status of the City Planning Department Staffing

City Planner Andrews summarized the following Planning Department staffing changes in 2023 –

- Joe Meyers resigned from the position as Planning Director in April.
- Christopher Jacobs assumed Meyers’s duties and responsibilities as of April in addition to his position as Community Development Director.
- Christopher resigned his employment with the City of Ypsilanti in July 2023.
- In August, City Council approved the hiring of planning firm, Carlisle and Wortman to perform an audit on departmental staffing needs moving forward, as well as providing a la carte services as needed on an hourly basis.
- Frances McMullan retired in August.
- Elize Jekabson has been tapped to serve as acting Planning Director during this time of transition.
- Andrew Hellenga is serving as Interim City Manager.
- Staffing in the Planning Department | Katie Jones, Economic Development and Equity Coordinator; Ellen Thackery, Preservation Planner; Holli Andrews, City Planner.

X. FUTURE BUSINESS DISCUSSIONS/UPDATES:

Commissioner Dunwoodie has had discussions and would like to dig deeper into multifamily housing and increasing density.

Commissioner Simmons would like to discuss the marijuana moratorium in fuller detail.

Mayor Pro Tem Steve Wilcoxon shared updates from City Council.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 8:47 pm.

Offered By: Brian Jones Chance; Seconded By: Phil Hollifield; Approved: Yes – 8; No – 0; Absent – 1 (Donnelly)