

**PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
February 17, 2016
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: R. Johnson, A. Bedogne, C. Zuellig, B. Mason, L. MacGregor

Absent: P. Hollifield (excused) H. Jugenitz (excused)

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

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Zuellig moved to approve the minutes of January 20, 2016, January 27, 2016 and February 10, 2016 (Support: A. Bedogne) and the motion carried unanimously.

IV. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None

V. PRESENTATION AND PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

1. Overview of proposed Changes to Zoning Ordinance

Ms. Wessler stated a lot of people have given staff feedback that the Zoning Ordinance is difficult to use, to which, she agreed. She listed the various areas of concern and the proposed fix for each.

1. An organization overhaul. Most administrative information has been pulled towards the front of the ordinance, to provide context to readers. Some information was distributed throughout the ordinance, i.e. definitions, district-specific clauses and parking requirements. In the draft, staff has begun consolidating them into logical places. It

has been broadly organized into Administrative, District-specific, Use-specific, Site Standards and then other sections which did not neatly fit elsewhere. There were duplicated sections, typos, etc. She hasn't caught all of them but she will continue to go through it. Definitions were spread throughout – she has put everything under “definitions”.

2. Duplicated sections/typos/recursive references throughout the ordinance. Many of these have been fixed, however, due to the breadth of the changes; there are likely a whole new host of such errors. Some sections are without numbering/indents entirely; those will be added back in, but still makes reading challenging. Staff has added line number in the interim.
3. Figures were in error/numbered incorrectly. They will be redrawn. Staff added that a volunteer from the Planning Commission to assist would be welcome.
4. Circulation/block plan not being used well. As written, the ordinance requires a circulation plan for every site, a block plan for every site less than 3 acres and a different type of circulation plan for sites larger than three acres. Staff is proposing a circulation plan of some type for all new development and a less-intense version of a circulation plan for redevelopment, with the intent that all transportation modes be safely accommodated on the site.
5. A recent Supreme Court case found that sign regulation must be content-neutral; we cannot regulate advertising signs differently from non-advertising signs, election signs from opinion signs, etc. Staff is working towards revising the ordinance and involving legal assistance where necessary.
6. Landscaping and other waivers. We can make our innovative solutions to those issues more available by spelling them out in the code. Staff has begun this process with street trees but other sections may need work as well.

Ms. Wessler concluded by stating that there is still much work to be done on the ordinance but it seems as though the organizational change will be a significant improvement. She asked board members to submit their feedback to her since her aim is to have the next draft to Planning Commission at the May meeting.

Chairman Johnson added this was overwhelming and agreed that we need to go through it diligently. Some comments were added by other board members.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Annual Report

Ms. Wessler reviewed the report with board members. Commissioner MacGregor noted two corrections of dates on front and last pages. Commissioner MacGregor moved that the Planning Commission recommend approval of the Annual Report to City Council with corrections as noted (Support: C. Zuellig) and the motion carried unanimously.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

1. 1420 Washtenaw

Ms. Wessler stated that the variance request for the above project was partially denied/approved at the Zoning Board of Appeals meeting. Commissioner Zuellig asked if this would have any effect on their ability to get their liquor license. Ms. Wessler responded that the extension was necessary only to hold the amount of inventory, which must be \$250,000, not including fuel or alcohol, but would not affect their ability to get a liquor license.

2. The text amendment for solar energy will be going forward to City Council at the March 1st council meeting. Review of the site plan and special use will be made at the March Planning Commission Meeting.

VII. FUTURE BUSINESS DISCUSSION/UPDATES

1. Highland Cemetery
2. Chairman Rod Johnson submitted his intention to retire as Chair of the Planning Commission to Mayor Edmonds, effective at the end of his term, which expires in May, 2016. He has been on the Planning Commission since 1999 and Chairman since 2006. He is also on the board of the Zoning Board of Appeals. He added his comments on how rewarding this had been for him and he feels very strongly that the current board members will continue to do the good work of overseeing and contributing to the Planning Commission.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Non-Motorized Committee – no report

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Since there was no further business, Commissioner Zuellig moved to adjourn the meeting (Support: B. Mason). The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.