

Minutes
Joint Meeting of the Planning Commission, Historic District Commission, and Zoning Board of Appeals
Riverside Arts Center, N. Huron
Thursday, 16 March 2017 – 7:00 p.m.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Beth Ernat, Economic Development Director.

II. Roll Call

The following members were in attendance from each commission:

Planning Commission– Heidi Jugenitz, Chair, Liz Dahl MacGregor, Chris Madigan, Toi Dennis, Matt Dunwoodie, Jared Talaga.

Historic District Commission – Anne Stevenson, Chair, Hank Prebys, Vice Chair, Mike Davis Jr, Ron Rupert, Jane Schmiedeke

Zoning Board of Appeals – John Bailey, Chair, Jake Albers Vice Chair, Heather Khan, Tom Roach, Cisco Garcia (alternate)

Staff – Beth Ernat, Economic Development Director, Joe Meyers, Community Development Director & DDA Director, Bonnie Wessler, Planner II, Cynthia Kochanek Planner I, Nan Schuette, Executive Secretary.

Presenters – Richard Murphy, Michigan Municipal League; Christy Summers, Beckett & Raeder

III. Election of Chair

Heidi Jugentiz nominated Liz Dahl MacGregor, supported by John Bailey, Liz accepted.

IV. Audience Participation

None

V. Presentations:

Beth Ernat, Economic Development Director, gave background on the City's status as a Redevelopment Ready Community, and stated that as part of that, the city has received assistance from the MEDC and the MML to prepare an RFP for the property located at 220 N. Park (the former Boys/Girls Club). To fully develop the RFP, she would like input from the various commissioners.

Joe Meyers, Community Development Manager, gave a short presentation on Redevelopment Ready Community explaining that the City of Ypsilanti is certified and one of only six in the state. This allows us to be more streamlined, making it easier for developers to go through the process; it also makes us eligible for certain types of assistance from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC).

Richard Murphy, Michigan Municipal League (MML), stated that they assist Redevelopment Ready Communities on behalf of the MEDC with visioning, Target Market Analyses (TMAs), etc. He stated that the MML is working on drafting the RFP for the City. As part of the process of drafting that RFP, they hired Beckett & Raeder. Together they have looked at the current market, the recent TMA, and developing trends. This research showed that there is a potential for owner-occupied townhouses in that area and explained how they arrive at potential costs involved.

Christy Summers, Beckett & Raeder, presented the three housing concepts developed as part of the market research.

Option 1: Proposed 4 unit and 2 unit row houses, two story, pricing for construction is based on regional adjusted costs for a 1,400 sq. ft townhome built on a slab with a one car garage with a purchase price of approximately \$260,000 each for a total of 44 units.

Option 2: Proposed stacked flats – 4 units per building– two on each floor for a total of 54 units.

Option 3: duplex arrangement – 2 units per building, this would be the least dense of all with 25 units.

After review of the various options, Ms. Summers opened up the meeting for comments by the commissioners. Comments included:

- Property taxes would be a deterrent –approximately \$9,000/yr
- Potential buyers would also have maintenance/HOA dues
- Cost of \$260,000 seems high for a 1,400 sq. ft townhouse in current market
- Don't like stacked with garage in front, with the garage being the primary face to the street
- Interested in ensuring that any extension of Locust/alley would be open to the public- no gated communities.
- Lighting along non-motorized path a must
- Interested in one-story/accessible units
- Concerns about gentrification/changing neighborhood character
- There's a lot of value/interest in new housing so close to Depot Town

The consensus was that Option 1 was most favored by those present.

T. Dennis asked what the next step would be – taking comments and go back to drawing board? Beth Ernat responded that they will take site costs, actual final costs, information gathered at this meeting, and all other pertinent information and incorporate it into the final RFP to ensure that developers are looking at this project with the City's interests in mind.

H. Jugenitz asked if the plans presented for Park & Grove would be viable in the case if the railroad crossings were re-opened since it was her opinion that it could affect the project and have an impact on the neighborhood if re-opened. Ms. Ernat responded it is permanent, and the RFP and general financials were prepared with those closures in mind. Richard Murphy noted that he did not think that whether or not the crossings were opened or closed would have any bearing on the viability of the plans presented.

H. Prebys asked why staff feels this development would work at 220 N Park, but we're not pursuing it for Water Street. Ms. Ernat responded that the difference is the scale of the project. At Water Street, you have to build in the cost of removal of contamination, building all the infrastructure, electric, gas, streets, curb cuts, sidewalks, sewers, etc; this would not be a consideration at this particular location.

A. Stevenson suggested to look at scale and size and style of homes in district – smaller fits better with neighborhood, but liked townhouses.

Ms. Ernat led a group participation exercise regarding likes and dislikes of the proposed plans. Over all, consensus was comfort with the Option 1, an open public right-of-way, sidewalks, non-stacked housing options, hidden garages, and building materials to complement the neighborhood.

Ms. Ernat thanked everyone for their input adding that she would like to make this an annual event to better inform all the members of some of the items that each board is working on.

A five minute recess was called.

After the meeting was recalled to order, each chair (or vice-chair) was called upon to give a summary of what their board or commission generally did, what their big projects have been in the past year or so, and what they were looking forward to in the future.

A conversation ensued among all members regarding good developments and working with the City to continue to provide quality services to residents.

Ron Rupert moved to adjourn the meeting (Support H. Prebys) and the motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.