

**PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
January 17, 2018
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER
7:00 P.M.**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: H. Jugenitz, T. Dennis, M. Dunwoodie, P. Hollifield, J. Talaga,
C. Madigan, A. Bedogne,

Absent: C. Zuellig (excused) T. Bedogne (excused) L. MacGregor (excused)

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

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Dunwoodie moved to approve the minutes of December 20, 2017 (Support: P. Hollifield) and the motion carried unanimously.

IV. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Rod Johnson, 310 N. Grove – former member of the Planning Commission. Thanked commission for all the years they have given of their time. He spoke about Master Plan update and added that it looked like there was a substantial committee volunteered to do this. This is affordable housing and he has looked at the Master Plan that we passed and he is surprised to see that affordable housing was not prominently displayed even although on Page 6 there is an article that covers it. Affordable housing seems to be part of Ypsilanti DNA and “affordable” housing means different things to different people. We have people in Ypsilanti that feel that we are not affordable enough and he supports that but in our Master Plan we go through our ideals and the various matrices to guide us and back it up with true data. He feels we have to make decisions based on the Master Plan which has good detail – he would guard against politics and we should be steadfast in the decisions that are made.

Chairperson Jugenitz thanked Mr. Johnson for his input and perspective. She appreciated the spirit of his comments.

V. PRESENTATION AND PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

1. 75 Catherine – Special Use and Site Plan

Ms. Wessler gave a staff presentation stating that this is a medical marijuana growing and processing facility that is licensed by the city and working under the Michigan Medical Marijuana Act which is a caregiver model for single producers. This Act was recently enacted and coming up this year the State is going to be licensing commercial growth facilities, etc. This gives existing businesses an opportunity to expand. 75 Catherine is interested in expanding and that is what is before us today. They are proposing a significant expansion to the south and square off the front of their building. They would be locating most of their parking toward the rear of the building. Landscaping requirements have been met; we don't have the letter from the engineer yet but it does look like engineering standards are ok; screening standards have been met; however, in order to enlarge the building they need to be granted three variances; one from the street side setback on Chichester; one from the front yard setback side on Catherine and one from the rear yard standard of 25ft from any residential. They have a hearing with the Zoning Board of Appeals on the 27th January. At this time staff is recommending that Planning Commission postpone any action until after the Zoning Board of Appeals meeting.

Commissioner Dunwoodie asked staff if anything has changed from the packet with approval recommendations of special use and Ms. Wessler responded that staff is recommending to postpone both, however, in the event both various are granted, we would have no issues with the special use and site plan application and would recommend approval.

Commissioner Dennis if it is possible to make our approval conditional on the various being granted by Zoning Board of approval and Ms. Wessler responded in the affirmative.

Todd Ballou, Project Architect – stated that he is aware of the variance and it makes sense to postpone but if they didn't get the variances, it would still be a simple change.

Ms. Wessler added that one of the features in the Zoning Ordinance is that if an applicant has to modify the site plan after approval, there are a certain number of changes that can be approved administratively. She enumerated these significant changes.

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

Commissioner Dunwoodie moved that the Planning Commission table the Special Use for the expansion of the medical marijuana growth facility of Aspen Gardens, until after the appearance before the Zoning Board of Appeals scheduled for January 24, 2018 (Support: T. Dennis). A roll call vote was taken and carried unanimously 6:0.

Commissioner Dunwoodie moved that the Planning Commission table the Site Plan for the expansion of the medical marijuana growth facility of Aspen Gardens, until after the appearance before the Zoning Board of Appeals scheduled for January 24, 2018 (Support: P. Hollifield). A roll call vote was taken and carried unanimously 6:0.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Master Plan Updates

Ms. Wessler stated that there were some issues that the Planning Commission had indicated they would like to cover in the revision of the Master Plan Updates: Water St, Bell/Kramer/two way traffic Hamilton/ Huron Traffic and Washtenaw/W. Cross and the train stop. The two lane is the last place where we want to be but we do want to have two lane downtown. We skipped a few steps in between but we need to do a capacity reduction. She elaborated on that. On the train stop, we need to ensure that there is a public space at the stop. On Water St, she would like board members to look at that for any tweaks they may want to consider. On Bell/Kramer in the Master Plan, the future land use map is a little bit vague – we can talk about that in future business since next month there will be a rezoning for the Bell/Kramer area, which hopefully will take care of that issue. She would like everyone to read the Master Plan and let her know what they want to do –possibly make a note of some things that need to be brought up for a larger discussion – then maybe do a parallel committee process for those things and then consider group resolution at the end for the end of October.

2. 2017 Annual Report

Commissioner Hollifield moved to adopt the 2017 Annual Report (Support: J. Talaga) and the motion carried unanimously. They liked the format and agreed that it should be kept the same.

Commissioner Dennis moved to adopt the additions to the annual report that was discussed at the table, i.e. that the Vice Chair has to be changed from Cheryl Zuellig to Liz MacGregor for half of the year; and also the addition of discussion of Water St, Hamilton/Huron, train stop and the existing Bell/Kramer in the upcoming Master Plan edition (Support: M. Dunwoodie) and the motion carried unanimously.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

1. 400 N. River - Amendment of condition regarding barrier-free space in right-of-way

Ms. Wessler stated that she had print-out where we had initially talked about bumping in a proper barrier free space on River St just north on the north edge of the building. After looking it over with engineers, we don't think we can safely provide that space. The most significant concerns with the proposed location are:

1. A curb ramp to access the space could be misinterpreted as a crossing location.
2. It is likely that vehicles would impede the accessible route to the ramp if not parked properly.
3. Grading constraints do not allow the sidewalk to be constructed flush with the parking space to eliminate the need for ramp access.
4. The single bump out space and associated ramp present winter maintenance concerns.

For these reasons, alternative solutions were evaluated. Relocating the space approximately 100' north would provide accessible access at the existing curb ramp at the cross walk. This can be accomplished with appropriate signage and pavement markings. This appears to be the most practical solution.

Chairman Jugenitz was concerned about snow removal. Commissioner Talaga gave some input since he requires barrier-free parking spaces and pointed out some issues that he could foresee with the recommendation from the engineer.

After further discussion by the board members, Commissioner Dennis moved that the Planning Commission approve two handicap spots – one closest to the end of Maple where ramp is and one closest to the entrance bump-out subject to feasibility analysis by engineer (Support: J. Talaga). A roll call vote was taken and carried unanimously 6:0.

VIII. FUTURE BUSINESS DISCUSSION/UPDATES

1. Rezoning Bell/Kramer Neighborhood
2. Proposed rezoning of Medical Marijuana Facilities (Ms. Wessler gave a short update)
3. 75 Catherine

IX. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Master Plan: Housing Affordability and Access subcommittee

Chair Jugenitz gave an update on potential members stating that since the meeting in December, she had reached out to representatives to each of the organizations to explain the background of the committee, provide them with copy of the charter and asked for qualifications from either themselves or their organizations. She noted the ones she had heard back from and the names of those of who she is still waiting. Ms. Wessler has accepted the applications for the at-large seats and Chair Jugenitz and Bonnie will go through these. Still recruiting for a landowner and business owner slot and wondered if anyone on the board had recommendations. The most likely date for the first meeting will be Wednesday, February 7th. She anticipates the meetings will be 2 hours once a month.

Chair Jugenitz asked for interest from board members realizing that some could attend on a rotating basis – we are limited to four spots. Commissioner Hollifield stated that he would be interested in a rotating basis, as well as Commissioner Dennis. Chair Jugenitz hopes to send out something to Planning Members the end of this week once she gets a commitment from members on who can participate on a regular basis.

2. Non-motorized Committee

X. ADJOURNMENT

Since there was no further business, Commissioner Dennis moved to adjourn the meeting (Support: J. Talaga) and the motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:47 pm.