

City of Kalamazoo  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
Meeting Minutes  
December 2, 2021  
*FINAL*

This meeting is being conducted electronically pursuant to the Open Meetings Act MCL 15.263 (2) and MCL 15.263a 1(b).

Members Present: Gregory Milliken, Chair; David Burgess; \*Mariah Phelps; Brian Pittelko; Jennifer Swan; James Pitts; Michael Harrison; Shardae Chambers

Members Excused: Sakhi Vyas, Vice Chair

City Staff: Christina Anderson, City Planner; Pete Eldridge, Assistant City Planner; Beth Cheeseman, Executive Administrative Assistant; Chris Praedel, City Commissioner; Charles Bear, Assistant Attorney; Amanda Cockroft, Marketing and Communication Specialist; Don Hepler, Senior Systems Analyst; James Baker, Public Services Director

**A. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Commissioner Milliken called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Planner Anderson proceeded with roll call and determined that the aforementioned members were present.

**B. ADOPTION OF FORMAL AGENDA**

Planner Anderson clarified that the Capital Improvement Plan under F. Discussion/Action Items is case #2021.18 not 2021.17 as listed on the agenda.

**Commissioner Burgess, seconded by Commissioner Chambers, moved approval of the December 2, 2021 Planning Commission agenda as amended. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Commissioner Pittelko, seconded by Commissioner Burgess, moved approval of the November 4, 2021 minutes as presented. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**D. COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Planner Anderson announced that meetings will go back to in-person at the beginning of the year. She welcomed Planning Commissioners to reach out if they have questions or concerns.

Commissioner Milliken asked if there were any protocols involved with in-person meetings. Planner Anderson replied that plexiglass was put on the dais between stations. She will not sit on the dais so each Planning Commissioner will have their own space and microphone. Planner Anderson stated that it is still under consideration whether to allow phone call comments. She noted that if phone call comments are allowed, they would not be recorded, but they would be live calls.

## **E. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

None.

\*Mariah Phelps joined the call and was noted in the attendance.

## **F. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:**

1. P.C. #2021.18: 2022 Capital Improvement Plan. Request by Community Planning & Economic Development to review the 2022 C.I.P. [Recommendation: Recommend approval of C.I.P. to City Commission]

Mr. James Baker, Public Services Director and City Engineer, presented information on the 2022 Capital Improvement Plan. He stated that projects in the General fund would include the following areas: Parks, Facilities, IT infrastructure, Public Safety Stations, Heavy equipment, and Fleet. Other areas of the C.I.P. include Major Street funds and Local Street funds. These funds are used to improve safety, incorporate neighborhood plans, and stormwater improvements. Water and wastewater funds are used for continued investment in that infrastructure.

Director Baker showed a bar chart showing investments by the funds: General funds - \$9.4 million, Major Street funds - \$13.7 million, Local Street funds - \$1.6 million, Water funds - \$39 million, and Wastewater funds - \$17.7 million.

Director Baker reviewed projects underway or planned for the various funds.

### General fund projects:

- Farmers Market redevelopment, facilities improvements, radios and IT equipment upgrades, heavy equipment purchases, fleet, and the Public Safety Station No. 2.

### Major/Local Streets:

- 33 local streets are to be paved or preserved. Major street projects are planned for Parkview, Stadium Drive, Miller Drive, Angling Road culverts, Ransom NCBD, and Paterson Bridge.

### Wastewater:

- Solids handling process upgrade, tertiary process upgrade, sanitary sewer replacements and trenchless rehab, Biofilter – odor control treatments.

Director Baker said they will coordinate projects with the township, streets, and road commission. They will coordinate sewer lining work throughout the City.

Water:

- Lead service line replacements, treatment plant station improvements, system reliability improvements, corrosion control optimization, north Kalamazoo lead service line replacement project.

Director Baker encouraged Planning Commissioners to go to the lead service replacement map on the website.

Commissioner Burgess noted that the bar chart showed the water fund and main streets fund were the highest. He wondered if that was a typical distribution of funds. Director Baker said there has been an increase in investment in drinking water and wastewater funds. He said there has been a substantial need to increase investment in the water system due to lead service line replacements. There is a need for station improvements and water quality improvements. Director Baker shared that they have worked with EGLE to prioritize schedules and work priorities.

Commissioner Burgess also asked if the City has an asset management system to keep track of the status of roads. Director Baker shared that the City has a transportation asset management plan. He said it is focused on a PASER rating of streets over time. That helps them determine when to complete road work in an effort to extend the life cycle of streets and minimize costs.

Commissioner Harrison asked where the Public Safety Station would be located. Director Baker said that it would be Public Safety Station 2 on Alcott Street in the Edison Neighborhood. It is currently under construction.

Commissioner Harrison asked how priorities were determined and about the communication process of projects to communities. Director Baker said the communication process is unique to the project. Some projects, like the Farmers Market or Public Safety Station 2, will have a tremendous need for community involvement and communication. Some will need less front end communication but will need some back end communication. He said the Capital Program is based within the focus areas of Imagine Kalamazoo 2025. Water system projects are based more in regulatory requirements. Director Baker said that some projects are years in the making - like Stadium Drive which can be linked back to 2014 or 2015. He said that on the drinking water side, communication comes as they are implementing the project.

Commissioner Pittelko asked about funds for jurisdictional transfer. Director Baker explained that a couple years ago, the City took local control of some of the streets previously under MDOT. The City was given funding to use specifically for those streets.

Commissioner Milliken commented on the Stadium Drive work stopping at Lovell. Director Baker shared that the next phase of work will be incorporated in the two-way conversion coming in future years. He said there will be pedestrian improvements and a planted median to help soften the roadway. Planner Anderson added that there will be a shared use pedestrian path connecting from the Howard path and extending along the railroad track property moving towards downtown.

Commissioner Milliken asked about dedicated funds for potential conversion projects in the future. Director Baker stated there has been a lot of planning and engineering going into two-way conversion projects. He said a lot of work was going on to identify future sources and uses. Director Baker said the project is moving swiftly forward. Commissioner Milliken commented that it was good to see that work is happening and funds are being dedicated to it.

Commissioner Milliken explained that the Planning Commission is required by State law to review the C.I.P. every year. As keepers of the Master Plan, they review and give their blessing on the C.I.P. to confirm its compliance with the Master Plan. He said this was their opportunity to raise any issues. This is a key implementation element of the Master Plan.

**Commissioner Burgess, seconded by Commissioner Chambers, moved to recommend approval of the C.I.P. to the City Commission.**

Commissioner Burgess said he thinks the C.I.P. is consistent with the goals of the Master Plan.

Commissioner Milliken said he is hopeful that next year brings the resources they need to get this all done.

**A roll call vote was taken and passed unanimously.**

#### **G. REPORT:**

##### **1. City Planner's Report**

Planner Anderson explained that they do an annual review of the Master Plan - looking at accomplishments, ongoing projects and projects not yet started. In addition to presenting the annual review to the Planning Commission, this presentation will be given to the City Commission on the 20<sup>th</sup> of December.

##### **2. Presentation on 4-Year Master Plan Update**

Planner Anderson reminded Planning Commissioners that the Strategic Vision Goals are the ten broad goals that guide the City's work. The Strategic Vision is the umbrella document. The Master Plan is under that and lasts for approximately 10 years. Next are the Neighborhood Plans and Parks & Recreation Plans which last for 5 years. Budgets and the C.I.P. are in place for one year.

Planner Anderson reported that the original Master Plan had 136 actions, 8 Strategic goals, and will last about 8 years. Since then, they have added Neighborhood Plans. She said that some goals have collapsed into each other as projects were done. At four years in, they are more than 50% complete.

2021 Accomplishments include:

- Complete Neighborhoods – Infill Housing
  - 13 new housing units were built.
  - In progress of creating a set of pre-approved housing plans which will increase the rate of infill housing in the community and increase types of housing.
- Zoning Updates
  - Eastside & Northside Neighborhoods.
- Kalamazoo Roots
  - Free Container Gardening Course.
  - 100 Garden Kits Distributed in 2021.
- Environmental Responsibility – Increasing Tree Canopy
  - Planted ~300 trees.
  - Completed Tree Inventory.
  - Tire Blitz (3,700 tires collected for recycling).
  - Natural Features Protection (Over 1,400 parcels added, text amendments).
- Economic Vitality
  - \$746,000 invested to start or grow 24 small businesses.
  - 10 grants of \$25,000 given in 2021 for storefront improvements – Eastside Neighborhood.
- Connected City
  - Added 4.1 center line miles of new bike lanes.
  - 1.2 miles of new shared use paths.
  - 9.6 miles of sidewalks repaired.
  - 0.7 miles of new sidewalk.
- Safe Communities
  - Traffic Calming work (speed humps, narrowed lanes, added bike lanes, or shared paths, crosswalks, and street signage).
  - Lead Service Lines (773 lead lines replaced in 2021).
  - Lead paint remediation (15 homes remediated).
- Shared Prosperity Goal
  - STEAM Academy (Eastside Youth Strong summer program).
  - Parent Literacy Together (Multi-generational learning).
- Youth Development
  - Youth Action Council (13 Kalamazoo youth advised Kzoo Parks programs and plans).
  - Super Rec (248 Youth served – summer camp, field trips, activities, reading, Meet Up and Eat Up Program).
  - Opportunities for Teens (28 counselors in training, 139 teens participants in MyCity Kalamazoo Program, 28 participated in All Things Possible).
- Inviting Public Places
  - Farmer’s Market (Renovations will be completed Spring 2022).

Planner Anderson noted the 2021/2022 Projects in progress include the Farmer's Market Renovation, Sustainability Strategy, Safe Routes to School grant applications, Youth Master Plan, and the LaCrone Park Splash Pad Installation.

Planner Anderson indicated that FFE Support was critical to the completion of projects. She noted they have invested \$52.7 million since 2017 with \$8.5 million invested in 2021.

Commissioner Burgess thought that presentations like that are exciting. He said it was wonderful to see the review and all the great statistics and how it links the day to day to the greater goals. He is happy to be a part of the next stages in all of this.

Commissioner Chambers said she is excited to see all this happen with Imagine Kalamazoo. She commented that the residents loved the tire program, and she hopes they can do that again. Commissioner Chambers thought it was good for the environment and good to have residents think about recycling on levels like that. Planner Anderson commented that when you think about the Master Plan, people usually think about land use and transportation use, but Strategic Vision Goals touch a lot of different areas.

Commissioner Milliken thought it was rare for a City to celebrate anniversaries like this and for them to look backwards and see what has been accomplished. He said that reflecting on those positive things are so needed right now and he was thankful they are sharing the presentation with the City Commission.

3. 2021 Site Plan Spreadsheet

4. 2022 Planning Commission Meeting Schedule

Planner Anderson asked Commissioners to review the schedule and see if there are any dates of concern. No one brought forward any concerns.

#### **H. CITIZENS' COMMENTS (Regarding non-agenda items)**

Tina McClinton from Lake Street called. She requested that the City fix the infrastructure in the Southtown Neighborhood. She also wondered why they would put a Pod City in a neighborhood where infrastructure is failing. Ms. McClinton commented that Kalamazoo is not a safe place to live anymore with the flooding and the shootings.

#### **I. CITY COMMISSION LIAISON COMMENTS**

Planner Anderson read a statement from Commissioner Praedel. The City administration officially transmitted the 2022 fiscal year budget to them this week. It can be viewed and downloaded at [kalamazoo.org/budgets](http://kalamazoo.org/budgets). He said it is 14.62% more than the previous budget. The work session for the City Commission and the public will be held on Monday, Dec. 13. The budget vote won't occur until late Jan. or early Feb. Commissioner Praedel said they would hear about the proposed sustainability plan and water system at the next COW meeting. At the regular business meeting they will consider an

emergency housing ordinance which would take effect immediately. He indicated there was a presentation given on it at the last COW meeting – Nov 15. The draft ordinance and presentation are on the City’s website. He reported that the City Commission’s last virtual meeting would be in December. They are planning for in-person meetings in January.

**J. MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS BY PLANNING COMMISSIONERS**

Commissioner Harrison proposed that moving into 2022 they develop a process, or consideration of how to incorporate more community involvement. He wants the community to feel connected and not disconnected in 2022.

Commissioner Chambers said she hoped to be in City Hall in January. She thought they would feel more connected, and the new Commissioners can see how things work with the public coming in to comment. Commissioner Chambers felt that residents may not use the call-in feature. They need to make sure they are listening to residents and hearing concerns.

Commissioner Milliken wished everyone enjoyable holidays and said he would see them in-person in January.

**K. ADJOURNMENT**

**Commissioner Milliken adjourned the meeting at 8:12 pm.**

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Anderson", is written over a horizontal blue line.

Christina Anderson,  
City Planner  
Community Planning & Economic Development