

City of Kalamazoo
PLANNING COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
March 2, 2023
FINAL

Members Present: David Burgess; Gregory Milliken, Chair; *Michael Harrison; Jennifer Swan; Sakhi Vyas, Vice Chair; James Pitts

Members Excused: Shardae Chambers; Brian Pittelko

City Staff: Christina Anderson, City Planner; Beth Cheeseman, Executive Administrative Assistant; Chris Praedel, City Commissioner; Charlie Bear, Assistant City Attorney; Bobby Durkee, Assistant City Planner

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

Commissioner Burgess, seconded by Commissioner Vyas, moved approval of the March 2, 2023, Planning Commission agenda as presented. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Swan, seconded by Commissioner Pitts, moved approval of the February 2, 2023, minutes as presented. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

D. COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Planner Anderson announced that Commissioner Vyas was terming off the Planning Commission – it was her last meeting with them.

E. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. 2023.02 Special Use Permit Request at 1025 North Park Street for a Rooming House in a RM-36 District.

Planner Anderson stated that a rooming house was when the bedrooms of a house are leased individually by multiple non-related individuals. She shared that this house had three bedrooms, the driveway was sufficient for three cars, and there was on-street parking available. Planner Anderson explained the make-up of the area and that the current zoning was RM-36. As far as Special Use Permit criteria, the use was appropriate for this location; zoning allows a rooming house with a special use permit; they are using the existing structure with no exterior changes. She said the streets there have the capacity for the use, and on-

street parking is available. There are no anticipated environmental impacts, and the site has clear ingress and egress.

*Michael Harrison came into the meeting at this time.

Applicant, Pastor Carr, came forward to speak to their application. He said they were looking to help individuals who have had hard times and need a place to live. Since the home bedrooms been available, it had been rented, and they have a waiting list. Pastor Carr stated that they plan on keeping the property clean. He mentioned they have a special type of lease in place. The lease stipulates no violence, no drug use, and no overnight guests. Pastor Carr said they live around the corner and check on the property every day. He hoped the Planning Commission would approve their request.

Commissioner Milliken opened the public hearing.

There were no in-person or phone call comments.

Commissioner Milliken closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Harrison wondered how many rooming houses were in the City. Planner Anderson said she didn't know the answer to that, but the Planning Commission has approved at least one in the last year. She estimated that they have at least one request a year for this type of housing. Planner Anderson expects to see more requests for this type of housing option. She shared that RM-36 is the most intensive residential district. This property happens to be in a place where there are single-unit homes, however, that district allows higher numbers of units.

Commissioner Milliken asked if it was the same rental registration/inspection process as other rentals in the City. Planner Anderson stated that it did have the same requirements.

Commissioner Harrison, seconded by Commissioner Swan, moved to approve the Special Use Permit Request at 1025 North Park Street for a Rooming House in a RM-36.

Commissioner Pitts stated that he can appreciate this type of housing. When he was young, he lived in a similar situation and learned to be on his own. He thought it was a great idea.

Commissioner Harrison appreciated that Pastor and Mrs. Carr live in neighborhood and can regularly evaluate how things are going with the house and tenants.

Commissioner Vyas appreciated the diversity of housing types coming forward in the City. She was thankful to the applicant for providing this housing opportunity.

Commissioner Milliken stated that it was no secret that they are in the middle of a housing crises. He thought it was necessary to find solutions like this. He was glad that this came forward. Commissioner Milliken said that the request was compliant with the zoning ordinance, and he agreed with the staff report.

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

F. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

1. Renewal of Planning Commissioner terms

Commissioner Swan was finishing a partial term. She agreed to continue to her first full term.

Commissioner Pittelko was finishing a full term. He agreed to continue to a second full term.

Commissioner Vyas, seconded by Commissioner Pitts, moved to approve Commissioners Swan and Pittelko to continue with the Planning Commission.

A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed.

Planner Anderson said they will elect new officers at the next meeting. She also clarified that the motion needed to be a recommendation to the City Commission.

Commissioner Vyas, seconded by Commissioner Pitts, moved to recommend approval to the City Commission of Planning Commissioners Swan and Pittelko to be appointed to continue terms with the Planning Commission.

A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed.

Planner Anderson reported that this would be on the City Commission consent agenda.

Planner Anderson announced that they would have two vacancies on the Planning Commission, and she encouraged Commissioners to share the opportunity with those they knew. They were hoping to fill the positions sooner than later. Planner Anderson explained that people could apply by going to City website, Boards and Commissions, or they can apply in person at City Hall.

G. REPORTS:

1. City Planner's Report

Christina Anderson shared that she was planning to have an in-depth report of the zoning code at the April meeting. They will also do officer elections at that meeting.

2. Site Plan Reports

H. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

No in-person or phone call comments.

I. CITY COMMISSION LIAISON COMMENTS

Commissioner Praedel came forward and stated that the Alvan Road and Westnedge rezonings Planning Commission had heard were passed by the City Commission.

Commissioner Praedel shared that City Commission had a retreat on February 18 to plan the 2024 budget. Top issues of concern are youth violence and housing. He thanked Kalamazoo Public Services and Consumer's Energy for their work during the ice storm. Commissioner Praedel thanked Commissioner Vyas for her service. He commented on how special it was to see her family with her that night. Commissioner Praedel thought it was powerful for young people seeing their parent do something to make the world a better place.

Commissioner Praedel outlined a scare his family had when a carbon monoxide detector went off in their basement. He encouraged everyone listening to make sure that every floor in their house has a carbon monoxide detector. Take it seriously. It is a silent killer.

J. MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS BY PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

Commissioners Burgess and Pitts thanked Commissioner Vyas for her service.

Commissioner Milliken thanked City staff, Public Works, Consumer's Energy, and Public Safety for their recent work during the ice storm. He said that a quarter of the buildings at Bronson lost power. He saw limbs down and roads closed.

Commissioner Milliken thanked Commissioner Vyas for helping him through the meetings. He was grateful for her wise, thoughtful words and deliberations. They were all better for it. Commissioner Milliken said they would miss her, and the City would miss her.

Commissioner Vyas reviewed her time on the Planning Commission and said that it had been a wonderful experience. She talked about the different kinds of work they had done during her tenure with the Board. She thanked City staff and said she was thankful for the opportunity to grow and be part of the vibrant, dynamic, momentum of the City of Kalamazoo.

K. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Vyas adjourned the meeting at 7:33 pm.

Planning Commission

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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "C. Anderson", is positioned above a solid blue horizontal line.

Christina Anderson,

City Planner

Community Planning & Economic Development