

City of Kalamazoo
PLANNING COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
December 7, 2023
FINAL

Members Present: Brian Pittelko; David Burgess; Christine Dascenzo; Gregory Milliken, Chair; Jennifer Swan; Mitchell Curtiss

Members Excused: Shardae Chambers; Michael Harrison; James Pitts

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

A. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Commissioner Milliken called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Planner Durkee proceeded with roll call and determined there was a quorum.

B. ADOPTION OF FORMAL AGENDA

Commissioner Milliken announced that a rezoning case for Stadium Drive had been postponed until at least March per the applicant's request.

Commissioner Swan, seconded by Commissioner Pittelko, moved approval of the December 7, 2023 Planning Commission agenda as presented. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Dascenzo, seconded by Commissioner Swan, moved approval of the October 9, 2023 minutes as presented. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

D. COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

E. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

F. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

1. PC #2023.08: 2024 Capital Improvement Plan - Request by Community Planning and Economic Development Department to review the 2024 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Mr. James Baker, Public Services Director, came forward to present the Capital Improvement Plan. He shared that the CIP focuses on three broad areas: General Fund, Major and Local Streets Funds, Water and Wastewater Funds. He said the plans focus on supporting the business units of the City, Good Governance work, and Complete Streets work. Director Baker showed a chart breaking down the \$80 million. He shared that the CIP is down approximately \$20 million from last year. Reductions were mostly made in the major street fund and the water fund.

Director Baker highlighted some specific projects.

General Fund

- Continued work at the Farmers Market
- Work at Milham Park and Verburg park
- Eden software replacement
- Crosstown facilities – courts/departments moving out/in
- Safety equipment for Public Safety

2024 Major/local streets projects

- Michikal and Kalamazoo two-way conversion
- Cork Street, Westnedge Ave, Whites Road, Inkster Bridge, Ransom Street, Howard Street
- Sidewalk improvements for Safe Routes to School

Wastewater

- Tertiary process upgrade
- Interceptor upgrades
- sewer lining
- manhole replacements
- odor improvements.

Water

- Corrosion control project
- Lead service line replacement
 - EPA is looking to increase rules and regulations governing lead. Updated legislation could impact City schedules.
- Stations will be implementing PFAS treatment in 2025.

Commissioner Curtiss asked for clarification if the items/projects listed were one time or less frequent expenses that were separate from the City budget. Director Baker explained that was the intention, however, some of the expenses were for multiple year projects.

Commissioner Curtiss asked what the mention of heavy equipment entailed. Director Baker said that it was for streets. This would cover things like dump trucks, snowplows, street sweepers, front end loaders

– big machines not funded by the Water Department. He explained that Water and Wastewater have heavy equipment line item budgets, and they buy their own.

Commissioner Milliken explained that the Planning Commission is required by State law to review the CIP and see if it matches the Master Plan. The Planning Commission gives a recommendation to the City Commission based on their review.

Commissioner Pittelko, seconded by Commissioner Swan, made a motion to recommend approval of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to the City Commission.

Commissioner Pittelko said he appreciated the Complete Streets work they noted as it is a large part of the Master Plan. He also mentioned appreciation of the environmental work planned: lead replacement, improvements to the wastewater plant, PFAS, and odor control.

Commissioner Dascenzo added that there was a good distribution of improvements around the City. She was excited about the work planned for 2024.

Commissioner Curtiss shared that multiple City expenditures mentioned in the CIP pertain to his work in everyday life. He asked if he should excuse himself from the vote. Commissioner Milliken did not feel it was a conflict of interest. Commissioner Curtiss was not approving an expenditure – only giving a recommendation after weighing it against the Master Plan.

Attorney Bear agreed with Commissioner Milliken. Even though Commissioner Curtiss may work in the field with certain projects, they were not reviewing a specific project nor dealing with a situation that could lead to compensation for him or his employer. Attorney Bear thought that disclosure of a potential conflict was a good thing for transparency, but he found no conflict of interest in this instance.

Commissioner Burgess asked if there had been a conflict of interest, if that should that have been brought up before discussion. Attorney Bear said that ideally it should have been brought up before the meeting and/or before discussion. He shared that he is available at meetings or ahead of time to check in on these issues. If there was a conflict, they would ask the Commissioner to recuse themselves.

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

2. 2024 Meeting Schedule.

Commissioner Milliken asked if there were any immediate concerns with the schedule. No concerns were voiced.

Commissioner Burgess, seconded by Commissioner Swan, moved to approve the 2024 meeting schedule of the Planning Commission.

A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

G. REPORTS:

1. City Planner's Report

Planner Durkee reported that he started working on an amendment to Chapter 8 (Administration) of the zoning ordinance. He doesn't expect significant changes. Planner Durkee also shared that Mr. Justin Gish, Sustainability Planner, has been doing research on lighting and is working with him on the Lighting Ordinance (Chapter 6).

Planner Anderson shared that guest speaker, Ryan Kilpatrick from Housing Next, gave a presentation to City Commissioners at the last COW meeting. He spent the day with staff working through conversations on housing: incentives and programs, and how the zoning code could support housing. Planner Anderson shared that the meeting was recorded, and she encouraged them to watch it on the City's YouTube channel.

Planner Anderson announced that they will be starting the residential code update. Staff have been doing research and they plan to kick off the process sometime this winter.

Planner Anderson informed the Commissioners that she and Sharilyn Parsons would be giving a Housing Matters presentation during a Zoom meeting the next week. Topics would include potential zoning updates, pre-approved plans, and HUD, HOME, Community Block Grant programs. She offered to pass along the Zoom information to any Commissioner interested.

2. Annual Report to the Planning Commission for 2022

Planner Durkee said that they missed bringing this report forward due to shifting roles with staff earlier in the year. Commissioner Dascenzo asked if he could give any highlights. Planner Durkee said there had been significant progress on some projects - Zoetis, 530 S. Rose, KRESA School, 21 cell antenna colocations. He shared that 1802 E. Main would be wrapping up soon. The Public Participation Plan was approved and there was a presentation of the Sustainability Plan.

3. 2023 Site Plan List

No questions voiced.

H. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

In-person comments:

Ms. Tammy Hibner came forward and voiced concern regarding the potential of a car wash going in on the corner of Drake and Stadium. She mentioned that the applicant had not yet had a public meeting. She felt there was no way he could build up the property enough so that it wouldn't pollute Asylum Lake.

Ms. Hibner noted that there are multiple car washes in the area (and the applicant has three of them). She suggested the City offer him a tax abatement to donate the property to them. Ms. Hibner also brought up concerns regarding pollution and Graphics Packaging. She asked the Planning Commission to focus on health, welfare, cleanliness, and lack of pollution.

Call-in Comments:

Due to technical difficulties of connecting the caller, Commissioner Milliken suggested City Commissioner Praedel give his report while staff trouble-shoot the situation.

The caller thanked them for their diligence in trouble-shooting the call issue. He thanked the board for their perseverance in pushing through some of the downtown projects – like the new entertainment venue. The caller stated that the downtown looks good, and they are doing a wonderful job. He thanked them for their hard work.

I. CITY COMMISSION LIAISON COMMENTS

Commissioner Praedel wished everyone a Happy Hannukah for those who celebrate. He noted that there was a nightly menorah lighting in Bronson Park. Commissioner Praedel stated they had the official swearing in of the 55th City Commission. He said they welcomed new City Commissioner, Alonzo Wilson, and that Commissioner Hess was the new Vice Mayor. Commissioner Praedel said the proposed budget was \$288 million. People can check it out at Kalamazoocity.org/budget. The Public Hearing for the budget is scheduled for January 2, 2024 with action to be taken on January 22, 2024. He informed them that the Commission had a budget work session scheduled the next Monday. Commissioner Praedel wished them all a happy holiday.

J. MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS BY PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

None.

K. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Milliken adjourned the meeting at 7:44 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Christina Anderson,
City Planner
Community Planning & Economic Development