

City of Kalamazoo
PLANNING COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
May 1, 2025
FINAL

Members Present: Ian Smith; Christine Dascenzo; Michelle Audette-Bauman; Jennifer Swan; Mitchell Curtiss; Wendell Tolber; Brian Pittelko, Chair; Thomas Kostrzewa; Zack Wilson

Members Excused:

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

A. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

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

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

B. ADOPTION OF FORMAL AGENDA

Commissioner Swan, seconded by Commissioner Kostrzewa, moved approval of the May 1, 2025 Planning Commission agenda as presented. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Tolber, seconded by Commissioner Curtiss, moved approval of the April 9, 2025 minutes as presented. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

D. COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

E. PUBLIC HEARINGS

P.C. #2025.02 – A public hearing to consider a rezoning request from Bogan Developments to rezone 802, 814, 822, and 824 S Burdick St., and 107, and 115 W Vine St, from Live-Work 1 (LW1) to Downtown 3 (D3).

Commissioner Swan abstained because she is employed by Tower Pinkster who is working with the developer. Commissioner Wilson abstained due to being on a committee with the developer.

Planner Anderson shared that the request was to rezone some properties on S. Burdick and W. Vine from LW1 to D3. These districts are identical in permitted uses and permitted lot types, and both are within the form-based code. She said the key differences in these districts is that D3 permits building up to five stories

whereas LW1 only permits building up to three stories. There is also a difference in allowed impervious coverage - 80% in LW1 and 100% in D3.

Planner Anderson explained that this is a transitional and unique area with the hospital, the Vine neighborhood and the Edison neighborhood. Planner Anderson stated that a lot of the zoning standards are tied to street type – in this case neighborhood business street, and neighborhood network street. This area has residential, commercial, and civic uses. She talked about the Future Land Use (FLU) plan that shows Urban Edge and Neighborhood Edge which both represent mixed-use districts. These districts are meant to promote activity, walkability, and commercial housing all mixed up together. Planner Anderson shared that it's not uncommon to think about pulling or pushing FLU district edges one way or another when they get rezoning requests.

Planner Anderson said that rezoning requests follow the Public Participation Policy, so the applicant had to do some outreach. She said the applicant held a meeting in conjunction with the Vine Neighborhood Association. The meeting was advertised through social media and the neighborhood organization. Planner Anderson showed pictures of the location/area.

Planner Anderson went through the review criteria stating that the rezoning is consistent with the Master Plan and Strategic Vision; the development would fit in with the district; there was a demonstrated need for housing in Kalamazoo especially near a major employer; the current development is not what is projected for this area; the development would be compatible with surrounding land uses.

Commissioner Curtiss asked if all the parcels proposed to be rezoned were owned by the applicant. Planner Anderson said they are all owned by the applicant or the applicant has permission to bring them forward for rezoning.

Commissioner Pittelko noted that the rendering shows more parcels included than the ones in the rezoning request. Planner Anderson stated that the applicant's original request included additional parcels. After some conversations, the applicant adjusted the parcels to include in the rezoning request.

Commissioner Dascenzo noticed that the documents specified the case as 2025.01 in some spots and 2025.02 in other places. Planner Anderson agreed to look at that for clarification.

Commissioner Curtiss verified that the differences in zoning between LW1 and D3 were only height and impervious coverage. Planner Anderson agreed that the uses and lot types of the zoning districts are the same.

Mr. Jamauri Bogan, CEO of Bogan Developments, and Mr. Jason Novotny, Tower Pinkster, stepped forward to speak to the request. Mr. Bogan shared that the project was a mixed-use development that would revitalize a critical corner in the Vine neighborhood. They plan to replace a long-standing liquor store, Food Maxx, and several blighted structures with workforce housing, an early learning center, and neighborhood serving amenities. He said the project aligned with the IK2025 vision and the Vine Neighborhood Plan by introducing affordable housing options, attracting new businesses, and enhancing

connectivity with the broader Kalamazoo community. Currently the site is zoned LW1, and they cannot build up to five stories. Mr. Bogan thought it was important to note that the original vision for these parcels was developed in collaboration with Bronson Healthcare, City of Kalamazoo, Vine and Edison Neighborhoods, and LISC. They had always imagined a five story building at this corner. He said they recently received approval from the Historic District Commission for the demolition of several properties along W. Vine Street. Mr. Bogan also spoke about the outreach meeting at the Vine Neighborhood Association. He listed the members of his development team and asked for the Planning Commissioners support. Mr. Bogan said they are not transactional; they are relational and want to be good neighbors and good stewards of their community.

Commissioner Tolber asked about the timeline for development. Mr. Bogan said that, optimistically, they want to break ground sometime next year. Commissioner Tolber asked for a definition of the learning center. Mr. Bogan shared that with his previous development, they partnered with the YMCA, and they built an early learning center. As they provide affordable housing, they want to provide affordable childcare as well.

Commissioner Pittelko asked what kind of community feedback they received. Mr. Bogan said the community feedback was great. He thought that whenever you present something new, there is always curiosity about what the development could bring. They have connected with the neighbors. Mr. Bogan said this vision was talked about for seven years. He thought there would be questions and they would be there to answer them.

Commissioner Curtiss asked if the reason for the rezoning request was related to height or also increased impervious coverage. Mr. Jason Novotny stated they would be under the allowed 80% impervious coverage. Part of that will be a playground surface adjacent to the preschool and they are planning on some green space amenities for the residents.

Commissioner Smith asked how many businesses would be occupying the commercial ground floor. Mr. Bogan said there would be three.

Commissioner Tolber asked if the mixed-income housing units would be maintained via applications that specifically spell out the rules or if it was expected to come along naturally. Mr. Bogan explained that they were using a state program around housing for employers, so they will have regulations that specify maintaining a level of affordability for a set period of time. Commissioner Tolber asked if this was for a certain number of units. Mr. Bogan indicated they were unsure of the number of units as the proforma was still conceptual.

Commissioner Curtiss wondered how their development required five stories over the three stories already allowed. Mr. Bogan said that five stories were needed to be efficient with the site and to align with the community vision. The ground floor of the development would be completely commercial with the other four stories being residential. Commissioner Pittelko clarified that the development would offer 80 units of housing. Mr. Novotny confirmed that the development would be approximately 80 units. He explained that the primary street frontage on Burdick would be five stories. He said as they step west into Vine, it is

their intention is to go from a five-story building to a three-story building. Mr. Novotny confirmed for Commissioner Curtiss that the step to three stories is where the rendering says preschool.

Commissioner Pittelko asked why they are looking at a larger plot than the rezoning request. Mr. Novotny said they are not requesting rezoning for some of the parcels, because they are already zoned RM-36, which allows for heights up to six stories.

Commissioner Smith asked about the number of bedrooms per unit. Mr. Bogan said a large majority of them would be ones, studios, and some two bedrooms.

Commissioner Audette Bauman asked if they had any future plans for community and neighborhood engagement. She noted that they got a couple of letters from neighbors. Mr. Bogan affirmed their commitment to community engagement. He said he spoke with one resident about that and will have ongoing conversations with her, the neighborhood, and the community. Mr. Bogan said they don't want this project to overwhelm people, but they want people to feel good about it.

Commissioner Pittelko shared how citizens could give public comment on the case.

In-person comments

Mr. Greg Milliken came forward to share some background on the project. He said the project evolved from the Bronson healthy living district which was a collaboration of KVCC and Bronson nearly 10 years ago. Mr. Milliken said they created the healthy living campus plan, and they wanted to create other improvements in this area. They identified this block for potential residential development because there was blight, empty parcels, and a lot of parcels owned by the same owner. Over time they started acquiring the property and started visioning and planning efforts. Mr. Milliken said they gathered together the Vine and Edison Neighborhood Associations, KNHS, LISC, City of Kalamazoo, KVCC, and Bronson. Their vision was a patchwork of missing middle housing. There is a need for housing, and they needed an opportunity to see what different types of housing would look like. When people get three lots, they can look here to see a demonstration of what a quadplex or a rowhouse looks like. Burdick was to be the most intense area, and the zoning at that time allowed five stories. He said they looked at five stories and tapering down from there - that was the plan. Mr. Milliken said they are happy to partner with the developer and see this come to fruition.

Ms. Karen Williams said she submitted the letter referenced earlier. She thanked everyone for their due diligence to make sure that the minimum zoning was passed to see this vision come true. Ms. Williams said the Downtown zone will be very close to her property. She said there was a lot of talk and intention to make it very livable on the residential side where it isn't Downtown yet. Ms. Williams encouraged the developer to stretch the idea of what it means to have outreach. She heard that people had been having visioning sessions for eight years, but for someone living there it was all new. Perhaps they should have more than one event advertised on social media and a Neighborhood Association that is a little removed. Ms. Williams offered to support the developer by being a liaison in the area. She expressed that she was happy to help the community, and the relationship vision come through in a way she hasn't yet seen.

There were no call-in comments.

Commissioner Kostrzewa, seconded by Commissioner Dascenzo moved to recommend approval to the City Commission to rezone 802, 814, 822, & 824 S. Burdick Street & 107 & 115 W. Vine Street, from Live-Work 1 (LW1) to Downtown 3 (D3).

Commissioner Kostrzewa said he applauded the effort. He shared that he knew firsthand the difficulty involved moving the bar forward. Height issues and historic issues are legendary. Commissioner Kostrzewa said he heard comments about the visioning process for years. He thought it was wonderful to see the intention around the activity - not just the rezoning, but the spirit of commitment and entrepreneurship.

Commissioner Dascenzo commented that no matter what the project ended up looking like, this area can handle the height increase. The similarity of districts sets it up well for the transition. She thought it would fit in the area well.

Commissioner Tolber thought the development went nicely with neighborhood, City, and Bronson's goals. Overall, it would be a nice fit.

Commissioner Smith thought it was a great development. He said the area needed more houses and better uses. This would be a dramatic improvement over the current use.

Commissioner Pittelko thought this development would fit in with the neighborhood, Downtown, Bronson, and the overall City vision. He was encouraged to see workforce and more affordable housing go in near Bronson.

A roll call vote was taken. Commissioners Smith, Dascenzo, Curtiss, Pittelko, Tolber, Audette Bauman, and Kostrzewa voted yes. Commissioners Wilson and Swan abstained.

F. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

None.

G. REPORTS:

1. City Planner's Report

Planner Anderson noted that Commissioner Curtiss was the Planning Commission's representative on the IK Partners Board and could provide an update at any time.

Planner Anderson explained that Imagine Kalamazoo (IK) is what the City calls the community conversation that yields the City's Strategic Vision and Master Plan. The Strategic Vision contains 10 broad goals that guide the work of the City. The Master Plan is a City-wide document focused on land use and transportation.

IK2035 has been divided into three pieces: Imagine It, Plan It, Design It. Planner Anderson said they are currently in the Plan It phase - taking what they heard in phase I and confirming it with the community. She said they will start the Design It phase in the summer – focusing on implementation of goals and outcomes. Planner Anderson went over the timeline – noting that the timeline can shift if more time is needed in any phase. When they are done with the Plan It phase, they will draft the Strategic Vision document, get it out for review, and have it approved by the City Commission. They will also draft the Master Plan, get it out for review, and bring it before the Planning Commission for approval. She stated that the Master Plan will go to the City Commission, but the Planning Commission is the official approver.

Planner Anderson showed a slide about points of contact (2,492 as of February 2025). They have engaged with the community via meetings, surveys, a book read, youth art projects, pop-up engagements, and Meetings on the Go. Planner Anderson reviewed what they heard from the engagement. She noted that they heard many, “for all,” statements - transportation options for all, housing for all, public spaces for all.

Planner Anderson reviewed existing Strategic Vision goals. She noted that the themes from IK2035 are a little different from the existing goal themes. The biggest difference is that Strength through Diversity and Shared Prosperity are not listed. They heard through the community that these are important topics that need to be intentionally woven into all City activities.

Planner Anderson said they are trying to be more intentional to set up documents and work plans. They are using the Goals, Outcomes, Strategies, Measures model. During the Plan It phase, they utilized public meetings and focus groups to dive into goals and outcomes. She said they plan to have a few more meetings: Kalamazoo High School Students @ Read And Write Kalamazoo (RAWK), Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Pottawatomini, Kalamazoo Residents with Disabilities & Caregivers. They are also hoping to have a meeting with the unhoused community, and more neighborhoods. Planner Anderson explained they were also seeking feedback on the City vision statement.

Planner Anderson stated that they would be willing to bring an IK presentation to any interested community or organization. She indicated that people could also go online to complete activities and sign up to stay in the loop when new things happen.

Commissioner Wilson appreciated the hard work. He wondered if they were tracking to know if they were reaching all demographics. Planner Anderson said that every time someone participates, they send out a demographic survey to them. She thought that thousands of emails had gone out. They will be evaluating that this month to see what areas they still need to reach.

Commissioner Kostrzewa asked if they had metrics for first time participants. Planner Anderson said that some of their sign in sheets ask about participation. She has been to all the meetings, so she can see who is new. Planner Anderson said they could add this question to their sign in sheets.

Commissioner Tolber asked how they could request a meeting. Planner Anderson said they could let her know at andersonc@kalamazoo.org, or they can reach out to 311, or they can email hello@kalamazoo.org. Commissioner Tolber asked if the group needed to find a place or if they came to her. Planner Anderson said they were happy to organize or come to a group space. The goal is to make it as easy as possible for people to participate.

Commissioner Pittelko said he appreciated their hard work.

2. Site Plan List

No questions.

H. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Commissioner Pittelko gave information on how to call in.

There were no comments.

I. CITY COMMISSION LIAISON COMMENTS

Commissioner Praedel thanked Planner Anderson and the IK2035 partners for their work. He also thanked the public for participating. Commissioner Praedel shared that it was an exciting weekend coming up. It was the Kalamazoo marathon weekend and the opening of the Kalamazoo Farmer's market. The market will be open every Saturday from now until Fall. He noted that people should expect construction there. Commissioner Praedel announced that May is Bike month. He mentioned the Mayor's Bike Ride, Bikes in the Zoo, and the Bike Rodeo. Commissioner Praedel said the City Commission had a first reading of a new ordinance amendment for the impounding of vehicles. He said that a number of residents, especially on the Northside, have been plagued with a mobile nuisance. This ordinance would allow participants in the mobile nuisance to get a warning, and then the City would have the right to impound vehicles. This is progress for residents who have asked for help.

J. MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS BY PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

None.

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K. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Pittelko adjourned the meeting at 8:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christina Anderson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Christina Anderson,

City Planner

Community Planning & Economic Development