

Alton James  
Chairperson  
Lauren Hood, MCD  
Vice Chair/Secretary

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Director

**City of Detroit**  
**CITY PLANNING COMMISSION**  
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Brenda Goss Andrews  
Damion W. Ellis  
David Esparza, AIA, LEED  
Gregory Pawlowski  
Frederick E. Russell, Jr.  
Angy Webb

**City Planning Commission**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**November 21, 2019**

**MINUTES**

**I. Opening**

A. Call to Order - The meeting was called to order by Chairperson James at 5:16 pm.

B. Roll Call - Marcell Todd, Director, called the roll. A quorum was present

Attendees: Ellis, Esparza, , James, Hood and Russell  
Excused: Andrews-Goss, Pawlowski and Webb

C. Amendments to and approval of agenda

**Commissioner Russell motioned to approve agenda, with amendments;  
seconded by Commissionr Pawlowski. Motion approved.**

**II. Minutes**

A. Meeting minutes of October 17, 2019 and November 7, 2019

Minutes to be presented at next meeting.

**III. Public Hearings and Presentations**

A. **PUBLIC DISCUSSION** – Special District Review of PCA (Public Center Adjacent) zoned property at 561 E. Jefferson Avenue, for the proposed demolition of an existing structure (the former Department of Administrative Hearings Building) and the redevelopment of the site as a surface parking lot.

George Etheridge, CPC staff member, provided a summary of report dated November 21, 2019 relative to request of Mary C. McCormick of CM Partners Architects for a special district review relative to proposed demolition of the building located at 561 E. Jefferson Avenue and the establishment of a surface parking lot at the same location. The property has been vacant for approximately six years and has fallen into disrepair.

The subject property is zoned PCA (Public Center District Adjacent) classification, (Sections 50-3-226 and 50-11-97 of the Zoning Ordinance), which calls for approval by the City Council of any exterior changes following the review and recommendation of the City Planning Commission and the Planning and Development Department. The subject property is located in Cluster 4 in the Central Business District subsector of the Master Plan of Polices. Goal 6 for the Central Business District subsector of the Master Plan of Policies aims to improve the districts position as a center for corporate headquarters.

The PCA District review criteria (Section 50-11-97 of the Detroit Zoning Ordinance) lists eighteen (18) criteria which must be considered when a proposal is being reviewed for consistency with the spirit, purpose and intent of the PCA district. The major alteration would be the razing of the existing structure, effecting the Jefferson Avenue street wall. The site plan presented seeks to provide continuity by carrying over the screening of the Larned Street frontage.

#### Public Comment

Frances Grunow – Detroiters for Parking Reform – Proposed a moratorium on Downtown parking lots due to the detrimental effect on the streetscape, historic properties, etc.; requested consensus of existing parking structures; and pending the completion of the Zone Detroit study; willing to present to the Commission their overall strategy for parking.

Staff to provide recommendation in January 2020.

- B. **PUBLIC HEARING** - to consider a proposed text amendment to the Detroit Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 50 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, to delete regulations relative to on-premises business signs, off-premises advertising signs, directional signs, and temporary signs, consistent with a companion ordinance to consolidate most sign regulations in Chapter 4 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, *Advertising and Signs*.
- C. **PUBLIC DISCUSSION** – Proposed amendment to Chapters 4, Signs and Advertisement and 50, Zoning Ordinance, of the 2019 Detroit City Code advancing new regulations for signage. (*Held concurrently with preceeding public hearing.*)

Participantats for this item include Rory Bolger of CPC Staff, Amanda Elias of the Jobs and Economy Team and Tonja Long and Daniel Arking of the Law Department. Rory Bolger, CPC staff member, provided a summary of report dated November 21, 2019 relative to the proposed text amendments to the Detroit Zoning Ordinance Chapter 50 of the 2019 Detroit City Code. The proposed amendment will repeal Article VI, *Signs*; deleting sign related definitions, procedures and regulations throughout the Zoning Ordinance. Sign provisions will be moved into six (6) chapters of the City Code, Chapter 4, *Advertising and Signs*. The statutory public hearing and public discussions were held concurrently.

#### Timeline

- Revisions to the regulations for on-premises business signs and off premises advertising signs began in 2012 by City Planning Commission staff's facilitation of a working group composed of a various city departments.
- A public hearing on the "Business Sign" ordinance was held in May 2015 and recommended for approval by CPC staff in June 2015.
- CPC staff presented a framework to the City Council regarding updates to the advertising sign regulations in November 2015; City Council green lighted the development of a text amendment.
- The administration had issues with various provisions; Planning and Development staff reconvened working group to further develop updated regulations for on-premises and off-premises signage in 2016.
- Council Member Scott Benson, working with the Law Department, included recommendations from the working group, community and stakeholders to prepare the draft ordinance that amends Chapter 50, removing sign regulations out of zoning and into Chapter 4, Advertising and Signs under police-power.

All references to "signs" will be deleted from the following Articles within the Chapter 50, Zoning Ordinance:

Articles VI – *Signs*; Article III – *Review and Approval Procedures (Part I)*; Article IV – *Review and Approval Procedures (Part II)*; Article V – *Violations and Enforcement*; Article VIII – *Residential Zoning Districts*; Article IX – *Business Zoning Districts*; Article X – *Industrial Zoning Districts*; Article XI – *Special Purpose Zoning Districts and Overlay Areas*; Article XII – *Use Regulations*; Article XIII – *Intensity and Dimensional Standards*; Article XIV – *Development Standards*; Article XV – *Nonconformities*; and Article XVI – *Rules of Construction and Definitions*.

The organizing principle for sign regulations proposed in the Chapter 4 amendment will include five (5) "sign districts," defined in Section 4-1-1 based on the twenty-one (21) land use classifications described and mapped in the City's Master Plan; and include *Low-density residential sign district, Low-density commercial/institutional sign district; High-density residential/mixed use sign district; High-density commercial/industrial sign district; and Recreation/open space sign district.*

Daniel Arking, Law Department provided a summary of the proposed Advertising and Signs Ordinance prepared by the Law Department. The Law Department was brought in by the Detroit City Council to advance a completed ordinance preserving exiting authority. The City Council charged the Law Department with four (4) directives:

- The ordinance should be based on the work of SOWG, under both CPC and PDD leadership numerous policies should be reflected in the ordinance.
- The ordinance should consolidate regulations for all types of sign in a single Chapter of the City Code, to facilitate administration, enforcement and accessibility of sign regulations.
- Signage should be subject to regulation under the City's police powers, rather than it's zoning authority.
- Ordinance should include regulations to allow for limited advertising in the CBD.

Council Member Benson led four (4) public meetings to collect community and stakeholder input on the draft ordinance on March 15<sup>th</sup>; April 5<sup>th</sup>; May 8<sup>th</sup>; and May 15<sup>th</sup>. Over three hundred (300) comments were submitted from a wide variety of public stakeholders.

The City Planning Commission staff was involved throughout the community engagement and their comments were incorporated into the revised draft sign ordinance. The Law Department compiled and submitted a compilation of Councilmember Benson's office for review and on September 30, 2019 the Law Department submitted a revised draft ordinance consisting of revised amendments to Chapter 4, Advertising; conforming amendments to Chapter 50, Zoning; and conforming amendments to Chapters 8, 32, 40 and 43 as necessary.

### **City Planning Commission Concerns**

Commissioner Esparza requested numbers on PowerPoint pages.

Commissioner Russell sought clarification relative to the impact of a on specific areas; understanding the impact of the proposed signage changes; requested the recommendation of the consultants; wants comparisons of other cities relative to zoning.

CPC staff will provide Commission with requested information.

### **Public Comments**

Norman Thrasher - Concerned with to the application process and what authority and methods will be used to determine approvals – Opposes

Joan Primo – Supports - needs revenue

Jim Forbes – Supports

Gerald Hasspacher - Sierra Club – Opposes

Erica Briggs – Scenic Michigan – Opposes

Joe Hooker – Supports

Curtis Ciaravino – Supports

Sue Mosey – Midtown Inc. – Opposes

Sharon Madison – Supports

Michael Ferlito – Supports

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Anthony Ferlito – Supports

- IV. Unfinished Business - None**
- V. New Business - None**
- VI. Committee Reports - None**
- VII. Staff Report - None**
- VIII. Communications - None**
- IX. Public Comment - None**
- X. Adjournment**