

Donovan Smith
Chairperson
Melanie Markowicz
Vice Chair/Secretary

Marcell R. Todd, Jr.
Director

City of Detroit
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
208 Coleman A. Young Municipal Center
Detroit, Michigan 48226
Phone: (313) 224-6225 Fax: (313) 224-4336
e-mail: cpc@detroitmi.gov

Kenneth R. Daniels
David Esparza, AIA, LEED
Ritchie Harrison
Lauren Hood, MCD
Gwen Lewis
Frederick E. Russell, Jr.
Rachel Udabe

City Planning Commission Meeting

MINUTES

January 4, 2024

5:00 P.M.

I. Opening

A. Call to Order – Chairperson Donovan Smith called the meeting to order at 5:20 p.m.
This meeting was held in the 13th Floor Erma L. Henderson Auditorium.

B. Roll Call

Attendees: Kenneth Daniels, David Esparza, Ritchie Harrison, Melanie Markowicz,
Frederick Russell, Donovan Smith and Rachel Udabe

Excused: Lauren Hood and Gwen Lewis

A quorum was present.

C. Amendments to and approval of agenda

Commissioner Russell moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Commissioner
Markowicz. Motion approved.

II. Meeting minutes of September 21, 2023

Commissioner Markowicz moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner
Esparza. Motion approved.

III. Public Hearings, Discussions and Presentations

A. **5:15 PM PRESENTATION** – Request of Mariners’ Church of Detroit for PC (Public Center)
Special District Review of proposed exterior alterations to 170 East Jefferson Avenue –
Mariners’ Church of Detroit (EF, JM) (ACTION REQUESTED) **30 mins**

Present: Eric Fazzini, CPC Staff
Petitioners: Ken Morrison and Mr. Phillips

Eric Fazzini, CPC Staff member gave a brief presentation of the overview of the Mariners’
Church of Detroit for proposed new sign, based on CPC report dated March 23, 2023, and

CPC memo recommending approval. Mariners' Church is located on the south side of Jefferson at the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel entrance. There is a small parking lot near the tunnel entrance and to the west is Hart Plaza. The proposed sign location is on Jefferson near the church tower. Mariners' Church is in the central business district (CBD). During April 2023, City Council approved a PC review for various building enhancements, improvements for lighting and reopening façade facing Hart Plaza. City Council delegated review for the proposed sign to CPC. Mr. Fazzini showed photos of the proposed monument style, L.E.D. digital sign displaying praying hands. He stated that the sign is permissible in CBD which corresponds with the high-density commercial/industrial sign. Mr. Fazzini summarized Chapter 4 of the City Code sign requirements for compliance, and he recited PC review Criteria 11 most applicable to the proposed sign district. The Church hopes that the new sign will be more visible to pedestrians, traveling passersby and drivers. Mr. Fazzini stated that CPC Staff recommends approval.

Mr. Phillips, the sign's designer, stated that this sign has a built-in photo cell in the electronic display. If it ran at full capacity at night, it would be so bright no one would be able to read it. The sign is automatic, and timing is done by atmospheric conditions. This was in response to Commissioner Smith's questions regarding sign dimming capability.

Mr. Phillips mentioned the sign is under the discretion of the Church. The sign is fully capable of full motion, but it is not a movie. This was in response to Commissioner Russell's inquiries.

Ken Morrison trustee of Mariners' Church stated the intent is to replace a very old manual sign with an electronic one in response to Commissioner Russell's questions.

Mr. Morrison answered the new sign is to display church services, special events, and announcements. This was in response to Commissioner Udabe's question.

Commissioner Markowicz motioned to approve the sign as it has been presented with the conditions of 1-3 as it applies to the property and to empower Staff to have the authority to handle any other odds and ends pertaining to this sign. The conditions are 1) The electronic message board shall be operated solely as on-premises sign and display messages or images related to the Church activities and events on the property only. 2) The electronic message boards shall only display static images and not flashing, moving or animated images. 3) Each image or message shall be displayed for a minimum of eight (8) seconds. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Russell. Motion Approved.

B. 6:45 PM PRESENTATION – Huntington Place Expansion Project Presentation PC (Public Center) Special District Review (Detroit Regional Convention Facility Authority representatives) (CG) (ACTION REQUESTED) 45 mins

Present: Chris Gulock
Petitioners: Gordon Wilson, Jason Arlow, Paul McKeever, Aric Bennett, Jay Thompson and Chris Zangara

This matter was heard at 6:30 P.M.

Director Todd and Chris Gulock provided a brief overview of the Huntington Place expansion project.

Gordon Wilson, DRCFA representative, presented via PowerPoint the Huntington Place Convention Center expansion project and Detroit Regional Convention Facility Authority (DRCFA) conceptual site plan for the Second Avenue extension. It is located on two parcels of Second Avenue parcel (0.723 acres) and convention center expansion parcel (1.199 acres). These parcels were dedicated to this project from the Joe Louis Arena (JLA) site. The project includes Second Avenue extension from Atwater, primarily from Second Avenue at Steve Yzerman Drive to Congress, loading dock improvements, and parking structure. Mr. Wilson mentioned they have been working closely with JLA property owners to resolve property connectivity issues. The site is located in three separate zoning districts. (1) Atwater Drive to M10-Lodge Freeway is zoned B5. (2) The central portion is zoned PC. (3) The northern portion, Congress is zoned PCA. They submitted 30% of the design drawings to Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) in November 2023. There will be a sky walkway over the Second Avenue extension, a pedestrian walkway, bicycle pathway and pedestrian experience. Later, Mr. Wilson explained the conference center expansion conceptual timeline with anticipated activation and closeout planned for July 2026.

Chris Zangara, DRCFA representative, discussed the design criteria and planned development of the bridge and roadways. They will build a 1200 foot length extended corridor from Steve Yzerman Drive to Congress. It will span across six existing roadways including two new bridges and two pedestrian tunnels. He explained the construction staging of the project.

Paul McKeever, DRCFA representative, described the architectural and landscape designs for Second Avenue. He displayed via PowerPoint the project street renderings of the bike paths, pedestrian walkway, new signage, landscape tree lines and planters.

Commissioner Markowicz suggested the developer team consider making this project's environment look more like Detroit (Detroit city culture) physically and contextually including art from Detroit artists.

The development team responded that the Second Avenue portion of the project is approximately \$65-\$70 million in projected costs. This was in response to Commissioner Esparaza's question.

Mr. Wilson stated they are on a tight time frame, yet they are receptive to meeting and receiving feedback from the community. This was in response to Commissioner Harrison's questions regarding community engagement.

Mr. Wilson stated that there have been traffic studies for ensuring flow and safety, and they plan to fully vet traffic information in response to Commissioner Harrison's questions.

Director Todd suggested that the developer team conduct a light study to show how light may move through from season to season. He advised this may be beneficial since it will provide potential impacts and reveal how some issues can be mitigated. The developers agreed to do some light and shade studies for summer time and winter time.

CPC Staff indicated that this matter will be brought back at a later date.

C. 7:30 PM PRESENTATION - Solar Initiative (EF) 45 mins

Commissioner Daniels motioned to table the Solar Initiative presentation to the next meeting, seconded by Commissioner Markowicz. Motion Approved.

IV. Public Comment – Public comment was heard before the 6:45 P.M. Presentation.

Vanessa P. commented in opposition of group day care homes amendment. The neighborhood (District 3) is not suitable for additional group day cares with more than six children. She mentioned concerns with the neighborhood having returning citizens and sex offenders.

Additionally, Vanessa P. mentioned that children need to go outside of District 3 for care due to neighborhood conditions and blight in response to Commissioner Udabe’s direct inquiries.

Pat Bosch commented that she is in opposition to the child care facilities amendment. She mentioned it is discriminatory against single family residential in R1 and R2 zoning.

Marie, a child care provider, commented her displeasure with inaccuracies and errors in the CPC report on the childcare facilities text amendment. She said several people at a recent block club meeting were not aware of the child care survey, and she requested a recirculation of the survey in the neighborhood. She shared concerns with staff shortage at Michigan Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA).

V. Unfinished Business –

- A.** Consideration of a Zoning Ordinance text amendment, Chapter 50 of the 2019 Detroit City Code – to update definitions, regulations, and procedures relative to child care facilities for consistency with updated State law and to broaden the opportunities for such facilities on a by-right or conditional basis. **(RB, and the Office of Early Learning) (RECOMMENDING APPROVAL) 45 mins**

Present: Dr. Rory Bolger, CPC Staff

Petitioners: Director Lisa Sturgess, Office of Early Learning

Director Todd stated that Staff is presenting a recommendation indicating how to proceed on this matter (not approving the ordinance). It is anticipated that it will return for a subsequent public hearing in order to address the various issues that Staff will be presenting.

The Chair decided to allow the 6:45 P.M. Presentation to be heard without objection.

Dr. Rory Bolger provided a detailed overview and presentation via PowerPoint and based on CPC report dated January 3, 2024. He described that this text amendment involves three different child care facilities as child care centers, family day care homes (1-6), and group day care homes (7-12 children). The Law department seeks to modify the City’s zoning ordinance definitions to match State law. City Administration desires to make sure that child care is more available in City facilities zoned PR. The amendment proposes that child care centers would newly be permitted on conditional basis on lands zoned R1 and R2. He reviewed all the zones which child care facilities will be newly permissible and prohibited. Dr. Bolger briefly described the September 21, 2023 hearing wherein an introduction of an alternate approach to special land use was discussed. Further, Dr. Bolger explained the Office of Early Learning and CPC Staff desired more community feedback and distributed new surveys to residential addresses on the same block as the 66 existing group day care homes. There were 1853 homes contacted to complete and return the survey. This resulted in 138 responses received (77 mail and 61 electronic). Staff observed that the most significant fact discovered was that 52% of the survey respondents were unaware of the existence of a nearby in home child care facility. Dr. Bolger explained 66% of the survey respondents identified the benefit of child care being provided in a single family zoned

neighborhood due to convenience for families. Staff found that 61% responded that they had no concerns. Others replied some concerns with community changes, noise levels, traffic volume and unfenced play areas.

Dr. Bolger stated that Staff does believe that the Office of Early Learning’s portrayal of the need for additional home child care is persuasive, consistent with a commitment to equity, and responds to the needs of low income Detroiters. He explained in detail Staff’s four recommendations as noted on page 6 and page 7 of the January 3, 2024, CPC report on this matter as follows:

- ❖ That the prohibition of Group Day Care Homes in multiple-family dwellings, lofts, and mixed-use buildings stated in Sec. 50-12-185(b) be retained as proposed, leaving Group Day Care Homes to be permitted on a by-right basis, subject to use regulations, within single-family dwellings, two-family dwellings, and townhouses.
- ❖ To expand Sec. 50-12-130 to specify that no Group Day Care Home be located on the same block as an existing Group Day Care Home or within 500 linear feet of an existing Group Day Care Home, whichever is less.
- ❖ To expand Sec. 50-12-185 to specify that upon approval of a Group Day Care Home, notification be sent by the City to all properties on the same block as the newly approved Group Day Care Home or within 500 linear feet of the new Group Day Care Home, whichever is less, identifying the location of the Group Day Care Home and the operator of the Group Day Care Home, and providing contact information for the enforcing agencies.
- ❖ To expand Sec. 50-12-185 to specify that the rear yard of a Group Day Care Home be fenced. (mandate rear yard)
- ❖ To expand Sec. 50-12-185 by adding a “nuisance” provision consistent with the existing provision applicable to home occupations against operating “. . . in such a manner so as to create a nuisance to surrounding property. Nuisances created . . . stemming from traffic, parking, noise, or disturbance of the peace shall be considered “nuisances in fact.”

Further, Dr. Bolger advised that if CPC desires to substantially amend the provisions, a second public hearing will be held. The Law Department is prepared to incorporate CPC modifications into a new draft of the zoning ordinance text amendment.

Director Todd explained that any additions or modifications made that were not involved in the previous notice will require new public notice and hearing. This was in response to Commissioner Smith and Commissioner Harrison.

Commissioner Russell motioned to advise CPC Staff and Law Department to proceed with preparing the actual text that reflects the quick reference table permissibility and regulations, and CPC Staff’s recommendation of January 3, 2024, CPC report (Proposed Childcare Facilities Text Amendment) on page 6, page 7, and page 8, seconded by Commissioner Udabe.

**4 yays (Harrison, Russell, Smith & Udabe) —3 nays (Daniels, Esparza & Markowicz)
Motion Approved.**

VI. New Business – There was no new business.

VII. Committee Reports – There were no committee reports.

VIII. Staff Report – Director Todd indicated that Staff anticipates discussing CPC Committees at the

next meeting. The newly identified Committees need a schedule of meetings and appointment of members.

Commissioner Daniels asked about the Gordy Howe Tour on January 19, 2023, and the status of payment of Commissioners' stipends.

Director Todd confirmed the date of the MDOT tour and social dinner. Commissioner Smith conducted a potential attendee head count for the event.

Director Todd stated CPC Staff is working with the City's financial office on the Commissioners' stipends, and an update is forthcoming.

- IX. Member Report** – Director Todd reviewed the community redistricting meetings and the process of the redistricting public hearing. Also, he mentioned all can view reports and maps on the redistricting on the CPC website. This was in response to Commissioner Smith's inquiry.
- X. Communications** – Director Todd acknowledged a notification letter received from the City of Dearborn Economic Development Planning Division. He mentioned a member of the Staff will plan to attend this planning meeting on January 8, 2024.
- XI. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 10:12 p.m.