

Donovan Smith, AICP
Chairperson
Melanie Markowicz
Vice Chair/Secretary

Marcell R. Todd, Jr.
Director
Christopher Gulock, AICP
Deputy 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

Adrian-Keith Bennett
Kenneth R. Daniels
David Esparza, AIA, LEED
Ritchie Harrison
Gwendolyn Lewis, MBA
Frederick E. Russell, Jr.
Rachel M. Udabe

City Planning Commission Meeting

MINUTES
May 15, 2025
5:00 P.M.

I. Opening

A. Call to Order – Chairperson Donovan Smith called the meeting to order at 5:29 p.m.

B. Roll Call

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

A quorum was present.

C. Amendments to and approval of agenda

Director Todd stated that the tentative Unfinished Business Item A is removed; however, the matter may be considered at the next meeting.

Commissioner Markowicz moved to approve the Agenda as revised removing Item A under Unfinished Business, seconded by Commissioner Russell. Motion Approved.

II. Meeting minutes

Meeting minutes of February 6, 2025.

Commissioner Markowicz moved to approve the Minutes, seconded by Commissioner Esparza. Motion Approved.

III. Public Hearings, Discussions and Presentations

A. 5:15 PM PRESENTATION – Proposed Institutional Building Adaptive Reuse Ordinance.
(KJ, Greg Moots, PDD) **45 min**

Present: Greg Moots and Edwina King, Planning and Development Department and Kimani Jeffrey, CPC Staff

Greg Moots of the Planning and Development Department (PDD) presented via

PowerPoint an ordinance text amendment to allow the reuse of various public, civic, and institutional buildings. Mr. Moots explained that since many school buildings or institutional buildings are vacant, this provision will permit reuses. The adaptive reuse for 19 uses which is currently in effect and this proposal will expand on it. Mr. Moots displayed before and after images of vacant buildings being successfully adaptively reused in the community, i.e., (1) school building reused as an apartment complex or (2) old police stations reused as offices. It is expected that the proposed text amendment will remove some rezoning challenges and/or eliminate the burden of time for rezoning.

Mr. Moots explained in detail the slide stating the following:

“Adding Adaptive Reuse Opportunities:

- Libraries
- Fire or police stations
- Post offices
- Courthouses
- Schools and educational institutions
- Religious institutions and religious residential
- Utility buildings”

Mr. Jeffrey explained details of the 50 proposed conditional uses that are allowed. This proposed text amendment will require a Buildings, Safety Engineering, and Environmental Department (BSEED), Special Land Use Hearing (SLU). He stated the proposed uses were chosen since they would contribute to the vibrancy a neighborhood. The benefit of an SLU hearing provides an opportunity for community feedback. Mr. Jeffrey explained reasons in detail for the text amendment and beneficial incentives, i.e., parking reductions and loading space requirement reductions each by 50%. Also, he mentioned that 75% of a (demolished) building must be retained to be eligible for benefits of the reuse ordinance. Mr. Jeffrey explained a slide that described, “Tactical Preservation a building reuse strategy focused on the partial and incremental reuse of existing buildings through a Buildings & Safety (BSEED) process to ensure that the properties can be activated in a safe, efficient, environmentally sound, aesthetically responsive manner via modifications to development standards.” Mr. Jeffrey explained that tactical preservation allows for incremental or partial reuse of existing buildings, wherein certain spaces in the building are reutilized one space at a time. This provision may limit the high cost incurred with making an existing building viable for use again.

Mr. Jeffrey explained a slide describing community engagement as follows:

“Developer stakeholder discussion: Mar 2025

Resident stakeholder discussion: Apr 2025

Council briefings: Mar/Apr 2025

DONcast Meetings: Apr 2025”

Mr. Jeffrey described positive community engagement including City Council members, focus groups, architects, developers, and residents, and the majority are in support. There was one opposing public comment, but it was addressed by CPC Staff. There will be more introductory presentation meetings forthcoming.

Ms. Edwina King stated that this proposal will scale up neighborhoods, and respond to residents’ desire to upgrade residential areas. This proposed text amendment allows for flexibility as a developer or resident. Ms. King expressed that the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

Greg Moots added recognized past work done by the Historic District Commission and Historic Designation Advisory Board on this type of proposed reuse amendment. He stated that there is potential to reuse schools as theaters since some have auditoriums.

Commissioner Smith emphasized the need to put a cap on the parking requirements.

Kimani Jeffrey concluded the presentation stating that after additional community engagement and deeper analysis, the CPC Staff may return this matter in June 2025.

B. 6:00 PM DISCUSSION – Request of the Housing and Revitalization Department (HRD) to modify the review process for Public Facility Rehabilitation (PFR) component of the CDBG NOF Program. (Special Committee Report, HRD, CG, MT) (RECOMMEND APPROVAL**)**

Present: Director Julie Schneider and Associate Director Rebecca Labov, Housing and Revitalization Department

Director Julie Schneider stated the public facility rehabilitation (PFR) program is operated by the Housing and Revitalization Department (HRD) to provide Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to nonprofit agencies that have public serving facilities. A public serving facility must abide by accessibility requirements, and it must be in compliance with the City's code. A nonprofit organization or group qualifies as a user of public grant funds and may receive help to improve their facility. HRD noticed a challenge that after an organization is approved for a particular amount of funds it would need to be reevaluated after environmental reviews, requirements, or other challenges were identified thereby causing the process to restart since the project's scope changed. Therefore, HRD sought out a new way to improve the approval PFR process.

Rebecca Labov of HRD presented via PowerPoint the proposed amended approval process for CDBG PFR. She described that CDBG PFR is designated for nonprofit organizations or groups directly serving low to moderate income residents to rehabilitate their public facility, i.e., community centers, homeless shelters, senior centers. For example, the public facility may need actual physical structure rehabilitation, accessibility improvements, rehabilitation on kitchens, bathrooms, roof replacements, roof leaks, environmental concerns, entryways, or hazardous building conditions, etc. Additionally, she explained that initially the nonprofit organizations would apply, HRD scaled and scored, and the project would be presented to CPC and City Council for an award. It was discovered that many projects would become stagnant or delayed due to lack of detail or budget inaccuracies after certain inspections, predevelopment work, or environmental reviews more funds would be needed. The funds may have been awarded prematurely, since they were awarded before the organizations were completely ready to move forward.

The proposed amended PFR process will be handled in two phases. The groups will begin by (1) an application submission, (2) HRD will provide deeper assistance with the budget, scope, identifying (construction) work, and (3) the project will proceed with standard reviews. A predevelopment agreement will be entered. Thereafter, the second phase begins, and the nonprofit PFR project will be presented to CPC for approval. It is believed that a two-phase process will ensure the applying groups or nonprofit organizations will have the ability to realistically identify work and necessary budget to complete the facility's rehabilitation project.

Rebecca Labov agreed to analyze eligibility of BSEED permit fees with this PFR proposal. This was in response to Commissioner Esparza's request to include assistance with permit fees.

Director Schnieder stated HRD will fulfill CPC's request for a flow chart of the proposed process.

Commissioner Daniels moved to approve this item, seconded by Commissioner Lewis. Motion Approved.

IV. Public Comment –

This matter was heard later in the meeting.

John Bolt commented on rezoning and asked if CPC has looked at what Minneapolis, MN has done with zoning. They have eliminated single family zoning, and it resulted in rent decrease.

Director Todd replied that as a part of their consideration or plans of Zone Detroit CPC Staff is keenly aware of cities like Minneapolis and their zoning plans. CPC Staff recognizes factors that some conditions are slightly different in City of Detroit. He explained that CPC Staff acknowledges that changes to R1 and R2 bring greater diversity, housing type, and broader land use making those districts more viable for owners, residents, and the City.

V. Unfinished Business –

- A.** Consideration of the request of Tina Castleberry to amend Article XVII, Section 50-17-60, District Map No. 58 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, Chapter 50, Zoning, to show a B2 (Local Business and Residential) zoning classification where a R3 (Low Density Residential) zoning classification is currently shown at 4213 and 4225 West Davison Avenue, generally bounded by West Davison Avenue to the north, Petoskey Avenue to the east, Waverly Avenue to the south, and Broadstreet Avenue to the west.
(TS) (TENTATIVE) 30 mins

Director Marcell Todd announced early in the meeting that this matter will be removed from the agenda and rescheduled for a later date.

VI. New Business – There was no New Business.

VII. Staff Report – There was no Staff Report.

VIII. Member Report – Commissioner Melanie Markowicz announced her resignation as Commissioner and this meeting is her last day. She gave remarks of gratitude, and she enthusiastically described her new role and stated her necessity to "make a clear separation of duties and interests."

Director Todd stated for the record that Commissioner Melanie Markowicz went through the Board of Ethics (BOE) process. The BOE formally decided that it is appropriate for Commissioner Markowicz to serve on CPC; however, she weighed her new role and responsibilities and opted out voluntarily.

IX. Communications – There were no Communications.

X. Adjournment –

The meeting adjourned at 7:31 p.m.