

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

City Planning Commission Meeting

MINUTES
September 4, 2025
5:00 P.M.

I. Opening

A. Call to Order – Chairperson Donovan Smith called the meeting to order at 5:28 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Attendees: Adrian-Keith Bennett, Kenneth Daniels, David Esparza, Ritchie Harrison, Gwen Lewis, Frederick Russell (arrive 5:37 pm), Donovan Smith, and Rachel Udabe

A quorum was present.

C. Amendments to and approval of agenda

Commissioner Bennett moved to approve the Agenda, seconded by Commissioner Daniels. Motion Approved.

II. Meeting minutes

Meeting minutes of April 17, 2025.

Commissioner Bennett moved to approve the Minutes, seconded by Commissioner Udabe. Motion Approved.

III. Public Hearings, Discussions and Presentations

A. **5:15 PM PUBLIC HEARING** – To consider the request of T. Van Fox (on behalf of MHT Housing, Inc.) and Tyler Hardy (on behalf of the Detroit Housing Commission) to modify the existing PD (Planned Development) zoning classification created by Ordinance No. 50-10 on Zoning District Map No. 40 at the former Herman Gardens public housing site now known as Gardenvue Estates to allow for the construction of a new multi-family housing complex including 53 apartments and 120 townhomes (TS) **45 mins**

Present: Luke Willian, MHT Housing
Timarie DeBruhl, CPC Staff

Timarie DeBruhl presented via PowerPoint and based on CPC report dated September 3, 2025, the request for a PD modification to allow for building more multi-family housing namely, Gardenview Estates. The site is located in District 7, and it is described as being bound by Tireman Avenue to the south, Joy Road to the north, Southfield Freeway to the west, and Asbury Park to the east. Ms. DeBruhl provided a background of the original PD from 2010. Ms. DeBruhl described the zoning for the surrounding area. It was the site of the former Herman Gardens complex but was demolished in late 1990s. Therefore, the development collaboration will be making the PD that was incomplete a planned development and making use of the remaining vacant lots that were undeveloped. She reviewed all of the area's surrounding zoning. The future land use map shows low-medium density residential. The development will consist of 72 townhomes and 52 apartment units to be built over two blocks.

Mr. Willian stated MHT Housing was awarded a Request for Proposal (RFP) to be the site's development partner with the Detroit Housing Commission (DHC). MHT's goal is to build a level of community that was supported through Area Median Income (AMI) levels. Mr. Willian showed renderings for the apartment building with one- and two-bedroom units, 10 townhome buildings with 12 units per building. This development is proposed to be 175 units total including play structures, community gardens, and indoor/outdoor gathering spaces, onsite community services, financial literacy program, education resources, and childcare resources. The goal is to start construction in late 2026 with an expected project completion date in early 2028.

Mr. Willian responded that the total cost is approximately \$60 million and Continental Management, an agency of MHT Housing, will oversee the facility. This was in response to Commissioner Daniels' questions.

Mr. Willian responded it will be 30%, 40%, 60%, and 80% AMI for residents in response to Commissioner Udabe's questions.

Mr. Willian mentioned that variation of colors and unique identity of units was discussed at the community engagement meeting, and MHT is willing to modify the building colors. This statement was in response to Commissioner Smith's questions.

Public Testimony

Royce commented his concerns regarding MHT Housing's developments, longevity, and origin, and he questioned their experience working with the City.

Mr. Willian stated that MHT Housing has existed for 30 years and its office is in Bingham Farms, Michigan. The agency has been working with the City for quite a few decades.

CPC Staff stated that this matter will return with a recommendation.

- B. 6:00 PM PUBLIC HEARING** – to consider the request of Matthew Walters on behalf of Goat Yard Marine, LLC (doing business as Detroit Boatworks) to rezone the properties at 2 St. Jean, 21 St. Jean Street, 95 St. Jean, and 140 Terminal Street, from PD (Planned Development) and M4 (Intensive Industrial) zoning classification to a B4 (General Business) zoning classification **(KJ, TS)** **45 min**

Present: Matthew Walters and Hanson Bratton, Development Team
Timarie DeBruhl, CPC Staff

Timarie DeBruhl presented via PowerPoint and based on CPC report dated September 3, 2025, the Goat Yard Marine d/b/a Detroit Boatworks request to rezone a PD, M4 zoning to B4. She explained that the original 2005 PD was established to permit the construction of 40 single-family homes, Morgan Waterfront Estates, a gated community. She explained the zoning of the surrounding area (map shown). There were homes developed to the east of the site, and a portion of that is vacant. There is an existing M4 parcel that has different ownership, and it is not a part of the rezoning. She stated there is a canal running along the eastern border of the site. The Planning and Development Department (PDD) submitted an interpretation that B4 is not consistent, and in its comprehensive Master Plan update PDD is examining this area for amending the classification.

Matthew Walters stated that this rezoning is for a proposed marina. Mr. Walters explained that 2 St. Jean is contaminated and environmentally hazardous due to previous land use of storage for industrial freight, and the land needs remediation (blighted with boats and dilapidated structures). The project site proposed will include 2 St. Jean, 21 St. Jean, and 95 St. Jean (formerly Detroit Boat Works).

Hanson Bratton described the land's background and how he acquired and purchased 21 St. Jean and 95 St. Jean for the Goat Yard Marine boat maintenance business. He said some cleaning and improvements have already been done due to a consent agreement, i.e., sunken ships removed and seawall installed. They want to expand the business for the maritime industry.

Mr. Walters explained that the proposed marina would include boat maintenance, boat painting, boat storage, and 60 boat slips would be rented out to the marina industry. There were before and after photos and aerial views of the site displayed. It is planned to include a 1000 linear feet of the new sea wall, environmental remediation, Detroit River new seawall or similar to mitigate flooding; utility infrastructure; dredging of canal and removal of sunken boats. A boardwalk will be developed, shoreline improvements and parking and inside boat storage and rack or raft storage, and a small bar and grill with retail on the riverfront (renderings shown). It will be open to the public and serve the maritime boating industry. They have spent \$3 million, and plan to invest more than \$10 million on the project. Mr. Walters and Ms. DeBruhl mentioned a letter of support received from Morgan Waterfront Estates Homeowner's Association.

Hanson Bratton explained, "The Morgan Estates pushed out the canal to the east side of that 90-foot-wide water easement. The wall that you see there is right on the easement line and then 45 feet closer to us is actually the property line separating Morgan Estates to St. Jean. And, another 45 feet of water easement for a total of 90 and then past that there is a gap that ranges anywhere from 30 to probably 80 feet because the property tapers away from Morgan Estates area. That is in the easement but it is on the existing property." This explanation was in response to Commissioner Russell's questions regarding the property line.

Mr. Bratton stated it is anticipated to start improvements and begin building in 2026. This was in response to Commissioner Daniels' questions.

Mr. Bratton explained that there is an existing business at 45 St Jean named Hackett Brass. They aspire to acquire the property, but they do not own it at this time. This statement was made in response to Commissioner Harrison's inquiries.

Public Testimony

Jerome Morgan commented clarification that he used to own the site in 2005. He mentioned that on the canal how will they operate on 45 foot wide of waterway on that side of the canal. He stated concerns on the Detroit Public Boat Launch, property line, and prohibited parking.

Eric Miller commented on the developers showing respect during construction and early morning hours, work being done in respectful manner. He commented if there will be appraisals of the homes' values and security of the area. He stated it is hard to make the (boat) turn in the space.

Maureen Miller commented concerns regarding the noise, traffic, environmental effects on trees and vegetation.

Paul Cassons commented concerns on conducting a study on additional boat traffic coming down the canal after adding 60 more slips. He mentioned that he is already having issues protecting his property and sea wall from current boat traffic on the marina.

Roland commented concerns with the width of the canal and its navigability, noise and waterfront maintenance. Also, he stated the proposed rezoning may conflict with B4 and industrial work, i.e., fiber glass and boat painting.

The development team responded that they will meet with the neighbors to address their concerns. This statement was in response to Commissioner Smith's inquiries.

Timarie DeBruhl discussed that there is a need to allow the petitioners more time for community engagement. Also, CPC Staff will research and obtain answers on the technical aspects of the canal size. Therefore, this matter will return before the Commission with a recommendation at a later date.

IV. Public Comment – There was no public comment.

V. Unfinished Business – There was no Unfinished Business.

VI. New Business – There was no New Business.

VII. Staff Report – Director Marcell Todd updated Commissioners on the ordinance amendment from the Office of the Chief Operating Officer (update regulations, procedures and definitions relative to housing and parking requirements). He stated that CPC Staff and Administration are continuously working, refining, and altering the proposed ordinance amendment. There will be a second public hearing on October 2, 2025. Also, he announced that the Detroit Land Bank Authority (DLBA) will give a presentation at the CPC meeting on September 18, 2025.

VIII. Member Report – There was no Member Report.

IX. Communications – Director Todd discussed that the City of Southfield sent a notification of amendments to its Master Plan. The amendments will be reviewed, and the deadline date to submit comments is October 29, 2025.

X. Adjournment –

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.