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City Planning Commission Meeting
November 17, 2022, at 5:00 PM

MINUTES

I. Opening

A. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 5:13 pm.

B. Roll Call

Present: Brenda Andrews, Kenneth Daniels, David Esparza, Ritchie Harrison (late), Lauren Hood, Gwen Lewis, Melanie Markowicz, Frederick Russell, Donovan Smith

Staff: Marcell Todd, CPC Director; Kimani Jeffrey, Christopher Gulock, Eric Fazzini, Kim Newby

C. Amendments to and approval of agenda

Marcell Todd, CPC Director noted minor changes to the agenda are that Item III A, the 5:10 pm public hearing is scheduled to last 45 minutes instead of the 90 minutes and that Kimani Jeffrey is the staff member for that item. Commissioner Smith motioned to approve the agenda as amended. Commissioner Andrews second the motion. Motion approved.

II. Meeting minutes of July 7, 2022

Commissioner Daniels moved to approve the minutes of July 7, 2022. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Commissioner Andrews noted the omission on page 4 under Member Report "...thanked Council President Mary Sheffield for putting out..." is missing a couple of words that should be corrected. The minutes were approved with amendments to the sentence wording by unanimous consent.

III. Public Hearings, Discussions and Presentations

- A. **5:10 PM PUBLIC HEARING** – to consider the request of Ballpoint Bagley, LLC to amend Article XVII, Section 50-17-2, District Map No. 1 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, Chapter 50, Zoning, to show an SD2 (Special Development District, Mixed Use) zoning classification where an R3 (Low-Density Residential District) zoning classification is currently shown on the property commonly known as 1451 Bagley Street.

90 min

Present: Kimani Jeffrey, CPC Staff; Ryan Zampardo, Devon Caldwell, and Brian Malloy, Inkwell Partners; Allen Machielse, Architect

Kimani Jeffrey, CPC Staff, gave a brief overview based on the staff report dated November 14, 2022, regarding the rezoning of 1451 Bagley Street. The proposal is to rezone from a R3 (Low-Density Residential) district to an SD2 (Special Development) district, a mixed-use zoning classification. Ballpoint Bagley, LLC is proposing to rezone the land at the southeast corner of Bagley and Trumbull to allow for a mixed-used development with ground-floor retail and second-floor office space. To the west is the project, Clement Kerns, which was rezoned to SD2, and that project is currently underway. The northwest corner of that intersection was also rezoned to SD2. The staff has participated in much of the engagement that has taken place. There is an overwhelming amount of support from the letters being submitted. One concern that's come up is about parking. Staff have been working with the developer who has come up with a parking strategy developed to alleviate many of the parking concerns. The strategy has received support as it addressed those concerns.

Allan Machielse, Architect, gave a brief PowerPoint presentation showing view of the subject property, a site survey showing the layout of the land, and the current zoning map for the area. Density existed in the neighborhood historically. The primary driver for wanting to change to an SD2 is that it allows flexibility for a mixed-use project. Offices on the second floor are included in the plan. Under the current R3 zoning, that would be prohibited. It also prohibits expanding and building the addition we are looking to build to the east of the existing building. The proposed new two-story addition would have retail on the ground floor as well as common ADA bathrooms that would serve the three existing retail spaces (one of which fronts Bagley and two front Trumbull), as well as the new proposed retail space that fronts Bagley. The plan is to restore and enhance the historic building that exists, to enhance that urban fabric, and add the addition to the east similar architecturally but differentiated from it, with the bay windows referencing the historic Victorian home that was demolished.

Ryan Zampardo, Inkwell Partners, said two companies have partnered for this project, he, and Devon Caldwell, have a company called Inkwell Partners and Brian Malloy has a company, Ballet Real Estate. Brian was the developer and a resident of the building at 1701 Trumbull, on the northwest corner of Trumbull and Bagley. He did a phenomenal job renovating a historic building and adding a small addition to a vacant parcel there. Taking the site from a very under-utilized blighted state to a thriving site with five (5) residents, six (6) small businesses, and thriving community amenities. One of our goals with this project is to build on the energy that Brian has

successfully delivered across the street, following a similar playbook utilizing the SD2 zoning to bring mixed-use to this corner.

On the ground floor, like what has been done at 1701 Trumbull, we're looking to bring in neighborhood-oriented small businesses. This being a small business-oriented space, allows for the rents to be at a nominally lower level, helping to bring the small business community in. Initial conversations with tenants, such as a locksmith, a tailor, and a custom suits business that is looking to open a permanent shop, and some dry goods and other soft goods retailers. Upstairs our goal is to provide small-scale office spaces, our tagline being "your home office away from home", providing local small businesses within the neighborhood and residents who are eligible to work from home and are looking for an alternative workspace to go into a couple of days a week. Office space ranges from 50' to 100 square feet per unit space.

There have been one-on-one meetings with neighbors in the area and formal engagements with Corktown East End Block Club, Corktown Business Association, and the Corktown Historical Society, and have received eighteen (18) letters of support to date including all the residents and business owners adjacent to the property. Some were concerned about parking, which we think demand may be lower than some assume. In terms of demand from a retail standpoint, these are low-traffic businesses. There is not sufficient water capacity to set up a restaurant. As at 1701 Trumbull, where there are six different retailers, the impact on street parking there is minimal. From the office standpoint, the time of use should be counter-cyclical to some of the other parking demands in the neighborhood. Office tenants will be there during business hours which contrasts with some of the existing demand which is more driven by the restaurant traffic and nightlife scene in the evening and residents coming home from work looking for street parking. There should be a nice balance where customers are using spaces during the day and leaving at night when other demands are taking place. There is also the lower utilization factor given all the changes that have happened in the way people work, post COVID, most people will use their space a couple of days a week. The idea is to focus on the local market, based on groups already in the neighborhood. We are looking to have 20-minute neighborhoods having as many folks from a 20-minute walk or bike ride on the site as possible. We are planning on doing outreach to the local apartment buildings, the Godfrey Hotel, and other users in the area to form partnerships with users that are within that short walking distance. Based on feedback from the East End Block Club meeting, who came up with the concept of the tiered pricing model to offer a lower base rental rate for folks who live within adjacent zip codes of the site to pay a base rate and outside of those zip codes a higher price, which goes to help us procure off-street parking. We have negotiated a letter of intent with the business across the street, Alpino Detroit, to have some reserved parking in their lot during office hours. The amount of available parking, both on-street and off-street, and some private lots, in a 2 to 3-block radius around the site, comes to almost 425 spaces. A good majority of them are on blocks that are not primarily residential streets.

Brian Malloy, Inkwell Partners, said that when the project was started the immediate concern was the neighbors, Ian and Sylvie (they have no off-street parking), who live

directly on the lot line; and Mindy and Tony (they have off-street parking) who live next to them. They would be most impacted as residents and are my neighbors. They wrote letters in support of the project. Ian wrote that he is not overly concerned about a lack of parking. Mindy wrote that the project's parking demands will not conflict with the existing parking demands from residential neighbors. Business owners and residents feel that more foot traffic is needed so there is excitement in having 5-20 office workers coming Monday-Friday.

Commissioner Markowicz thanked the team for the comprehensive presentation, which included community feedback and perspective and infill architecture that respects the heritage of the neighborhood and the scale. I fully support it.

Commissioner Esparza asked for more description of the tiered pricing model for rents as it relates to proximity.

Brian Malloy, Inkwel Partners, said that we plan to offer a baseline price for people who live within those zip codes listed, it roughly maps to the 20-minute bicycling distance and everyone else will pay an elevated price, which we will put toward procuring for them off-street parking. There is quite a bit of surface parking still available in Corktown. We have procured a letter of intent and hope to get more as demand warrants. Ford has a \$60 million mobility hub, essentially a parking deck with space for scooters, a ridesharing drop-off point, MoGo bikes, and we hope to have our tenants park there and zip down on a scooter to our spot.

Commissioner Esparza asked what is the plan for refuse for the retail units?

Brian Malloy, Inkwel Partners, responded that there is an alley to the south of our site where all the dumpsters that serve that community are lined up. We do not have direct alley access and neither does the art gallery down the street.

Commissioner Esparza asked about the letter of support regarding the parking commitment with the property owner across the street. Could you possibly have an actual agreement you could submit so that it goes beyond a letter?

Brian Malloy, Inkwel Partners, answered that it is a non-binding letter of intent. We have tried to work on stronger content, but it is difficult for both of us to commit fully because if we committed now and weren't able to get zoning, we would still have to pay for parking spots. We intend to do that as soon as possible.

Commissioner Esparza asked about the office arrangement and concept on the second floor, are the days of the week and hours of the day described or is it 24-7?

Brian Malloy, Inkwel Partners, responded that our tenants will have 24 hours a day, 7 days a week access to the spot. When we talk about workdays, we are basing that on typical work behaviors. With all our business tenants we have a direct relationship, but with their customers, we only have an indirect relationship. I don't think we've ever heard any complaints from the neighbors that those employees were parking on residential streets. With our direct relationships, we tell them that if their

employees park on the residential streets we're going to have an issue. We will have a direct relationship with those office tenants.

Commissioner Esparza asked if they would look at investing in the original building a bit further.

Brian Malloy, Inkwel Partners, spoke of how they have budgeted for the masonry more than what they would usually have to fix the outside of the original building.

Commissioner Esparza stated that he lives about 1 ½ blocks away and is very encouraged and in support of what he has seen.

Commissioner Russell asked both the staff and the developer what is the schedule for this project.

Kimani Jeffrey, CPC Staff responded that we will be looking for this item to come back at your next regularly scheduled meeting the first week of December, and if all goes well tonight, we will be looking to make a recommendation, based on the comments so far, to approve. The last Planning & Economic Development Committee was today, so it will be sent to them at the beginning of the new year if it makes it through the Law Department in a timely fashion. The process with the Law Department could be expedited. That could make a difference between the matter coming before the Council in possibly January versus February or later.

Ryan Zampardo, Inkwel Partners, said that they would like to move as fast as possible.

Commissioner Russell asked about same-day action and what it takes to expedite through legal.

Kimani Jeffrey, CPC Staff, said that there has been overwhelming support from the community. We are interested in what transpires during public comment but based on the commentary thus far, if there was interest in moving it forward on the same day that could help expedite a possible legal review and going forward to the City Council table in January.

Commissioner Russell asked for an electronic copy of this presentation.

Kimani Jeffrey, CPC Staff, said it was completed right before the hearing and we will send it out now.

Commissioner Daniels asked to see if we can vote to move it forward tonight.

Commissioner Markowicz agreed. She does not see parking as an issue in the area. It is in a local historic district and the architect of the project also serves on that commission; therefore, I have full faith that the exterior and interior of the building will be given the proper due historical respect and materiality that we're looking for.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dorothy Bennett: I have served on the East End Block Club and have seen the presentation before and again on the historical. The building is gorgeous. Their presentations are wonderful. As long as I get to keep my spot in front of my house, I am very happy. I am in favor of their renovation and addition to the building at Bagley and Trumbull.

MOTION

Commissioner Andrews motioned to waive same-day action criteria. Commissioner Daniels second the motion. Verbal unanimous approval given by Commissioners. Motion approved.

Commissioner Markowicz motioned to accept the proposal as submitted from R3 to SD2. Commissioner Daniels second the motion. Verbal unanimous approval given by Commissioners. Motion approved.

- B. 6:00 PM PUBLIC HEARING** - to consider the request of IFF Development LLC to modify the plans for the existing PD (Planned Development) zoning classification at 17665 Joy Road located at the southeast corner of Joy Road and the Southfield Freeway service drive, at the Gardenview Estates development area. The request would modify the existing PD created by ordinance #15-10 of 2010 and amend Article XVII, Section 50-17-42, District Map No. 40, Chapter 50 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, Zoning. (CG)

45 mins

Present: Christopher Gulock, CPC Staff; Rick Raleigh, IFF Senior Project Manager; Franchesca Lucio, IFF Project Manager; Pam Weaver, Development Centers Manager

Christopher Gulock, CPC Staff, gave a brief PowerPoint presentation regarding the staff report dated November 14, 2022. This is a planned development (PD) modification for the Joy-Southfield Early Childhood Education Center located on Map 40 at the intersection of Joy Road and the Southfield Freeway. In 2010 the Housing Commission controlled Herman Gardens and has been redeveloping the site for the past 12 years. In 2010 the City Council and the Commission approved an ordinance 15-10 to rezone the entire 100 acres to planned development (PD). It was going to be a project in different stages and the PD would give the City Council the ability to review the different phases as they came online. The initial plan was to have single-family homes, but as the market evolved, they added multi-family units, two senior buildings at the north end of the site, and the Boys and Girls Club of Southeastern Michigan. The Housing Commission decided to sell the northwest corner (7.7 acres) of the site to Trinity Health several years ago. They planned to partner with different agencies to bring needed services to this community. The entire site was zoned planned development (PD) except the Boys and Girls Club at

the southeast corner is still R5. In the first phase, the Council did approve a site plan for some of the housing, but that northwest corner was deemed vacant PD at the time the ordinance was passed in 2010. Over the last 12 years, we've amended the PD two or three times as new projects have come online.

Today, the petitioner is IFF Development LLC, a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI). They are based out of Illinois but have regional offices throughout the Midwest, including Michigan and Detroit. They are a lender, but they are also a consultant. One of their missions is to assist non-profits and other service providers to create safe and inspiring spaces that enable them to achieve their missions and support their communities. Trinity Health has agreed to sell to IFF 3.4 acres. Trinity Health recently sold another 3 acres (to the east) to Covenant Care Clinic which the commission reviewed about 3-4 years ago. IFF is proposing a new one-story early childhood education center/campus. It would have about 9 classrooms serving about 100 children and their families. There will be three different age groups: infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. They are partnering with Development Centers, a Detroit-based human services provider. The goal is for IFF to partner with Development Centers, which would operate the facility and eventually own and operate the facility after so many years.

Covenant Health Clinic hopes to break ground in December. They purchased the land from Trinity Health as well. IFF and the Early Childhood Center are working with Covenant Health Clinic to keep the sites complimentary. They have also worked with our office and the Planning & Development Department (PDD) in the last year to get the site the way the city wants it. PDD wants to create a pedestrian-friendly, attractive corridor on Joy Road. Dave Walker, who represents the western planning division of PDD has worked closely with them as well.

The site plan was described, and pedestrian paths, stormwater features, landscaping, and parking spaces were viewed and discussed. The building must serve, based on state regulations, the different groups separately, toddlers, infants, and preschoolers. There are two play areas. The infants in the northern wing, toddlers in the middle, and preschoolers at the south end. The drop-off of the children was discussed. Joy Road is a county road so they would need to get a driveway access permit from the County.

Regarding community outreach, the petitioner set up a table at the Annual Family Fun Day in August by the Cody-Rouge Community Action Alliance at Stein Park. There were boards to show the proposal and to get feedback from the participants who were there. Also, in June 2022 they attended the Cody-Rouge and Synergy Works community 5K Walk and Run where they also had a table to get feedback. Former Commissioner Angy Webb was able to help get them on their community monthly meeting agenda. Some of the feedback received was that people asked for a well-lit early education space, a large flexible room that could be used during the day for the children and after hours for the community, accessible playgrounds after hours, culturally relevant art throughout the building, high-quality food during meals, and connectivity to local housing. There were some questions about building materials. Overall, there was general support. The market and other factors have

dictated a preference to have more service providers and health care providers, rather than retail at this location.

Rick Raleigh, IFF Senior Project Manager, gave a brief presentation on the project. Trinity owns the site currently and IFF has also been the funder project to date. Development Centers is a human services organization. IFF has been hired by Trinity to act as a developer and potential owner. IFF is doing this model in several locations where we are the stand-in landlords to allow some low-cost dollars to come into the projects so we can pay off traditional debts and allow providers to have an affordable way to purchase themselves. We are looking to be short-term owners.

Pam Weaver, Development Centers Manager, said their early childhood program provides services to over 12,000 individuals, workforce development, and early childhood programming. Providing programming for about 35 years in Cody-Rouge. In 2003 it started with development centers and since that time we've worked in Cody-Rouge providing community groups and socialization groups for families with young children. Our work evolved into having Head Start programs and we have a location at St. Suzanne in Cody-Rouge. Our programs include free-cost Early Head Start and Head Start programming, Great Start readiness programming, and other work we do with childcare providers in the Brightmoor community who are privately operating home and centered-based care for families; and we do consultation work with that group. We also have prevention services, intervention services, and early childhood mental health consultation in childcare and early childhood mental health services.

Rick Raleigh, IFF Senior Project Manager, said that the first thing IFF did in Detroit was a needs assessment. Somewhere between 23,000 and 28,000 seats are needed in the City of Detroit. That means there are 23,000 to 28,000 kids in Detroit who don't have access to high-quality childcare. Cody-Rouge is one of the top ten neighborhoods in Detroit in terms of need for childcare. The site plan was discussed in detail.

Commissioner Lewis asked if IFF is the lender, and who is the owner of the facility.

Rick Raleigh, IFF Senior Project Manager, answered that Trinity is currently the owner of the site. The ultimate end goal is to have development centers ownership.

Commissioner Lewis then said that at this point we do not know what entity is going to provide the childcare service.

Rick Raleigh, IFF Senior Project Manager, responded that Development Centers will provide that service and IFF will own the building in the short-term.

Commissioner Andrews asked what are some of the security measures for this complex? Do you have cameras? Is there a fence around the entire area? Could someone leave the roadway and drive into the building?

Rick Raleigh, IFF Senior Project Manager, answered that there is a vestibule that you must get buzzed into just to get in the building and there will be a door at either wing. Even if you get into the building and you're buzzed in, there is still another layer of security before you have access to classrooms. We don't intend to have a fence around the entire building, because we do want it to feel welcoming. We are setback a good distance from Joy Road and the same with Southfield Freeway. Yes, we would have cameras at entrances. We don't have a detailed level of plans to show where we're going to have cameras, but yes, we would have a level of security with cameras at entrances.

Pam Weaver, Development Centers Manager, added that the Development Centers at the other sites that we operate that are free standing building have grounds security, parking security and cameras on the grounds. Licensing has many safety standards for the security and safety of the children and so we would have barriers before you have access to children. In the building there are cameras in the classrooms as well.

Commissioner Andrews asked what barriers they have that prevents a vehicle leaving the roadway and plowing through.

Rick Raleigh, IFF Senior Project Manager, answered that is one of the reasons we put the youngest children in the courtyard to surround them by the building, to protect them from vehicles and the noise. We have a fence and landscaping also around the building. We are significantly set off from Joy Road as well as from Southfield.

Commissioner Esparza asked CPC staff if we have seen IFF in the past with a similar development.

Christopher Gulock, CPC Staff, responded yes, IFF applied for a rezoning to develop a site on the east side at McClellan, a vacant school site. The commission recommended approval to build a new building on that site. They also developed a site at Marygrove College as well and they might be looking at Corktown in the future.

Rick Raleigh, IFF Senior Project Manager, stated that the east side site is planned to break ground in the spring of 2024.

Commissioner Esparza asked about the area that's identified as a future development site and if it is something the IFF team controls?

Rick Raleigh, IFF Senior Project Manager, answered yes, that is part of the same site, but there is no plan as to what that could be at this time.

Commissioner Esparza then asked if more thought could be given about the buffering on the service drive and Joy Road.

Rick Raleigh, IFF Senior Project Manager, responded that one of the things we

wanted to do, especially with the playground, is to make it as natural as possible. Boulders can be placed on the inside and outside of the playground, an easy thing that could be incorporated into the landscaping and create an extra level of safety.

Commissioner Esparza asked if they were able to share the anticipated project costs for this development. Have you considered the likely effects of the current market and the reality of those factors regarding budgets and contingencies?

Rick Raleigh, IFF Senior Project Manager, answered that right now they are at \$8.5 million. We have considered the effects of the current market. All three are mission-driven organizations, so aren't necessarily driven by bottom-line returns.

Commissioner Hood asked the team to explain the calculus used to determine how many seats you need. Is it based on the number of children and...? You have a lot of projects in the works, how do you know we need so many childhood centers?

Rick Raleigh, IFF Senior Project Manager, our research and evaluation arm did a deep dive study in 2017, which I can share with you after the meeting. It talks through the whole methodology.

Commissioner Russell asked CPC staff if the sale of the land came through the Commission.

Christopher Gulock, CPC Staff, responded no, the Commission and the Council do not have a role in the sale of the land. For some urban renewal land, the city does have control over it, but this is owned by the Housing Commission.

Commissioner Russell reiterated that Joy Road was a county road, but what is Southfield Freeway and the Service Drive? Who is the governing body on those?

Christopher Gulock, CPC Staff answered that Southfield Freeway is an MDOT state trunk line, the service drive may be part of the state trunk line, but I would have to double-check.

Commissioner Russell said that the intersection at Joy Road and Southfield is not a complete street. It doesn't appear to be a safe street or street where you would feel comfortable walking in the traffic. Would those governing bodies make any improvements on those streets as far as slowing traffic and making those walkways safer?

Christopher Gulock, CPC Staff, said that when they developed the Gardenview Estates they did have quite a bit of a setback. The freeway is below grade. Joy Road is a 5-lane road that gets a medium amount of traffic. The five lanes probably have enough capacity to handle the traffic. We can look at the surrounding roads and sidewalks. The owner is required to maintain the sidewalk adjacent to their property. The county is responsible for snowplowing on Joy Road. MDOT has contractors to do the freeway.

Commissioner Russell said I think that early childhood center is exactly what's needed in this location, but I have concerns with the pedestrian traffic, drop-off, and pick-up plan. I see charter schools where there is bedlam at drop-offs and pick-ups. It seems that is not a safe intersection.

Rick Raleigh, IFF Senior Project Manager, noted that early childhood works differently than a school drop-off where the child would have to be at school at 8:15 am. There is more of a range in time they are dropped off and picked up.

Pam Weaver, Development Centers Manager, added that typically we have before-care services, the formal learning start time of 9:00 am but kids come before 9 because parents must work. The staggered arrival times and departure times were factored in terms of the entrance and exits. We have seen those back-ups at Marygrove and were mindful of that as we thought about the flow and scheduling. We are trying to pull from the nearest radius of young children to the center. It's free programming. Hopefully, many children from the housing nearby will enroll there.

Commissioner Russell said it would be interesting to see that pedestrian path from the Gardenview community because where those streets are, there is a fence around that. How do you walk from Gardenview to the western half of the site? It's blocked off. If people come from north of Joy and northwest of the Southfield Freeway, how do we do that?

Pam Weaver, Development Centers Manager, said the concept of this site and having the early childhood center next to the health clinic is that parents can drop their kids off, and go to their health appointments so they could be using the entirety of the parking available in this campus, and we would encourage that.

Commissioner Russell asked if this ends up being a Charter School or if it relates to DPS.

Pam Weaver, Development Centers Manager, said the early childhood contracts are for federal programming; our Early Head Start, Head Start, and Great Start readiness programs. While there are programs that are aligned with school districts and charter schools, it tends to be because they have applied for those funding pots to be able to have them in their building. For this one, we are not aligned to a K-12. It would be an early childhood center funded by these other sources.

Commissioner Russell asked, when they return, he would look to see a pedestrian plan that did not cross or put to a minimum where it crossed vehicular traffic. I would like to see whether there was enough space for the staff to park and how that drop-off would go.

Rick Raleigh, IFF Senior Project Manager, stated that they did expand the parking lots.

Commissioner Russell asked if the materials shown are like the materials at

Marygrove.

Rick Raleigh, IFF Senior Project Manager, said that Marygrove is a terracotta. Currently, we have a metal-type paneling and screening run.

Commissioner Russell said we would like to have something sustainable, long-lasting, and aesthetically pleasing for a long time. Do you have any other sustainable concepts you want to incorporate in this that you'd like to share?

Rick Raleigh, IFF Senior Project Manager, agreed that we want the building to be long-lasting and those considerations are being made when selecting materials. We are also trying to go above and beyond the state requirements for the classroom, with the children breathing fresh air. Natural light is being incorporated also.

Commissioner Lewis said she is in the area quite a bit and based on the presented site plan, depending on hearing from the community, I think that would be a great opportunity for that community to have an early childhood childcare center in the area. During Covid, many have shut down. There is a greater need because of this. This would be an excellent development for that corner. Are there any community development block grant dollars being placed in this development?

Rick Raleigh, IFF Senior Project Manager, responded no.

Commissioner Lewis then asked if you anticipate community development block grant dollars being applied for this development.

Rick Raleigh, IFF Senior Project Manager, responded yes. Again, we are looking at roughly \$8 million and for this to work for early childcare we do need to get a level of subsidy into the deal.

Commissioner Lewis said, as I recall there were community development block grant dollars in one of your previous efforts. Was that the effort that you intend to break ground on in January?

Rick Raleigh, IFF Senior Project Manager, responded yes.

Commissioner Lewis asked the Planning Commission staff to give them an update on what is occurring with the development that is going to break ground in January. There was a substantial amount of CDBG funds that went into that and if the entity plans to, again, apply for CDBG funds for this development, I would like to look at that and make a comparison.

Commissioner Hood noted for the record that Commissioner Harrison joined the meeting (6:50 pm).

Commissioner Smith asked CPC Staff to summarize the PD modification process and the site planning process that will be associated with the project. Does that process speak to exterior materials and what would and would not be permissible?

Christopher Gulock, CPC Staff, said that this PD is already created, and the request is to amend that PD to attach this site plan for this corner. The commission and council do have jurisdiction over the site plan and the elevation. We'll ask Mr. Raleigh for the updated plans. The plans are supposed to show elevations of all four sides including the materials. Staff will review those, and the commission and council will approve the design as part of its review, including the elevations and the site plan.

Commissioner Smith said bringing a project like this would be a great improvement to the area with the long-term impacts of a project like this. My only comment is that is a lot of metal. I would like to see an elevation that has more contrast to it, more visually appealing.

Commissioner Hood spoke to Mr. Gulock saying he would make sure to get the updated design from Mr. Raleigh. Give the status update on the other early childhood that's breaking ground as requested by Commissioner Lewis. Also, include some elevations of the Marygrove project and other recent early childhood developments that IFF has done for comparison.

Rick Raleigh, IFF Senior Project Manager, noted that we are breaking ground in March or April, not in January.

Commissioner Smith added to include the elevations when they come back. I don't remember what the other project looks like. When you come back with the update, can you show what that project looks like, and we can compare?

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment

Christopher Gulock, CPC Staff, informed the commissioners that staff will try to bring this back at the next meeting on December 1st, if possible, with a recommendation.

C. **6:45 PM PRESENTATION** - General Services Department, Recreation Division presentation of the Recreation Strategic Plan (Dara O'Byrne, Julianna Fulton) **45 mins**

Present: Dara O'Byrne, Chief Parks Planner – City of Detroit, Julianna Fulton, Deputy Chief Parks Planner – City of Detroit

Dara O'Byrne, Chief Parks Planner, introduced herself and said that we are part of the public spaces planning unit in the General Services Department. The Strategic Plan is our 10-year vision within the parks and recreation system in the city of Detroit. The two-year process was originally planned to be led by a consulting firm, but due to Covid, it ended up being done in-house.

Julianna Fulton, Deputy Chief Parks Planner, reported that the project began in 2020 with a survey of over 700 respondents asking residents what they want to see for the future of the parks and recs system. They identified issues, set priorities with recommendations. Armed with this information, there was a series of 16 stakeholder focus groups and 6 public focus groups held to dive into those priorities, and concerns and identify some strategies to address them. There were months doing data analysis. We worked on an equity metric to evaluate across our entire parks system and then we had a public review. In the public review process, we had over 27 meetings, including 3 open houses and at least one meeting per City Council district. Overall, we had 69 recommendations, mostly minor, which have been incorporated into the final plan.

The plan is six chapters and is available on the website, <https://detroitmi.gov/departments/detroit-parks-recreation/parks-and-recreation-strategic-plan>. The first chapter talks about inventory, walkable parks, mini parks, destination parks, community open spaces, private parks and boulevards, and medians that are owned by Parks and Recreation. Recreational facilities include cultural centers and specialty centers as well as city-owned marinas, cemeteries, and golf courses. Greenways like the Joe Louis Greenway and other smaller neighborhood greenways. Residents are very concerned about the maintenance of these spaces, so we incorporated programming maintenance into this plan as well.

The second chapter talks about the vision, community engagement and the survey. The vision for the plan is to improve the quality of life for all Detroiters through our parks, greenways, recreation centers programs, all using this equity framework. The three main lenses we looked through are public health, nature and environment, and access and connectivity. The survey results show that the concerns in using the parks, recreation centers and programs are: lack of information, safety issues in parks and access to recreation center locations and programs.

The number one reported issue is the lack of information. In Chapter 3 we have a series of strategies to address that and attack it from different angles, i.e., creating a public-facing program calendar, and creating seasonable program notices that go out in the mail. Creating a designated team of seasonal staff that can greet residents and provide information about the permitting process, and programs going on, and assist with maintenance.

Recommendations or strategies related to extending our season for both programming and maintenance. Encouraging walking loops to increase fitness in parks. Providing flexible amenities to neighborhood parks and focusing those large sports hubs at our regional parks. Issues about the difficulty in the permitting process were noted, so we have been working to make permitting easier and educate users on how to use the permitting process. Increasing maintenance capacity and flexibility, making sure we have adequate staff to do the higher-level maintenance. Beautifying Detroit by extending natural areas, we have a series of strategies about nature and the environment and making sure

we are providing those spaces for Detroiters to enjoy. One of the strategies is specifically launching an anti-litter campaign. We are hoping we can partner with our fellow Departments to attack this issue at a city-wide level. We also have a strategy for refocusing our Adopt-A-Park Program. Previously it was about mowing, we are shifting that into groups being stewards of the park where they might do some park trash pick-ups as well as help activate the parks through programs. Road safety on the way to parks and making sure we have parks that are inclusive for all ages and abilities. There are 48 strategies in total.

Chapter 4 makes sure that we are held accountable and making progress on the measurable targets, and we will be tracking them within the next 10 years to make sure we are addressing some of the strategies and concerns residents reported in the survey. For example, increasing swim lessons for youth by 5% each year, making sure we're maximizing our programs in recreation centers. We want to make sure that our spending per capita matches the national spending per capita on their parks system.

Dara O'Byrne, Chief Parks Planner, added that the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan was centered around an equity framework. We have over 300 parks in the City of Detroit. We needed a way to evaluate our prioritization of park improvements. We used an equity metric that is centered around a national best practice at the Trust for Public Land. We came up with a methodology tailored to the specific needs of the City of Detroit, allowing us to prioritize investments in our park to ensure that we are serving the people with the greatest need. This focus on equity can be applied to parks and we also look at it when we are making other investments throughout our parks and recreation system. The metric factors and analysis that we did review access, so if that a park or facility is the only park in that area, that would help prioritize us investing in improvements in that park as it is the only park that community has access to. We also looked at the total population density of the area, the number of people that park is serving, the youth population density, and our senior population, the percentage of people of color and the percentage of people with low income. We looked at things related to mental health and low physical activity and if there were areas with poor outcomes that would help prioritize that park for improvements. We also looked at environmental risk factors to prioritize adding additional trees if the air quality in the area is poor, etc.

Julianna Fulton, Deputy Chief Parks Planner, reported that 80% of all Detroiters have access (within a 10-minute walk) to parks and recreation centers. Our goal is to get to 95% over the next ten years, that would be about 40 parks. There is a capital plan for each district that helps us to prioritize our parks. We are trying to get to all the non-improved parks in the next ten years. Walkable parks, destination parks, regional parks and riverfront parks need a greater amount of investment. Rouge Park is over 1,000 acres and one improvement in ten years is not sufficient. Regional and riverfront parks might need a higher budget and more frequency. Destination parks may be more attractive for fundraisers, particularly philanthropic donors. For the city to leverage dollars it's going to need to put in at least 50% of the capital needs for those parks and 60% for those

neighborhood or walkable parks. The city has gaps in walkable recreation centers, and there are four new recreation centers planned that will help fill some of those gaps. We hope to build a partnership system to fill in some of the remaining gaps, although we may not be able to commit to building any additional new centers after these four, over the next ten years.

Since the draft Strategic Plan was released, the department has held a series of meetings in each district, open houses, and incorporated the recommendations that were heard from the public, we have an appendix that goes over each one of those recommendations and what we did within the plan to address that. Most of the feedback was positive. The Strategic Plan was also submitted to the City Council. The state requires the plan to be updated every 5 years and allows the city to be eligible for state grants, one of our main funding sources outside of the city.

Commissioner Lewis asked about population density and the loss of population in the City of Detroit and how they are working to ensure that low-income and families of color have direct access to parks. Based on the population reduction, are any parks going to be decommissioned? Is there any information on what parks would be decommissioned? Will Detroit residents have input on the future of the land in their communities?

Julianna Fulton, Deputy Chief Parks Planner, responded that we do have our community open space parks in the areas, which sometimes are very hard to get to because they are by industrial, a railroad track if they are in an area where there is no other properties on that block. We have turned them over to a more passive, natural use. That's a list of our non-traditional parks that could be decommissioned, although this plan does not call for that.

Dara O'Byrne, Chief Parks Planner, the formal process is called surplus and there is a formal process to surplus properties. This plan does not have any proposals for surplus our existing parks.

Commissioner Lewis asked if there is any indication of the 300 parks as the ones that could be surplus in the future.

Julianna Fulton, Deputy Chief Parks Planner, we have certain restrictions on parks, we have one that does not serve a lot of residents but has deed restrictions, so that could not be sold. It is on a case-by-case basis. If we can relocate the park to a better site that still serves the neighborhood, that is something the residents would support as well as the department.

Commissioner Lewis stated that my only concern is that if something like that were to occur where you would begin to decommission surplus parks, the community would be involved in the front-end so that Detroiters understand what the future of those parcels of land would be.

Commissioner Daniels asked what the largest park is, outside of Belle Isle, in the

City of Detroit.

Julianna Fulton, Deputy Chief Parks Planner, responded that it is Rouge Park (1,180 acres), which is larger than Belle Isle (under 1,000 acres). The smallest is .1 acres.

Commissioner Daniels asked if residents could rent parks to hold paid events, i.e., concerts, and sell tickets to generate income.

Julianna Fulton, Deputy Chief Parks Planner, said yes, but not all parks are rentable for all things. We do have a process if you have a large family reunion or high school reunion you can rent a park, put up a tent, and have vendors. There are additional steps if anyone is coming and selling things in a park if there is amplified music. Additional oversight would go to the Special Events Committee and reviewed by Police and Fire as well.

Dara O'Byrne, Chief Parks Planner added that there is a permitting process on our website.

Commissioner Daniels then asked if there is a capacity for each park, is that available as well on the website?

Julianna Fulton, Deputy Chief Parks Planner, responded no, that is something we are working on. Some of the larger events can damage, such as sports. We are looking into setting capacity limits.

Dara O'Byrne, Chief Parks Planner, noted that neighborhood parks tend to be less positioned for large events because they tend to not have parking or space unable to accommodate the event. We do have larger parks to accommodate larger groups.

Commissioner Daniels asked if community organizations adopt these parks and then apply for grants to fix them up themselves or do they have to go through the city.

Julianna Fulton, Deputy Chief Parks Planner, replied that as the property owners, they do have to get Parks and Rec permission. We have a simple donation form if you want to donate a bench, a tree, or a playground. We review to make sure it meets safety standards and is something that we can maintain in the long term, etc. We do have an Adopt-A-Park process and will be launching a newly revised process that's focused on stewardship instead of mowing that will be launched in January.

Commissioner Russell asked are there camping permits at any of the parks.

Julianna Fulton, Deputy Chief Parks Planner, yes, but with the caveat that the camping isn't open to the public. It is a camping program by a partnership with Detroit Parks and Rec., the YMCA, and the Sierra Club called Detroit Outdoors

which trains teachers and youth leaders on how to camp and they do have camping in Rouge Park.

Commissioner Russell asked to repeat the five-year plan.

Julianna Fulton, Deputy Chief Parks Planner, replied that this is a 10-year plan, and the state requires an updated plan every five years. It doesn't require we do the whole process every five years, but it does mean we need to update the data every five years. If you don't have an updated plan, you're not eligible for trust fund grants, a major source of grant dollars for park systems across the state. The largest amount of trust fund grants the city has received is \$1.2 million. Some years, if we're not eligible, we don't get any. This year we received quite a bit related to the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) as well as funds from other state funding sources.

Commissioner Esparza asked if the city made history by doing this plan in-house either by our sheer population size or our physical size.

Dara O'Byrne, Chief Parks Planner, responded that we have a planning staff of 2 in GSD. We were limited in our staff capacity but were able to get it across the finish line and are proud of it.

Commissioner Esparza asked if you've identified the level of estimate it would take over ten years.

Julianna Fulton, Deputy Chief Parks Planner, the parks piece is anticipated to be about \$17 million a year, and recreational centers are higher.

Commissioner Hood asked for access to the survey data collected.

Julianna Fulton, Deputy Chief Parks Planner, replied that the full plan is on the website.

Commissioner Harrison was curious to know are cities gauging in measuring access to x amount of public space or outdoor amenities and whether there are corresponding ways of how that impacts public health?

Julianna Fulton, Deputy Chief Parks Planner, said there is quite a bit of academic data on this and we do have a current study underway in Detroit that's partnered with Detroit Audubon and Michigan State University (MSU) that is looking specifically at couple of parks and how natural park improvements can help reduce high blood pressure and other health problems associated with being close to a park.

Dara O'Byrne, Chief Parks Planner, added it was somewhat fortuitous for us that the Trust for Public Land came out with their equity metrics at the time we were doing this. Originally, we aspired to do the more robust equity analysis but because the Trust for Public Land came out with this standard, we were able to

use it and it was helpful for us to use those same metrics that we can then track over time as well. Also, there has been a lot of research into the pandemic, the use of open space, and the people who had access to open space and parks and people who didn't. Particularly because gyms and places you would otherwise go to were closed, but parks were open. There has been a lot of study about when people had access to parks during the main shutdown of the pandemic and how it helps them mentally health-wise. That is why mental health was included as part of our metric as well. We know and data supports the impact of green space and open space in parks on mental health. Yes, there is a lot of data out there and I'm excited about this plan and being able to have consistent metrics that are more readily available so that we can track over time as well.

Commissioner Esparza asked if the two cities that are within Detroit (Highland Park and Hamtramck) participate.

Julianna Fulton, Deputy Chief Parks Planner, said that when we were looking at our metrics, we did acknowledge that non-Detroiters don't care where those boundary lines are, they just want to go to the closest park. They did not participate heavily in our engagement process, but we did take into consideration their park system when working on this.

Commissioner Markowicz asked if priority was given to some parks where it made sense to have free access to public Wi-Fi.

Julianna Fulton, Deputy Chief Parks Planner, responded that we do have a strategy that talks about expanding access and we are in the works of getting a grant through the Detroit Parks Coalition to provide Wi-Fi at certain parks, but we didn't pull data about where it would be most beneficial. That was not part of the plan, but we did acknowledge that's growing in importance and have started work on that.

Commissioner Markowicz asked about the full report, is there a section about capital improvements and maintenance, particularly as it pertains to the historic assets across our parks system and what is the status of Historic Fort Wayne?

Julianna Fulton, Deputy Chief Parks Planner, replied that Historic Fort Wayne is in the plan both in the parks section as well as the facility section. We also have a strategic plan that was developed in 2021 that's focused just on Historic Fort Wayne. We have recommendations about funding for Historic Fort Wayne as well as some of our other historic assets across the city. In the plan, Fort Wayne would be listed both in the parks side and the recreation side.

Dara O'Byrne, Chief Parks Planner, added that we heard both from the community and we know through our work in parks that maintenance is a key component and part of what we work to balance. Questions came up whether we have the capacity to maintain our existing parks if we're considering adding new parks. There are specific strategies around maintenance and making sure that we have the funds needed. One of the strategies is meeting that national metric about

best practices around maintenance for our park system and just prioritizing maintenance of our existing parks.

Julianna Fulton, Deputy Chief Parks Planner, added that Clark Park is another example, acknowledging there are historic structures there, old service buildings, a gazebo, and restrooms. The plan calls for what would be needed to renovate those and re-open in some capacity to the public. We have more so on the facility side about making sure we're upkeeping our historic recreation centers and recreation facilities.

Commissioner Markowicz said that in Brush Park the historic Wheeler Complex has been said to be rehabilitated by the city for six, seven, or eight years. Since then, it has been said it would become a community recreation center and I wanted to understand the status of that historic structure and access to recreational needs in that particular area.

Julianna Fulton, Deputy Chief Parks Planner, replied that we no longer own that property, it was sold 4-5 years ago. We do have a park not very far at John R and Watson, but it is a much smaller park.

Marcell Todd, CPC Director, said that we look forward to utilizing this report as a resource as we have in the past, and we look forward to working with them to see what of its content may have influence on Zone Detroit zoning ordinance, the Master Plan and even the Capital Agenda.

Commissioner Hood added a text question from a listener, "Is public art under the purview of Parks and Recreation?" The Gateway to Freedom statue is the one in question, does Riverfront Park count as a park?

Julianna Fulton, Deputy Chief Parks Planner, responded we do have monuments and sculptures within our parks and facilities, but the Arts & Culture (ACE) is a division within the General Services Department. We don't technically always own those statues or monuments, sometimes they are a long-term lease or placed temporarily in the park. That section of the riverfront is part of Hart Plaza and is part of the City of Detroit, Parks and Recreation. We just worked with our partners through Detroit Economic Growth Corporation (DEGC) to stabilize the structure and make some improvements to both the plaque and the area around the statue. We do acknowledge that additional improvements in the area are needed.

IV. Unfinished Business

No unfinished business.

V. New Business

No New Business.

VI. Committee Reports

Commissioner Hood, asked for the process for sub-committee membership.

Marcell Todd, CPC Director, answered that according to the Commission's rules, the Chair has the appointive authority for the rules as well as the goals and objectives committee. When it comes to participation on things that are outside the Commission's control, that has been treated the same as the appointment of the Chair, a motion by the body to designate one of its members to participate.

Commissioner Hood requested a short presentation under Staff Report at the next meeting on what committees there have been in the past and what we might want to consider for the future.

VII. Staff Report

Marcell Todd, CPC Director, said that the staff will provide the Commissioners with the 2024 calendar at the next meeting, a draft document of the requested history and possibly an update on other items previously requested.

VIII. Member Report

Commissioner Smith reported that he will be unable during the December 1st meeting as he will be traveling.

IX. Communications

No Communications

X. Public Comment

No public comment

XI. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm

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