

**Donovan Smith**  
Chairperson  
**Melanie Markowicz**  
Vice Chair/Secretary

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

## City Planning Commission Meeting

**MINUTES**  
**May 16, 2024**  
**5:00 P.M.**

### I. Opening

A. Call to Order – Chairperson Donovan Smith called the meeting to order at 5:24 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Attendees: Adrian-Keith Bennett, Kenneth Daniels (arrive 5:27 p.m.), David Esparza, Ritchie Harrison, Gwen Lewis (arrive approximately 5:30 p.m.), Melanie Markowicz, Frederick Russell (arrive 5:38 p.m.), Donovan Smith and Rachel Udabe

A quorum was present.

C. Amendments to and approval of agenda

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

Commissioner Smith announced Adrian-Keith Bennett as CPC’s new Commissioner.

Commissioner Adrian-Keith Bennett gave a brief introduction of his professional accomplishments and commented on his gratitude and enthusiasm to serve as Commissioner.

### II. Meeting minutes of February 15, 2024

**Commissioner Markowicz 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 Credit Union ONE, a Michigan credit union, to amend Chapter 50 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, *Zoning*, by amending Article XVII. Section 50-17-43, District Map No. 41, to show a B1 (Restricted Business District)

zoning classification where a R2 (Two-Family Residential District) zoning classification is currently shown on land generally bounded by Eldred Street on the north, Junction Avenue on the east, Christiancy Street on the south, and the north/south alley parallel to and west of Junction Avenue on the west, more commonly known as 1503, 1509, 1571, 1521, and 1545 Junction. Avenue. (CG, DP) 45 mins

Present: Chris Gulock, CPC Staff

Petitioner: Cherie Pointzes, Robert Molka, Dan Myers, Nathan Welch and Derek Sluptka

Chris Gulock via PowerPoint presented the rezoning request of Credit Union ONE and based on CPC report of May 13, 2024. The location site is on Junction Avenue of zoning map 41. It is north of Interstate 75 (I-75), west of Interstate 96 (I-96), and west of Junction Avenue. Eldred is to the north and Most Holy Redeemer Catholic Church and surrounding residential to the south. Mr. Gulock provided a brief history of the property and a BZA (Board of Zoning Appeals) use variance of the 1960s. The credit union has owned the building for 50 years. Currently, Credit Union ONE does not have a drive through. Credit Union ONE desires to remain in the neighborhood, and they plan to demolish the existing building and construct a new one. Mr. Gulock reviewed the site plans and described that the new building will be slightly larger at 3400 square feet with offices and a drive through with three interactive tellers (ITMs). Mr. Gulock reviewed maps, site plans and proposed landscaping. Mr. Gulock mentioned the two entrances will be off of Junction, and there will be 18 parking spaces including handicapped spaces for visitors. Two proposed stacking lanes from the back of the building. The developers will continue to work with BSEED (Buildings, Safety Engineering, and Environmental Department) to obtain approval on their site plans. The results of consultant's conducted Traffic Impact Assessment were that an average daily traffic estimated 367 vehicles and with the new credit union (added drive through) may increase to 426. Additionally, it was estimated that 50% of customers will utilize the inside of the building and 50% will use drive through for services. Mr. Gulock explained a comparison and contrast of B1 and B2. He mentioned that the site is in the Vernor/Junction Area of the Master Plan for low medium density. Later during discussion, Mr. Gulock mentioned that PDD determined that this site plan is generally consistent with the Master Plan. Mr. Gulock described community engagement as favorable. The developers utilized the Detroit Department of Neighborhoods, and they were on the agenda for the February 15, 2024 District 6 meeting. Credit Union ONE sent 14 letters to its adjacent neighbor's houses, Latin Press Newspaper, Clark Park Coalition, Southwest Detroit Business Association and Holy Redeemer School. A support letter was received via email from Deb and Steve Sumner active representatives of Hubbard Farms.

Cherie Pointzes, Attorney Nathan Welch and other development team members introduced themselves. It was mentioned that Credit Union has been looking to upgrade the facility for over the last decade seeking to better service for its members and the community. Later a member of the development team explained the timeline stating that it is expected to take five to six months from demolition to rebuilding depending on approvals from City.

#### Public Testimony

There was no public testimony following the public hearing presentation.

Mr. Gulock explained that this half-acre site will be required to have storm water materials and features. The petitioners indicated that they would seek a consultant to assist with the storm water features. A developer team member, Derek Sluptka, mentioned they are planning to use LED lighting in the building, and they will consider sustainability materials

when finalizing their plans. These statements were in response to Commissioner Russell's questions.

Mr. Gulock stated the petitioners attended a preplan review meeting. The Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD) gave them feedback on their project, and DWSD staff is available to guide the developers. This was in response to Commissioner Russell's inquiries.

Mr. Gulock confirmed that this matter will return before CPC with a recommendation.

- B. 6:00 PM PUBLIC HEARING** – To consider the request of Michigan Acquisition East LLC, to amend Article XVII, Section 50-17-3, District Map No. 2 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, Chapter 50, Zoning, by modifying the terms and conditions of the existing PD (Planned Development) zoning classification established by Ordinance 17-H, as amended by Ordinance 21-98, and currently exists on land generally bounded by East Jefferson Avenue, St. Antoine Street, Atwater Street and Beaubien Street. **(KJ)** 60 min

Present: Kimani Jeffrey, CPC Staff  
Petitioner: Jared Friedman and John-Paul Wolfe of Friedman Real Estate

Kimani Jeffrey via PowerPoint presented a proposal based on CPC report dated May 13, 2024, and a request of Michigan Acquisition East LLC the owners of Tower 600 Renaissance Center (Ren Cen). The site address is 590 East Jefferson. Mr. Jeffrey described the Ren Cen as seven skyscraper buildings located in downtown Detroit between Jefferson Avenue and Detroit River. Five towers are owned by General Motors, and one tower is owned by Michigan Acquisition East LLC (represented by Friedman Real estate). Later, Mr. Friedman explained Tower 500 has an owner out of New York. During a brief history summation, Mr. Jeffrey stated the Renaissance Center was completed and opened in 1977, and the PD zoning was established by ordinance 17-H effective in 1975. This request is to modify the terms and conditions of the existing PD zoning classification established by ordinance 17-H and amended by ordinance 21-98, and the petitioners' request to expand the uses in allowed B5 major business district zoning classification for the Renaissance Center 600 Tower. Mr. Jeffrey displayed a photo and an aerial view of the towers and discussed surrounding zoning as majority PD and some SD4 to the east of the site. Mr. Jeffrey explained the Master Plan of policies designates this site as major commercial consisting of B5, and that generally buildings in the downtown and New Center area are referred to as central business district (CBD). Mr. Jeffrey distributed handouts explaining the depth of what actual B5 permits.

Jared Friedman provided a presentation via PowerPoint describing how Friedman Real Estate has been serving Metro Detroit for 37 years specializing in office, retail, multi-family property for institutions and private owners. Mr. Friedman described that post pandemic working trends have changed, and there is less demand for office space. He mentioned in response to these new trends Friedman Real Estate work to strategically transform a client's building to other uses with more demand.

John-Paul Wolfe continued via PowerPoint to describe Ren Cen, 600 Tower (eastern most tower) as 300,036 square feet, 21 floors with 16,055 square foot average floor. It is on its own parcel at 1.25 acres. There are provisions for adjacent parking with three levels of lower level parking with 270 spaces, and a surface parking lot with 200 spaces providing ample parking for this building. Mr. Wolfe stated Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan (BCBS) signed a long-term building lease for Tower 500 only, and BCBS decided to vacate the

Tower 600 building. Therefore, Tower 600 is now 10% occupied with three tenants (1) Great Expressions, (2) Detroit Riverfront Conservancy, and (3) Canadian Consulate on office levels. He concluded that since the zoning of this tower is solely office space, a modification would beneficially permit restaurants and retail to be allowed in the building.

Mr. Wolfe stated they participated in community outreach and sent out notifications to receive support from the surrounding community as follows:

- Detroit Riverfront Conservancy
- Downtown Detroit Partnership
- St. Peter & Paul Church
- Millender Center
- Detroit-Wayne Joint Building Authority

There was discussion regarding PD modifications and unifying all Ren Cen Towers.

Many Commissioners expressed their prospective goal of rental housing.

Public Testimony

Dale Wiggom commented but it was for next item.

Lenovo Tab a female commented on zoning change hearing.

Mr. Jeffrey stated that CPC Staff recommends approval of the zoning modification request. CPC Staff suggests the following conditions:

- 1) The CPC would allow Staff the ability to further refine any pieces of the use list.
- 2)
- 3) That the developer must work with the immediately adjacent community to minimize the disruption to neighborhood during construction and address any impacts that may arise.
- 4) All changes in development that do not change overall character, height, massing of buildings within the development are subject to approval with CPC Staff.
- 5) That the permissible uses for the development must be limited to those that are currently permissible to zoning classification subject to further refinement.
- 6) All site plans, elevations, lighting and landscapes are subject to review and approval by CPC Staff prior to applying for building permits.

**Commissioner Daniels moved to approve of Staff's recommendations considering the Michigan Acquisition East LLC, seconded by Commissioner Esparza. Motion approved.**

- C. **7:00 PM PUBLIC HEARING** - To consider the Sixth General Text Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 50 of the 2019 Detroit City Code proposing a range of issues both substantive and non-substantive changes to policy and practice concerning, but not limited to, the permissibility of use, dimensional requirements, definitions and procedures as well as needed corrections and clarifications. (JM) **60 mins**

Present: Jamie Murphy, CPC Staff

Jamie Murphy via PowerPoint presented the CPC Report dated May 13, 2024, pertaining to

Zoning Ordinance Changes. Ms. Murphy explained that the City's last major rewrite of the zoning ordinance was in 2005 and last overview in 2018. Therefore, when it comes to general text amendment changes, there is a need for the ordinance to catch up with current zoning trends.

The majority of the modifications are not a policy change, but fixing inconsistencies for unity and shaping it for the whole thing reads as one document. CPC Staff selected practical things or matters that are non-controversial, and avoid topics that will upset people, yet it make sense with the way development trends are going or suggestions from other City departments. She summarized the Two categories for these 13 proposed changes substantive (policy change) and non-substantive (correcting inconsistencies) as follows:

1. Planned Developments (PD) - This proposal will increase the PD time period to five years, and the lapse will no longer be mandatory, but optional.
2. Allowing lofts conditionally in R1 and R2 districts – BSEED advises that the special land use hearings are usually granted. This could benefit the City since it will encourage commercial buildings to be re-developed as residential. This finds a middle ground to change the reuse of these buildings without encouraging upset in the neighborhood.
3. Allow lofts and mixed-use development as by-right in B2, B3 and B4 districts. Commercial corridors might be suitable for residential use instead and by-right could encourage it. It is currently by-right in Traditional Main Street Overlay (TMSO) when combined with a commercial use.”
4. Allow Body Art Facilities conditionally in B2 and B3 districts, formerly known as (f/k/a) tattoo parlors, are more socially acceptable nowadays. These are no longer considered an undesirable use or blighting influence. The change was requested by City Council Pro Tem Tate in response to a project proposed for District 1.
5. Permissibility of Brewpubs, Microbreweries, Small Distilleries, Small Wineries - Have been somewhat strictly regulated, similar to other alcohol uses. These uses haven't had the same negative effect as bars and party stores that don't make product on site. Propose to allow conditionally in B2 and allow by right in B3. Allow in B4, B5, B6 by-right.
6. Allow Miniature Golf Courses conditionally in SD1 and SD2 districts. This will eliminate restrictions so they could be closer than 500 feet to residential without a neighborhood petition requirement. It will reduce required off-street parking from two to one parking spot per hole.
7. Gateway Radial Thoroughfare Overlay areas - The overlay regulations prohibit uses that may be detrimental to the area. Because they are listed in the use regulations, they become eligible for appeal. Proposed to add prohibition so it cannot be appealed due to a loop hole.
8. Research and Testing Laboratories in B5 – Currently, large animals are prohibited at laboratories in B4 districts. This proposes to extend that prohibition to B5 also. This is mostly downtown and in the New Center areas.
9. Accommodation of overnight guests as Home Occupation – This was added in 2018 but never enforced. This provision will strike this from zoning and get rid of it to clean things up.
10. Clarify Height bonus - Streets wider than 80 feet get extra height due to the width of the street, but the term “street” creates confusion. The distance is to be measured property line to property line, proposed to use “right-of-way” to clear up that issue.
11. Permissibility of Loading space located in alley – Commercial uses are allowed to use an open adjacent alley for loading space. Proposed to expand this to residential uses. Loading space is not always required, but if there is multi-family and certain number of units.

12. Architectural and Site Design Standards - These are specific changes requested by PDD requiring clarifying that roof equipment must be screened for residential development. Also, add a minimal thickness for metal panels used on residential buildings to avoid rippled appearance; allow certain materials on case by case basis; add that the design review committee can permit certain materials for traditional main street overlays.
13. Truck Stop Definition- Currently, it specifies diesel fuel has to be sold. There is an existing business currently that has overnight parking in the southwest area, and they have accommodations for drivers but do not have fuel for sale. It is proposed to expand the truck stop definitions to include any combinations of overnight parking and overnight accommodations, commercial shower, but not proposing to expand where they are allowed.

The non-substantive changes are as follows:

Code	Modification
Sec. 50-4-131	A list is referenced as seven items although there are only five; propose to strike “seven” to eliminate the issue entirely
Sec. 50-8-142	Eliminate “business college and commercial trade school” from uses that are allowed conditionally in R5 as they are by-right
Sec. 50-12-62, 50-12-63, 50-12-69, 50-12-70	Add uses that are currently permitted in R5 and R6 districts to the use table
Sec. 50-12-81	Add “crematory or pet crematory” as allowed in PD Districts with legislative approval
Sec. 50-12-226, 50-12-227, 50-12-307	Strike provision requiring accessory parking for certain uses as all uses are required to provide accessory parking
Sec. 50-12-336	Clarify requirements for food catering establishments in SD2 districts (by-right, no larger than 5,000 square feet, have at least 10% of the floor area as a retail store)
Sec. 50-12-348	Eliminate the use regulation regarding research and testing laboratories in SD1 and SD2 districts as the use is not allowed in those districts
Sec 50-14-49	Correct and simplify the title of a section about parking requirements
Sec 50-14-58, 50-14-60	Move the parking requirement for auto sales from one category to another
Sec 50-16-402	Correct the year in the definition of “tobacco retail store” from 2099 to 2009
Appendix Letters “G” and “S”	Correct “victims” to “survivors” for shelters for survivors of domestic violence use to be consistent with the rest of the zoning ordinance.
Banks with Drive Through	In SD2 take out of the use table (mistakenly listed)

Ms. Murphy stated that the proposed changes were shared with other departments and the

Mayor's Office. Law Department is still reviewing. Other departments still awaiting response--BSEED and BZA.

Commissioner Markowicz: If there is a development unfinished after five years, they have not done what they said, does the COD have the option to hold that lapse. JM: COD may act to rezone the property.

Commissioner Markowicz asked allow lofts conditionally R1 and R2 districts does it only apply to buildings that are not traditionally residential homes or would this apply to accessory uses such as carriage houses or garages?

Ms. Murphy responded that the law department recommended that the definition of loft is tightened up and detailed, so that it does not apply to accessory buildings.

Ms. Murphy replied and agreed that it would be easier to automatically bring it back a PD for an update for a modified standard three years and will work on language to change it. This was in response to commissioner Harrison's concerns that five years would be too long for PD update. She will make a note to update the language and working for that standard of five years update in three years.

#### *Public Testimony*

Director Todd announced that there was a letter received today from Ms. Nelson, and it has been electronically distributed to CPC.

Ms. Nelson commented her concerns about temporary residents and renting out carriage houses and garages that were not approved. She expressed that Commissioner Markowicz's questions and Staff's answers addressed her concerns regarding renting out and carriage houses rental.

Ms. Ross commented that changing zoning to allow short-term rental for the lofts in R1 and R2. Question the need to change especially with many spaces downtown and she is opposed. Why is there a need to fix something that is not broken.

Ms. Miller commented that the Airbnb loft language is not clear. Other states have banned Airbnb, i.e., Hawaii and New York. She expressed that having a business is prohibited in Indian Village, a historically designated area.

(user name: Lenovo 10 tab HD) A woman commented concerns with mini golf. And zoning eliminated some safeguards of R1 and R2. Eliminated some aspects of control of one's neighborhood which impacts the liability. And enforcement and parking.

Dale Wiggom commented and the need for another opportunity to address the changes, PD lapse language and responsibility and importance of a mass mailing.

**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. Committee Reports-** Director Todd confirmed June 12, 2024 as the committee's next meeting date.

**VIII. Staff Report** – There was no New Business.

**IX. Member Report** – There was no Member Report.

**X. Communications** –There were no Communications.

**XI. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.