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Gwendolyn Lewis, MBA
Frederick E. Russell, Jr.
Rachel M. Udabe

City Planning Commission Meeting

MINUTES
March 20, 2025
5:00 P.M.

I. Opening

A. Call to Order – Chairperson Donovan Smith called the meeting to order at 5:38 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Attendees: Adrian-Keith Bennett, Kenneth Daniels, David Esparza (*meeting departure 6:49 p.m.*), Ritchie Harrison, Gwen Lewis, Melanie Markowicz, Frederick Russell (*meeting arrival 5:42 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 Udabe. Motion Approved.

II. Meeting minutes will be provided at the next meeting.

III. Public Hearings, Discussions and Presentations

A. **5:15 PM PUBLIC HEARING** – to consider the request of Fusco, Shaffer & Pappas, Inc, on behalf of the Church of the Messiah Housing Corp. in conjunction with the Detroit City Planning Commission to rezone the properties located at 2124 Field Street, 2138 Field Street, 2148 Field Street, 2158 Field Street, 2166 Field Street, 2172 Field Street, and 2184 Field Street where an R2 (Two-Family Residential) zoning classification is shown to an R5 (Medium Density Residential) zoning classification. **(DP)** **45 min**

Present: Joe Heaphy, Steve Roffi, and Richard Cannon
Dolores Perales, CPC Staff

Dolores Perales presented via PowerPoint and based on CPC report dated March 18, 2025, a request to rezone seven parcels from R2 to R5. The petitioner's request is to rezone five parcels, and the City is a co-petitioner for the remaining two parcels (2124 Field Street and 2138 Field Street). The site is located in District 5 near Belle Isle in the Butzel

neighborhood. The proposed development will be known as Belleview Village a 29-unit three-story apartment building and affordable housing. The project includes two separate sites that do not need to be rezoned. CPC joined as co-petitioner to ensure consistency and avoid spot zoning. Ms. Perales reviewed the zoning of the surrounding area as R2, B4, and vacant land. The Planning and Development Department (PDD) submitted an interpretation that the proposed rezoning is consistent with the Master Plan. Ms. Perales described the community engagement which began in 2023 where there was a meeting between Church of the Messiah and Field Street Block Club Association. Thereafter, the Field Street Block Club Association provided support for the rezoning (letter submitted). CPC Staff received 10 letters of support, and no letters of opposition were received.

The development team stated they were notified by the Housing and Revitalization Department (HRD) that the Detroit Land Bank Authority (DLBA) will be offering the parcels for sale along with the City's request for a high-density housing development. The development team did not desire to compete for the same parcels, so they negotiated and worked with the Field Street Block Club Association to create a mutual concept, and donated the northernmost lot as greenspace and legacy garden. They emphasized that this project offers housing affordability, and some vouchers are provided through the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) for formerly homeless individuals. Also, there will be a mix of units that are at 20%- 60% of Area Median Income (AMI) levels.

Steve Roffi, presented via PowerPoint site plans of Parcel A, Parcel B and Parcel C. He discussed the proposed exterior styles of the buildings.

- Parcel A - A proposed three story 29-unit affordable apartment building (four studio units, 21 one-bedroom units, and 5 two-bedroom units, barrier free accessible units) with a common corridor, two elevators, 37 on-site parking spaces, and greenspace.
- Parcel B - A proposed two-story, six-unit town home building with stacked ranch units with individual entry, interior stairs, a first-floor ranch will be a fully accessible unit, recreational greenspace and nine parking spaces including a van-accessible handicap parking space.
- Parcel C - Proposed is 4 three-bedroom townhouse units and two three-bedroom stacked ranch units, a first floor ranch will be a fully accessible unit, and recreational greenspace, and eight parking spaces.

Public Testimony

Toya Watts commented her opposition of the rezoning. She mentioned that there was not enough community outreach, and the neighborhood space will be tight if it adds more apartment buildings.

Dr. Paula Cruz Tachas commented her support for the rezoning. She attended the meetings where Church of Messiah addressed density, solar panels and parking.

Belinda Gilmore, President of Black Bottom-CDC, commented support and requested more community engagement.

Jacob Graham commented his support of the rezoning. He expressed his appreciation for parking and alley access.

Commissioner Markowicz moved to waive same day action requirements, seconded

by Commissioner Russell. Motion Approved.

After the motion passed, Commissioner Harrison stated that he offers general support for the development, but he asked the developers in harmony with public testimony to follow up with the community and address concerns.

Commissioner Markowicz moved to approve the rezoning of this parcel with the condition and recommendation that the developer parties do further engagement prior to going to City Council, seconded by Commissioner Russell. Motion Approved.

**B. 7:15 PM PRESENTATION - PD (Planned Development) Project update
(RB) 30 min**

Dr. Rory Bolger presented via PowerPoint the PD (Planned Development) Project update. He explained the background of zoning classifications of Residential, Multiple, with Approval (RMAs) and Planned Developments (PDs). CPC Staff are now reviewing 33 PDs. These reviews are based on the Law Department's advice that any PD locations without a site plan approval or a development plan require rezoning to a standard zoning classification.

The PDs are eligible for review due to their current status as an urban renewal, lapsed PDs, undeveloped or incomplete PDs or PDs requiring an authorized extension. The PDs have a site plan approval or development plan needing to be looked at and rezoned. Some are locations that were never developed, or the original plans are not going to materialize (i.e., Research Park Project or Perfecting Church Project). PDs that were established as urban renewals for which a plan had been adopted and the adopted plan included a zoning complement. The City used its appointed community member groups called Citizens District Councils (CDC) to advise on most urban renewal PDs projects. CDCs were funded and operated by the City; however, during the City's financial problems, CDCs dissolved. Therefore, these urban renewals that are undeveloped will need to be rezoned to a standard zoning classification. Also, lapsed PDs are developments that are not completed by the required three years. Dr. Bolger explained that the modification of the Sixth General text amendment intends to repeal that lapsed provision. It is recognized that there are too many instances where developers face difficulties completing a project in only three years.

Dr. Bolger explained that CPC has the responsibility to monitor approved PDs; however, if abandoned or stalled, CPC has the authority to call on the developers and land owners for project status. Thereafter, CPC may make a determination to rezone.

Director Todd expounded that he anticipates further discussions on lapsed PDs with the Law Department. Also, after recent discussion, analysis and assessment, it is expected it will require writing standards and setting parameters on the impacted lapsed PDs.

Dr. Bolger informed CPC that they will be considering 11 sites on Map 71 at Seven Mile Road and Telegraph Road which are currently zoned as Lapsed PDs at the next CPC meeting on April 3, 2025.

IV. Public Comment –

This matter was heard later in the meeting.

William Davis commented on his pleasurable experience serving as a past member of a Citizens District Council (CDC) regarding development in the Wayne State University area. He expressed Commissioners to consider returning CDCs to the City's planning process.

V. Unfinished Business –

This matter was heard earlier in the meeting.

- A. Consideration of the request of co-petitioner's Leandra King and Herman Stacy in conjunction with the City Planning Commission to amend Article XVII, Section 50-17-10, District Map No. 9 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, Chapter 50, Zoning, to show an SD1 (Special Development, Small-scale mixed-use) zoning classification where the R2 (Two-Family Residential District), R5 (Medium Density Residential District) and R6 (High Density District) zoning classifications are shown for properties commonly known as 11534 Woodrow Wilson Avenue, also 1540, 1550, 1636 Lawrence Street, and 1551, 1537 Burlingame Street, generally bounded by Rosa Parks Boulevard, the east/west alley first north of Lawrence street, Woodrow Wilson Avenue, Burlingame Street, the John C. Lodge Freeway, and Lawrence Street (see map below) **(KJ) (RECOMMEND APPROVAL)**

Present: Woodrow Hankins and Leandra King
Kimani Jeffrey, CPC Staff

Kimani Jeffrey presented via PowerPoint and based on CPC report dated March 18, 2025, the rezoning of R2, R5, and R6 parcels to SD1. He displayed an aerial view of the site. The Detroit Farm and Cider, Jehovah Shalom Church, Inc., and the vacant lots are included in the rezoning. The City has joined to keep the zoning consistent and provide for potential opportunity on this site (i.e., parking lot). The address at 1636 Lawrence is the Detroit Farm and Cider (photos shown). The urban farm site is approximately four acres between Woodrow Wilson Street and Rosa Parks Street. Ms. Leandra King, owner, has a permit for an urban farm; however, she would like to now legalize other past aspects of the operation. The address at 1551 Burlingame is the Jehovah Shalom Church, Inc., a separate proposal, with prospects of commercial activities such as art gallery, book store, counseling services, school, daycare and rental hall. CPC Staff recommends SD1 zoning classification. SD1 not the most advantageous, but it is the best tool at this time for mixed use. The Planning and Development Department (PDD) designates the site as neighborhood commercial, and due to size, PDD interpreted this rezoning as generally consistent with the Master Plan. Mr. Jeffrey reviewed the public hearing results mentioning that the community is in support, and no one opposed it. The surrounding neighbors have submitted a petition in support of Detroit Farm and Cider.

Mr. Jeffrey reviewed some concerns from the last time this matter was before CPC explaining that there have been planning studies conducted, and he displayed maps showing vicinity and Joe Louis Greenway. This was in response to Commissioner Russell's concerns.

Mr. Jeffrey responded that there are no animals on the farm at this time. Ms. Leandra King has submitted a petition to obtain animal husbandry approval. This was in response to Commissioner Lewis.

There are some legal and court matters with Detroit Farm and Cider. The Law Department has advised there are correction orders that must be adhered to, but these are viewed by the Buildings, Safety Engineering, and Environmental Department (BSEED) and the Law Department as achievable. BSEED is monitoring conformance.

This matter returned later in the meeting. Thereafter, there was discussion and further clarification regarding the Law Department's opinion on CPC proceeding with this rezoning.

Mr. Jeffrey clarified and read aloud the Law Department's opinion. Also, he stated that it is Staff's recommendation to approve this rezoning.

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

VI. New Business – There was no New Business.

VII. Committee Reports – Director Marcell Todd confirmed that CPC Committee will meet on Wednesday, March 26, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.

VIII. Staff Report – Director Marcell Todd discussed the following matters during the Staff Report:

- 1) The next CPC meeting will be held in the community at the Wayne County Community College District-Northwest Campus on April 3, 2025.

Commissioner Russell moved to change venue for the next CPC meeting on April 3, 2025, to the Wayne County Community College District-Northwest Campus, seconded by Commissioner Rachel Udabe. Motion Approved.

- 2) Director Todd provided a brief synopsis of the ongoing City Council budget hearings. He encouraged Commissioners to observe or attend the hearings, and/or offer any comments and concerns for the upcoming Legislative Policy Division budget hearing.
- 3) Director Todd stated that Detroit is the host city of the 2026 National Planning Conference. He mentioned that Planning and Development Department Deputy Director Dara O'Byrne is the appointed Chair for the conference's hosting committee. He asked Commissioners to inform Staff of their interest in participating in any of the committees.
- 4) Director Todd stated that per the request of City Council, Staff had a meeting with General Motors and Bedrock representatives regarding the Renaissance Center. The matters discussed at the meeting prompted a new policy centered on planned developments (PDs). He stated that CPC should anticipate possible modification of the PDs.

IX. Member Report – There were no Member Reports.

X. Communications – There were no Communications.

XI. Adjournment –

The meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.