



**Regular Meeting
LANSING PLANNING BOARD
February 2, 2016
6:30 p.m., Conference Room
Neighborhood Empowerment Center
600 W. Maple Street**

MINUTES

1. OPENING SESSION

Ms. Graham called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

- a. Present: Beth Graham, Lynne Martinez, Alisande Henry, Marta Cerna, Josh Hovey & Council Representatives Judy Brown Clark & Jessica Yorke
- b. Absent: John Ruge & Tony Cox
- c. Staff: Bill Rieske, Susan Stachowiak & Doris Witherspoon

Ms. Henry made a motion, seconded by Ms. Martinez to grant excused absences for Mr. Ruge and Mr. Cox. On a voice vote (5-0), the motion carried unanimously.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Ms. Graham approved the agenda by unanimous consent.

3. COMMUNICATIONS – None

4. HEARINGS

A. PROPOSED FEDERAL FUNDING ALLOCATIONS - CONSOLIDATED PLAN, FY 2016 – 2021, ANNUAL ACTION PLAN, FY 2016-2017

Ms. Witherspoon said that this is a hearing to solicit public input on the proposed goals and objectives and projected use of federal funding allocations of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) for the Five-Year Consolidated Plan, 2016-2021 and the Annual Action Plan, 2016-17. She said that Entitlement Grant Awards for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has not been announced as of this date. Ms. Witherspoon stated that the amounts proposed for HUD 2016/City 2017 CDBG, HOME and ESG activities are estimated based on prior entitlement awards. She said that if the grant amounts HUD actually awards to the City of Lansing for CDBG, HOME and ESG are different from the amounts shown above, adjustments will be made to the budget amounts proposed for each program. Ms. Witherspoon said that the primary objective of Lansing's Housing and Community Development Program is the development of a viable community which will provide standard housing in a suitable living environment, principally to benefit low and moderate income persons, preserve and expand existing businesses and industries, and create an atmosphere conducive to stability in neighborhoods.

Ms. Graham opened the public hearing.

Julie Powers, Greater Lansing Housing Coalition, 600 W. Maple Street, stated that GLHC does a lot with the funds that they are given through the CDBG

program. She said that Lansing is the hub of development in the tri-county area. The Tuesday Toolman program operates on a budget of less than \$50,000 annually. The funds also support the Home Education Resource Organization H.E.R.O. program. They work with the City Parks and Recreation Department, use funds to provide a tool truck that contains over 500 tools that can be used for free and they provide programs that help people to “age in place”. They also partner with the Center for Financial Help to provide credit counseling. Ms. Powers said that every CDBG dollar gets about \$5.00 of return. She said that over 8,000 people utilized GLHC resources last year and the services they provide have a big impact on the community.

Karen Sturdivant, 1901 W. Hillsdale Street, asked about the application process for obtaining funds through the CDBG program and if the City offers assistance for first time applicants.

Ms. Witherspoon stated that Ms. Sturdivant should contact the City Development Office. She said that the purpose of this hearing is to determine what the communities needs are so that the Development Office can develop a budget for use of the City’s CDBG funds.

Susan Cancro, Executive Director, Advent House, 743 N. ML King, stated that she is the Chairperson of the Greater Lansing Homeless Resolution Network which is a group of representatives from about 30 different organizations including hospitals, shelters, government and housing organizations. She said that helping people overcome homelessness involves providing housing but also helping people with life skills so that they can maintain permanent housing. Ms. Cancro said that people are still recovering from the recession and therefore, there is still a great need for housing assistance. She said that there are more than 500 people that can be counted that are homeless although the actual population is probably far more.

Katrina Urista, Secretary, Greater Lansing Homeless Resolution Network, 743 N. MLK, said that the residual effects of the recession are still being felt by many segments of the population. She said that support through the CDBG program is essential to helping people obtain housing and stay in their homes.

Amber Paxton, City of Lansing, Office of Financial Empowerment, 124 W. Michigan Avenue, said that this is one of Mayor Bernero’s initiatives. The purpose is to provide financial/credit counseling so that people can improve their credit scores and learn how to manage money. Ms. Paxton said that this Office has been in existence for about 3 years and has provided counseling to over 7,500 people. She thanked the Board for its continued support.

Mikki Droste, Executive Director, Capitol Area Housing Partnership, 1290 Deerpath, East Lansing, said that CAHP merged with Franklin Street Housing a while back. She said that there is a great need in the area for affordable housing. Ms. Droste stated that they provide down payment assistance, foreclosure prevention training and other assistance for homeowners.

Seeing no one else wishing to speak, Ms. Graham closed the public hearing.

Ms. Henry said asked if the Planning Board will be provided with the final dollar amounts from HUD.

Ms. Witherspoon replied yes and stated that they expect to have the final dollar amounts by the end of February.

Ms. Martinez asked if the percentages allocated to the various programs will change as a result of the final dollar amounts.

Ms. Witherspoon said that there will be no radical changes to the proposed budget that the Board is being asked to approve.

Ms. Martinez made a motion, seconded by Ms. Henry to approve the proposed funding allocations, with the understanding that the funding allocations will be adjusted accordingly once the actual allocations are received from HUD, for the Five Year Consolidated Plan 2016-2021 (7/1/16 - 6/30/21) and the Annual Action Plan, HUD FY 2016 /City FY 2017 (7/1/16 - 6/30/17). On a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0.

B. Z-1-2016, 635 W. Willow Street - Rezoning from "B" Residential to "DM-4" Residential, and 656 W. Maple Street – Rezoning from "B" Residential to "DM-1" Residential

Ms. Stachowiak said that this is a request by TWG Development, LLC, to rezone the property at 635 W. Willow Street from "B" Residential to "DM-4" Residential and to rezone the property at 656 W. Maple Street from "B" Residential to "DM-1" Residential. The purpose of the rezoning is to permit multiple family residential use of the subject properties. Ms. Stachowiak said that the applicant proposes to demolish the existing auditorium building at 635 W. Willow Street and construct a 4-story, 72 unit (18 1-bedroom, 36 2-bedroom & 18 3-bedroom units), affordable multi-family residential apartment building. The applicant also proposes to rehabilitate the former high school building at 656 W. Maple Street into 18 (9 1-bedroom and 9 2-bedroom) senior citizen apartment units.

Ms. Stachowiak said that the applicant's proposal includes 3 separate parcels of land (635 W. Willow, 715 W. Willow and 656 W. Maple Street). The applicant intends to combine the 2 parcels (715 W. Willow and 656 W. Maple Street) that will be used for senior citizen housing into one parcel. For tax purposes, the 635 W. Willow Street parcel that will contain affordable, non-age restricted housing will continue to be a stand-alone parcel. Although there will ultimately be 2 separate parcels of land, the development will function as one site. While the proposed density (approximately 30 dwelling units per acre) for the former MSB auditorium parcel at 635 W. Willow Street is much higher than that of the other 2 parcels (6-10 dwelling units per acre), the total density for all 3 existing parcels combined is only 12 dwelling units per acre which is quite low for a multiple family residential development and will not be disruptive to the character of the neighborhood or the quality of life for its current residents.

Ms. Stachowiak said that staff is recommending approval of the rezoning on a finding that the proposed rezoning complies with the intent and purpose of the Design Lansing Comprehensive Plan, is compatible with the mixed land use

composition of the area and will have no adverse impacts on vehicular and pedestrian traffic, the environment or future patterns of development in the area.

Ms. Graham opened the public hearing.

J.D. Curry, 333 S. Pennsylvania Street, Indianapolis, TWG Development, LLC, said that TWG Development responded to a Request for Proposals in 2015 for development of the subject property. He said that they were selected to be the master developer of the site which is the east, approved 10.5 acres of the Michigan School for the Blind property. Mr. Curry said that they will manage the property for up to 45 years. He said that they are not using historic tax credits but are committed to restoring the building consistent with their historic character. They also intend to maintain the campus setting and will provide adequate vehicular and bicycle parking. The parking lot will be landscaped to soften its appearance from Willow Street and they are amenable to some type of decorative wall structure north of the parking lot as recommended by the staff. Mr. Curry said that they have held 2 community meetings over the past couple of weeks to present and seek input from the public on the development proposal.

Councilmember Yorke stated that one of the results of the neighborhood meeting was to keep the color of the new building consistent with the existing buildings on the site. She said that the neighbors do not want it to look fake.

Mr. Curry said that they will preserve as many of the mature trees on the site as possible. He also said that the units will be 100% affordable. The 1-bedroom units will range from \$281 - \$650 per month and will contain about 700 square feet. The 2-bedroom senior units will range from \$325 - \$769 per month and will contain about 900 square feet. The 3-bedroom units will range from \$363 to \$876 and will contain 1,100 square feet. Mr. Curry said that the rents factor in what HUD allows for utilities.

Mr. Graham asked if there will be dining facilities in the buildings.

Mr. Curry said that there will be community space in each of the buildings. There will also be a fitness center, maybe a café, a police substation and lighting parking lots. He said that the 600-650 square foot police substation will not be manned but will be available to the police if they want to use it. Mr. Curry said that they are considering a bike share program where the residents can rent bikes for free.

Ms. Yorke stated that a recent study by GLHC revealed that there is a shortage of 20,000 units of affordable housing in Lansing. She said that some feel that there is enough affordable housing in Lansing and it should be dispersed to other communities such as Okemos. Ms. Yorke said that he appreciates the developers holding the 2 community meetings.

Ms. Martinez said that safe and affordable housing is essential for Lansing.

Ms. Graham opened the public hearing.

Julie Powers, Greater Lansing Housing Coalition, 600 W. Maple Street, said that she is very supportive of the proposed development. She said that it is consistent with the City Master Plan and is compatible with the surrounding land

uses. Ms. Powers said that seniors are living on fixed incomes and deserve safe and affordable housing which is what this development will provide.

Mary Elaine Keener, 1027 Seymour Street, stated that she is very supportive of this proposal. Ms. Keener stated that she is very pleased with the openness that the developers have displayed as well as their willingness to listen to the neighbors.

Craig Emens, 1208 N. Pine Street, said that he has lived in the neighborhood for 23 years and has seen the area transform over those years. He said that he is disappointed that he did not know about the neighborhood meetings. Mr. Emens said that what the developers are saying sounds positive as long as it does not turn into poverty housing. He asked about the start date for the project.

Mr. Curry said that the application to MSHDA is due by April 1st. He said that the goal would be to start construction in the Spring of 2017 and the construction will take about one year.

Austin Ashly, Director, Old Town Commercial Association, 1232 Turner Street, stated that his office could be a hub for disseminating information. He stated that this is not Section 8 voucher housing. It is just affordable housing. Mr. Ashly said that he is supportive of the request on behalf of the owners in Old Town. He said that this type of development allows seniors to age in place and the development will provide a customer base for the businesses in Old Town.

Ms. Henry made a motion, seconded by Ms. Martinez to recommend approval of Z-1-2016 to rezone the property at 635 W. Willow Street from "B" Residential District to "DM-4" Residential District and to rezone the property at 656 W. Maple Street from "B" Residential to "DM-1" Residential District. On a roll call vote (4-0), the motion carried unanimously.

C. Form-Based Code (FBC) Commercial and Mixed Use Zoning Districts, R-INST Institutional Residential District, and Amendments to Chapter 1284 – Off-Street Parking

Mr. Rieske stated that about six weeks ago, the materials regarding the Form-Based Code (FBC) were distributed to the Planning Board's for examination and future consideration. Those materials included an update letter, a user's guide, a map of FBC districts, and the zoning text.

Mr. Rieske stated that the Future Land Use Plan, transects, and zoning districts, from one of the PowerPoint presentations show the link between the Design Lansing Comprehensive Plan and the FBC. The Lansing Transect provides the basis for the regulations. Mr. Rieske said that the FBC intro letter explains the difference between conventional zoning and an FBC, and the status of the FBC project. He said that the User Guide:

1. Describes the process to create the FBC,
2. Page 2 explains the transect,
3. Pages 3 & 4 provide the framework map and organization of the ordinance,

4. Page 5 explains how to use the FBC (district map, street type, building type),
5. Page 6 shows the FBC districts completed to date, and the various uses allowed,
6. Page 7 advises the user of alternatives if he/she does not see the proposed use, and
7. Page 8 describes the approval process.

Mr. Rieske said that the FBC ordinance has been reviewed by the City Attorney's Office and the changes that they suggested have been made to the document. He also said that the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA) was considered in developing the ordinance. Mr. Rieske stated that our FBC treats churches in an equivalent but not identical manner as other places of assembly. He stated that there are plenty of high traffic locations for churches.

Mr. Rieske said that Phase 3 will address:

1. Residential districts
2. Special districts (industrial, institutional, research, open space, public facilities)
3. Downtown core and edge
4. Building types (primarily residential and special buildings)

Mr. Rieske said that there are illustrations in the Ordinance that depict the desired development pattern for the variance districts.

Ms. Graham asked why the downtown area is not addressed on the map.

Mr. Rieske said that the downtown will be addressed in a future phase of the project. He said that the current phase of the project addresses all commercial districts and the reuse of the vacant school properties. Mr. Rieske said that with the exception of the suburban commercial district at the south end of Lansing, the rest of the districts are mixed use.

Ms. Martinez said that the Frandor shopping center is designated for mixed use development. She asked why the Red Cedar Golf Course property does not have a designation on the map.

Ms. Stachowiak said that the SkyVu development is being zoned "E-1" Apartment Shop district, as is the Red Cedar Golf Course property. She said that the map will be updated to reflect mixed use zoning for the Red Cedar property.

Mr. Rieske said that there is a list of land uses that shows where they are permitted and if they are permitted by right, special conditions or special land use permit. He said that church are to be located primarily in residential areas but will also be permitted on the east-west corridors so that there will be ample space for churches but not on major commercial corridors.

Ms. Henry asked how the developers feel about the FBC.

Mr. Rieske said that most of the public input that was obtained was during the Master Plan process and through the 3 workshops that have been held on the FBC. He said that most people just had questions.

Ms. Martinez said that if a development complies with the FBC requirements, the development will be permitted without a public process.

Ms. Stachowiak said that what Ms. Martinez just stated is correct but that is also true under the current Zoning Ordinance. A project only requires a public hearing if there is to be a rezoning, special land use permit or variance.

Ms. Graham opened the public hearing.

Carla Barker, 2205 N. Grand River Avenue, asked what mixed use neighborhood center means and if her property will be affected by the FBC in terms of permitted uses.

Mr. Rieske stated that the area along N. Grand River where Ms. Barker lives will continue to be residential.

Julie Powers, Greater Lansing Housing Coalition, 600 W. Maple Street, spoke in support of the FBC. She said that this is the result of 10 years of work and 10,000 regional participants in the process. This is putting our planning values into practice. Ms. Powers said that the FBC ensures responsible development and gives City staff the tools to make it happen without having to go through a lengthy process.

Councilmember Clarke asked about the areas that are not designated for a particular FBC district on the map. She also asked if there is going to be 4 phases of the project.

Mr. Rieske said that Phase 3 of the FBC will cover the remainder of the City.

Seeing no one else wishing to speak, Ms. Graham closed the public hearing.

Ms. Martinez made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hovey to recommend approval of Phases 1 and 2 of the proposed Form Based Code ordinance. On a roll call vote (4-0), the motion carried unanimously.

5. **COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE** - None

6. **RECESS** – None.

7. **BUSINESS**

A. **Consent Items**

1. **Minutes for approval:** January 5, 2016. APPROVED without objection with the following correction to page one, first paragraph:

Change “Ms. Henry made a motion...” to “Ms. Graham made a motion...”

B. New Business – None.

C. Old Business – None.

D. Report from Planning Manager

8. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

Ms. Graham asked about the status of the former Harley Hotel conversion to student housing

Ms. Stachowiak said that the project has been abandoned.

9. COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS - None

10. PENDING ITEMS: FUTURE ACTION REQUIRED – None.

11. ADJOURNMENT – The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.