



FLINT MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE
Meeting Notes
May 5, 2015



Members Present:

Pamela Hawkins
Judy Hovey
Councilwoman VanBuren
Sandra Robinson
John Henry
Councilwoman Poplar
Paul Mattern

Raynetta Speed
Linda Boose
Elizabeth Jordan
Bob Wesley (Co-Chair)
Clarence Pierce
Jim Richardson (Co-Chair)

Members Not Present:

Bryant Nolden
Barry Williams (excused)
Mona Munroe-Younis (excused)

Isaiah Oliver
Charles Tutt

Staff Present:

Megan Hunter
Kevin Schronce

Kristin Stevenson

CALL TO ORDER:

Co-Chair Jim Richardson called the meeting to order at 5:43 pm. The meeting was held at the Flint Public Library, 1026 Kearsley St., Flint, MI room 205.

PUBLIC FORUM:

Co-Chair Richardson stated that this is a working meeting of the Master Plan Steering Committee. Therefore, public comment will be limited to the first ten minutes in order to allow for dialogue between Steering Committee members.

Mr. Tony Palladeno, attendee wanted to comment all of the Master Plan efforts and shared that everything is being "laid out pretty well".

PLANNING COMMISSION UPDATE

At 5:40pm Co-Chair Bob Wesley informed the committee that the Planning Commission did not have a meeting in April but they will continue dealing with marijuana licensing.

Mrs. Elizabeth Jordan shared that there are some clinics that are operating without a business license and are thus eligible to be closed down.

DRAFT ZONING CODE OUTREACH UPDATE:

Co-Chair Richardson called on Mr. Kevin Schronce at 5:44pm to begin the discussion on the draft zoning code.

Mr. Schronce skipped ahead on the agenda to the Outreach Update while waiting for the arrival of Megan Hunter. Mr. Schronce shared that Planning staff recently wrapped up 9 ward workshops all of which had a fair amount of attendance. He explained that the next step is for staff to begin visiting neighborhood group meetings, schedule open house events, and hosting "hot-button" issue zoning meetings. Planning staff is also working with Mark Baldwin to create video profiles of

each ward and the proposed zoning to be uploaded to the Imagine Flint site.

DRAFT ZONING CODE DISCUSSION:

At 5:54pm, Mr. Schronce moved on to begin discussion of the draft zoning code. He prefaced the discussion by saying that the zoning topics on the agenda are based off of questions and discussions had over the past three weeks of ward workshops and past comments from committee members.

LIQUOR STORES- Mr. Schronce shared language from the state law on liquor stores/licensing and asked the committee members to take a look at the language proposed in the draft zoning code. Ms. Hunter clarified that 'liquor' does not include wine and beer and the quotas shared by the state only apply to liquor.

Co-Chair Richardson asked if it makes a difference if an establishment is a drug store or convenience store. Ms. Hunter replied, "no".

Ms. Jackie Poplar gave the "big picture" which is that the amount of liquor licenses allotted to the city was determined when there were 200,000 people. She proposed that there needs to be a way to have the state regulate for a much smaller population. Co-Chair Richardson asked what zoning can do about this issue. Ms. Hunter replied that the zoning code's reach is limited but some options include implementation of a specific approval process, building requirements that discourage loitering, or including language that permits liquor sales within 500ft of a church or school. She continued that the issue is that state controls the law on liquor licensing and local municipalities do not have very much authority.

Ms. Elizabeth Jordan asked if there is a way to restrict in commercial corridors. Ms. Hunter replied, "yes for new uses or developments". Mr. Schronce summarized that zoning can imitate the 500ft regulations, require a site-plan process and emphasizes that new businesses wouldn't be allowed in residential areas.

Ms. Pamela Hawkins asked about administrative review of the draft code. Ms. Hunter explained the approval process.

Co-Chair Richardson asked about the transfer of licenses in a particular location; will the new zoning apply to the transfer? Ms. Hunter replied that she is fairly certain that the new zoning will apply if the use is not grandfathered in because the location is vacant.

Ms. Jordan asked about the difference in allowed uses in a Neighborhood Center vs. City Corridor district. Ms. Hunter said that she will have to find out if some commercial uses could potentially be prohibited in a NC while allowing a restaurant with a liquor license. She further shared that the zoning code does not allow for many nuances when it comes to uses.

Ms. Poplar asked if there is a way the zoning code could control the amount of liquor stores within a ward. Ms. Hunter said that staff will look into the idea of concentration and see what language can be added, perhaps limiting the number of special uses in an area.

Co-Chair Wesley asked about the city of Youngstown, Ohio and how it handled the issue of state regulation. Ms. Hunter explained that their approach was led by residents in collaboration with the police department. They worked together in going after problematic liquor stores until they finally closed. She added that this is an approach that could potentially be imitated in Flint.

GREEN NEIGHBORHOODS- Mr. Schronce described Green Neighborhoods as primarily single family housing at a lower density. He explained that there GN was a big discussion during the ward workshops. He gave the example that one acre is equal to about 8-9 city lots where the typical lot size in Flint is approximately 4,800 sq. ft. Ms. Hunter added that the code will have a minimum lot size requirement and potentially a maximum. Mr. Schronce then explained the draft size requirements and adjacency for expansion.

Ms. Poplar asked if residents will have to pay property taxes for all of the lots they may acquire. She shared that the idea of expansion proposed seems as though it's geared toward people with money. Co-Chair Richardson added that this was a good point and asked if the assessor can / will be involved. Ms. Hunter responded that it could cost a lot more but the assessor will decide. Mr. Schronce added that it will also depend on the specific lots being acquired. Co-Chair Richardson stresses that it needs to be figured out how the zoning code can address the issue of taxing. Mr. Schronce replied that you can adopt lots which is not the same as combining. But, once the code is adopted, the assessor, Land Bank, and City will work together to find a way to lower costs for residents expanding/combining. Ms. Hunter added that the intention of the Green Neighborhood district is to help residents. She continued that ultimately, the issue has less to do with zoning and more to do with the arrival of potential new developers. Currently 15,000 sq. ft. lot is the minimum lot area so the next question is if a person who currently lives in a GN should be allowed to expand without needing to meet the minimum requirements. She gave the example of a resident living on a 5,000 sq. ft. lot who would like to add 5,000 sq. ft. —would this be okay even though it would not meet the 15,000 sq. ft. minimum requirement of the new code?

Ms. Hunter clarified the zoning code sets the floor not the policy.

Councilwoman VanBuren asked about urban gardens.

Ms. Hunter asked for feedback on groups from outside of a neighborhood coming in to do a garden and whether this should be allowed.

Councilwoman VanBuren wanted to know there contiguous parcels that make up one acre actually exist in Flint. Mr. Schronce replied, "yes". Councilwoman VanBuren responded that she would like to know where they are located because that will help determine the response of whether or not "outside" groups/churches should be allowed into a neighborhood.

Ms. Jordan proposed that maybe the expansion of land does not have to be a square. She says that as changes are made to the draft code, it needs to be considered how the regulations will allow the City to transition. Ms. Hunter replied that this was a good point and that staff will need to be clear on defining that.

Mr. Paul Mattern suggested that people should be allowed to acquire lots in their own neighborhood that may be down the block especially because some people have neighbors on all sides and are not able to expand their property to the lot right next to them.

Ms. Hunter summarized the main zoning pieces in Green Neighborhoods: -15,000 sq. ft. minimum area -whether "outsiders" should be allowed to enter a neighborhood and create a garden -whether current residents should be allowed to expand without meeting the minimum requirements.

Co-Chair Richardson suggested that if someone buys or acquires property that they do not live on, they should have to also purchase a bond so that if they were to pass on or get bored, the City would have to maintain it. Ms. Jordan agreed that there needs to be a way to guard against potential loss of interest but there also cannot be too many regulations during this transition phase.

Mr. Schronce shared that the Land Bank has been approaching the City when people come to them and want to purchase land in order to make sure that the buyer's intentions align with the land use and proposed zoning. The City has also entered into a written agreement with the Land Bank and the Center for Community Progress for them to re-write their land disposition policies to align with the Master Plan and new zoning.

Ms. Hunter indicated the livestock table shared with the committee and asked if it can be held for the next meeting.

IMPLEMENTATION TASK GROUP UPDATE

At 7:21pm, Mr. Schronce gave a brief overview of the seven implementation task groups.

HUD CHOICE NEIGHBORHOODS UPDATE

At 7:25pm, Ms. Hunter gave a brief update on the Choice Neighborhoods project. She explained that the goal is to transform a distressed public housing project (Atherton East). She gave an overview of the area, key stakeholders, and the 3 goals of the project: neighborhood, people, and housing. She also shared that Atherton East is identified in the Master Land Use Plan as Open Space because it lies in a floodplain. The City will not qualify for an implementation grant if this transformation plan does not identify a relocation plan for Atherton East residents.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT:

Co-chair Richardson adjourned the meeting at 7:35pm and thanked everyone for their input.

Submitted by: Kristin Stevenson 5.13.15