



FLINT MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE Meeting Notes September 16, 2014



Members Present

Jim Richardson, Co-Chair
Judy Hovey
Mona Munroe-Younis
Sandra Robinson
Linda Boose
Charles Tutt

Bob Wesley, Co-Chair
Barry Williams
Raynetta Speed
Pamela Hawkins
Paul Mattern

Members Not Present

Jackie Poplar, City Council (excused)
Isaiah Oliver
Bryant Nolden, City Council
Elizabeth Jordan, PC Rep (excused)

Pastor LaTrelle Holmes
John Henry (excused)
Clarence Pierce
Richard Boone (excused)

Staff Present

Vincent Slocum
Megan Hunter

Kevin Schronce

CALL TO ORDER:

Co-Chair Richardson called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. The meeting was held at the Flint Public Library, 1026 Kearsley St., Flint, MI.

PUBLIC FORUM:

Co-Chair Richardson stated that this is a working meeting for 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.

Heidi Phaneuf, concerned resident of the Grand Traverse District Neighborhood, expressed concerns to Steering Committee Members about the inclusion of single family residences as a special use within Mixed Residential zoning districts. Ms. Phaneuf stated that the Grand Traverse District Neighborhood (parts of which are identified as Mixed Residential in the draft zoning ordinance), has traditionally been a single family neighborhood, and recent investments have been made by Habitat for Humanity to renovate and improve single family homes in the Grand Traverse District Neighborhood. In order to support this investment and preserve the historic integrity of the neighborhood, Ms. Phaneuf stated that single family homes should be included in Mixed Residential place types as a permitted use.

PLANNING COMMISSION UPDATE:

Co-Chair Bob Wesley gave a brief update on recent Planning Commission Activities, stating that the Planning Commission has been working on many of the same zoning discussions as the Steering Committee.

MASTER PLAN PROJECT UPDATE

Kevin Schronce, gave an update on the activities of planning staff following the Oct. 2013 adoption of the Master Plan, including:

- **Sub-area Plans**
 - Currently being refined by planning staff based on feedback from residents and neighborhood groups within each sub-area. Once this is completed the plans will be presented to the Planning Commission for final review.
- **Zoning Ordinance**
 - Still in the process of ongoing review and revision. Mr. Schronce stressed to committee members and meeting attendants that nothing has been finalized or approved as of yet. He urged all that are interested in learning more about the ordinance to attend Planning Commission meetings on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month.
 - Megan Hunter, also added that the timeline for anticipated approval has been pushed from November of 2014 to January/February of 2015 in order to ensure that the ordinance was thoroughly vetted and allowed ample time for public review.
- **Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)**
 - Work is continuing on the CIP. Mr. Schronce added that, due to the fact that Flint has never developed a CIP, much of the data that would normally be available in other municipalities has not been available in Flint. To ensure the plans accuracy and comprehensiveness, extensive research and interviews have been conducted to determine the full cost and scope of Flint's capital project needs.
- **Street Lighting**
 - The Department of Planning and Development is now responsible for the City's system of street lights (apprx. 12,000). Mr. Schronce informed committee members that a system is currently being set in place to ensure that Consumers Energy is replacing lights as they become aware of them.
 - Committee Member Barry Williams asked who was responsible for ensuring that Consumers Energy was replacing street lights that were out, to which Mr. Schronce indicated that he was responsible for ensuring this and that residents should first contact Consumers and then himself.
- **Parks and Recreation**
 - Effective July 1st, 2014, the Department of Planning and Development is now responsible for management of the City's Parks and Recreation Department.
 - Mr. Schronce gave committee members an update on new parks partnerships and ongoing projects that have been carried out as part of this new managerial transition.
 - Ms. Hunter also stressed to Committee Members that this work had been carried out with significant budgetary and staffing challenges.
- **Blight Workshops**
 - Committee members were presented a summary of the feedback that was received by residents at the *Beyond Blight Ward Workshops* hosted in July, 2014. Feedback is currently being incorporated into the *Beyond Blight: 5-year Blight Elimination Framework*.
- **Implementation Task Groups**
 - Master Plan Implementation Task Groups are now formed and currently meeting to identify implementation strategies within the Master Plan for their group to carry out. The long-term goal for these groups is for them to take the lead on grassroots implementation of the Master Plan, with support from City planning staff.
- **Geographic Information Systems (GIS)/Data Coordination**
 - Planning staff are partnering with the Community Foundation of Greater Flint and

- approximately 40 neighborhood groups to conduct an update of housing condition assessments, in addition to a comprehensive street lighting audit.
- The Department of Planning and Development has secured the services of a trained GIS technician who will manage the City's mapping system and provide mapping services to City departments and organizations. This technician has already begun working with the Police Department to provide them with critical data that has not previously been available to them.
- **Target Market Analysis (TMA)**
 - Thanks to a grant from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), a TMA is currently being developed to assess the market demand for multi-family and mixed residential housing in the Grand Traverse District Neighborhood, University Avenue and Carriage Town areas, the North and South Saginaw Corridor areas, and Downtown
- **Newsletter**
 - A project newsletter is released monthly to keep residents and community members informed about the ongoing efforts of the Master Plan Project. The newsletter reaches more than 1,000 subscribers.
- **Grants**
 - Megan Hunter gave committee members an update on recent grant activities, including:
 - The City recently applied for a choice neighborhoods grant from HUD to develop a plan and architectural designs for the redevelopment of the Flint Housing Commission's Atherton East site. The plan would be used to reconnect the site to the surrounding neighborhood and improve resident access to health, educational, and employment services.
 - The City is preparing to apply for an EPA planning grant to fund additional work on Chevy Commons (Chevy-in-the-hole) as a passive green space.

ZONING DISCUSSION

Megan Hunter pointed out to committee members that there were several mistakes in the zoning memo that had been sent by Houseal Lavigne Associates and that planning staff are working with them to ensure that these mistakes and inconsistencies are being corrected. She also reiterated her agreement that single family housing should be a permitted use in all Mixed Residential Zoning Districts. She also added that MR 1 Districts should also include duplex's.

Ms. Hunter pointed out that there were inconsistencies between the proposed zoning map and the consultant memo. Namely, the map included MR 3 Districts within the Carriage Town Historic Neighborhood, while the memo did not. Concern was expressed among committee members that the inclusion of MR 3 would be disruptive to the overall historic character of the neighborhood, due to the high intensity of use within MR 3 Districts.

Ms. Hunter also indicated that changes would need to be made to the administrative chapter of the ordinance, as current allowances seem arbitrary and too empowering to the Director of Planning and Development.

Planning staff are also working with the consultants to include references between ordinance sections and graphics to illustrate regulatory concepts and definitions to ensure that the ordinance is user friendly and accessible to residents.

Steering Committee members discussed, at length, whether to allow accessory dwellings or "Granny Flats" to be developed in residential zoning districts. Ms. Hunter added that these structures could be included as a special use and be made subject to Planning Commission approval. Paul Mattern

stated that these developments, if allowed, should be aesthetically appropriate for the neighborhood, pointing out that there is a great deal of difference between building an small accessory structure in ones back yard versus renovating a garage that is more visible from the street. Sandra Robinson informed committee members that similar structures had been constructed in the South Parks neighborhood that look nice and are not disruptive to the neighborhoods aesthetic.

Judy Hovey asked if such developments could be restricted to only family members, to which Ms. Hunter responded that it was not likely due to concerns about discrimination. Bob Wesley, Co-Chair, then asked Ms. Hunter how these structures would be reviewed by the Planning Commission. Ms. Hunter responded that, if these structures were included as a special use, then residents would be required to go before the Planning Commission before obtaining approval to build. Jim Richardson, Co-Chair, pointed out that such structures could be unsightly on a small lot that is not built for them. Ms. Hunter agreed but added that Planning Commission review would help alleviate this concern.

Charles Tutt expressed concern that such structures could adversely affect property values to surrounding properties. Judy Hovey agreed, stating that these structures should only be included in Green Neighborhood Zoning Districts where lot sizes are large enough to accommodate them. Several other committee members disagreed, stating that these structures should also be allowed in Traditional Neighborhoods, provided that lot sizes are large enough to accommodate them. Other discussion centered on what would happen to these structures once the family member who lived there moves out and whether these structures would lead to an excessive quantity of rental properties in single-family neighborhoods.

Mona Munroe-Younis expressed social equity concerns, stating that, if such structures adversely affect property values, then they should be restricted in Green Neighborhoods, and not just Traditional Neighborhoods. Pamela Hawkins stated her belief that concerns about the adverse effects of these structures were being overinflated, and Mona Munroe-Younis asked Ms. Hunter if there was evidence from other communities about these adverse effects. Ms. Hunter replied that there are not typically any adverse effects if the structure's development is carried out in a conscientious manner. She added that planning staff would do more research on the matter to determine the various costs and benefits of allowing such structures.

Charles Tutt voiced concern that the consultant memo given to Steering Committee members included language about Southwestern High School and not the City's other High School facilities. Ms. Hunter clarified that this was not meant to imply that more thought or planning was going into Southwestern. She added that this was only included because the Land Use map places Southwestern within a Green Innovation place type, a place type that differs greatly from its current zoning designation. This was not the case with other Flint High Schools.

In closing, Ms. Hunter told Steering Committee members that a potential special October meeting would be held with the Master Plan consultants to engage in detailed discussion on the zoning ordinance. The meeting will likely be for 4 hours and would be open to the public. Kevin Schronce agreed to send out a poll to Steering Committee members and Planning Commissioners to determine which day and time would work best for everyone.

ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Submitted by: Vincent Slocum