



FLINT MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE Meeting Notes October 7, 2014



Members Present

Jim Richardson, Co-Chair
Judy Hovey
Sandra Robinson
Linda Boose
Richard Boone
Bryant Nolden, City Council

Bob Wesley, Co-Chair
Raynetta Speed
Pamela Hawkins
Charles Tutt
Elizabeth Jordan

Members Not Present

Jackie Poplar, City Council (excused)
Isaiah Oliver
Clarence Pierce
Paul Mattern (excused)

Pastor LaTrelle Holmes
John Henry (excused)
Mona Munroe-Younis (excused)
Barry Williams

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.

Joe King from the Civic Park Neighborhood Association expressed concerns about the Civic Park neighborhood. He told committee members that investment in the Civic Park neighborhood should be focused on infrastructure to support future development. Rather than building new homes, Mr. King expressed that demolition should be made a priority given the large number of vacant and structurally deficient homes in that neighborhood. He also expressed a desire to see a neighborhood plan developed for the Civic Park neighborhood.

Maurice Davis, president of the Civic Park Neighborhood Association concurred with Mr. King, adding that there should be some money invested in the rehabilitation of homes in the Civic Park neighborhood, as it would help to stabilize the neighborhood. He also added that there should be a plan for the reutilization of Civic Park School, and that all future plans for Civic Park should be inclusive of the community's needs and wishes, especially those of seniors. Future planning should also be aimed at maintaining the neighborhoods historic and social integrity.

William Alexander, Another resident of the Civic Park Neighborhood suggested that Civic Park School could be redeveloped as a trade school focused on green energy.
Megan Hunter informed those in attendance that the City was funding home rehabilitation using

CDBG dollars, and that all those interested should contact Jonathan Moore in the office of Planning & Development. Pamela Hawkins asked if this service was available to all homeowners, to which Ms. Hunter responded that, per federal requirements, funds were only available for use in Low and Moderate income census tracts. Judy Hovey asked if planning staff would be interested in housing data gathered on Fairfield Village neighborhood, to which Ms. Hunter responded that they would. Linda Boose asked if funding for rehab could be used to offset the rise in property taxes such improvements could result in. Ms. Hunter replied that, per federal requirements, they could not.

PLANNING COMMISSION UPDATE:

Co-Chair Bob Wesley gave a brief update on recent Planning Commission Activities, stating that aside from the Planning Commission's ongoing work with the draft Zoning Code, he had no specific updates to offer for Steering Committee members

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP) OVERVIEW

Megan Hunter gave an overview of the Capital Improvement plan for Steering Committee members. She explained that the CIP lays out all major capital improvements to be funded over the next 5 years. She explained that it was an important budgetary tool that will be used to aid in the implementation of the Master Plan and ensure that the City's limited resources are used in the most efficient way possible. Part of the challenge of funding capital improvements in Flint, she explained, is the fact that the City's population has shrunk so dramatically over the past 50 years, whereas the cost of maintaining critical facility and infrastructural projects has risen do to the increased cost of deferred maintenance.

To ensure that the CIP is aligned with the Master Plan, capital improvement projects and goals are organized in the same way as the Master Plan. There are several chapters of the Master Plan, she added, which are not traditionally included in a City's CIP, such as Housing and Neighborhoods. Planning staff chose to include this in Flint's CIP given the critical role they will play in implementing the Master Plan. For the Environmental Features, Parks, and Open Space chapter of the CIP, Ms. Hunter added that planning staff have a unique opportunity, given that she is now acting as the Director of Parks and Recreation, to reshape the image of City parks which have historically been a model for other communities.

For the Infrastructure and Community Facilities chapter of the CIP, a lot of emphasis was placed on the importance of integrating blue/green infrastructure into future development as well as focusing on issues of sustainability in future infrastructure improvements. For the Economic Development and Education chapter of the CIP, planning staff focused on capital improvements geared towards increasing access to educational and employment opportunity. For the Public Safety, Health, and Welfare chapter of the CIP, planning staff focused on improving connections to public facilities and health institutions. She then explained that the Transportation and Mobility chapter of the CIP was aimed at improving efficiency of the City's street grid and improving access to alternative forms of transit.

Co-Chair Richardson asked if there was a list of capital improvements that were identified in the plan and if Ms. Hunter could provide an example. Ms. Hunter replied that the development of the Genesee Valley Trail was included as a specific capital improvement in the Transportation and Mobility chapter of the CIP. She added that a complete list of all CIP projects would be made available to Steering Committee members. Raynetta Speed asked if the City's senior centers were included in the CIP, to which Ms. Hunter replied that they may not currently be included. She explained that, when the CIP was originally being developed, the City was in the process of selling both Hasselbring and Brennan Senior Centers, thus they were not included in the list of public improvements. She added however that this has changed, and the City is now leasing those

facilities instead. Therefore they will be included in the final CIP.

Charles Tutt expressed concern that committee members were only given a portion of the CIP to review rather than the entire plan. Ms. Hunter explained that, given the highly technical nature of many of the CIP's recommendations, planning staff did not believe that Steering Committee members would want to be burdened with having to review the entire plan. She then assured committee members that they would be provided a complete copy of the draft CIP to review.

Co-Chair Richardson asked when Ms. Hunter expected the CIP to be adopted. Ms. Hunter replied that the earliest she anticipated the plan to be adopted by was November. Charles Tutt expressed concern that a November adoption deadline would not give Steering Committee members and the community enough time to properly review and provide feedback on the plan. Ms. Hunter responded that the plan would be widely circulated among the community and that extensive outreach efforts would be conducted for both the CIP and the zoning code to ensure that the community had ample time to review and provide feedback. She also reiterated that November was the earliest that the CIP would be adopted, and if more time were needed to ensure that the community had time to review, then that deadline would be pushed back. Elizabeth Jordan voiced her appreciation that the plan's format and use of language made it very accessible to lay readers who may not have the level of technical expertise that would normally be required to understand a CIP.

Mayor Walling encouraged Steering Committee members who were interested in reviewing the CIP in greater detail to form a CIP sub-committee that could focus its efforts on reviewing and providing feedback on the draft CIP

ZONING DISCUSSION

Kevin Schronce gave Steering Committee members an update on all of the planning staff and Steering Committee member feedback and recommendations that had been given to the consultants regarding the draft zoning code. He also indicated that planning staff would like to have maps with parcel level data included in the code. He added that the zoning code was probably taking longer to develop than committee members anticipated, due to the fact that the code had not seen any substantial rewrites or revisions since the 1970's. Given the change in Flint's population, economy, and land use patterns since that time, the zoning code rewrite required a substantial amount of work. He reiterated to Steering Committee members that it was better in the long-run to take more time developing the zoning code in order to ensure that it is done well, rather than pushing it through the process more quickly.

Judy Hovey asked where the definitions for various special uses in the draft zoning code came from. Mr. Schronce indicated that these definitions were taken from the previous zoning code with changes made on an as needed basis. Ms. Hovey informed committee members that language in the zoning code, as it pertained to adult day care facilities, should be in alignment with state regulations and should also be respectful of the rights of vulnerable populations. Mr. Schronce pointed out that there was language in the larger code that related to state standards. Ms. Hovey indicated that state law supersedes city code and that zoning cannot be used to restrict group homes in a manner that is inconsistent with state law. Charles Tutt asked if the City had the power to regulate these uses to which Ms. Hunter replied that the City could limit these uses, so long as such limitations do not conflict with state law. She added that the code did include language that was intended to limit clustering of these uses. Ms. Hovey added that the code should also take into account recent changes in current community mental health standards. Elizabeth Jordan stressed to committee members that the zoning code should have a clear eye for social justice, which was a cornerstone of the Master Plan.

Ms. Hunter expressed her opinion that the code should be more restrictive of alcohol sales. She

added that this was a major priority for community members that emerged from the master planning process. She also stressed to committee members that the sale of liquor was heavily managed by the state, and as such, was difficult for cities to regulate. Co-Chair Bob Wesley added that in some cases, states can even supersede local code and allow liquor to be sold wherever they like. Ms. Hunter indicated to Steering Committee members she would be amenable towards making the sale of alcohol a special use in all cases. Co-Chair Richardson expressed concern about making alcohol sale a special use across the board, as it may discourage the development of desirable uses such as restaurants. Mr. Schronce added that the primary concern that many community members voiced throughout the master planning process was the widespread proliferation of bars and liquor stores. He then asked whether Steering Committee members would be supportive of making bars and liquor stores a special use. Ms. Jordan added that the majority of concerns that had been voiced to her were regarding liquor stores and that she had not heard many complaints related to restaurants. Ms. Hunter asked committee members if liquor stores and bars should be a special use, but not restaurants. Steering Committee members agreed that this would be the best way to address the sale of alcohol.

Co-Chair Richardson asked what the benefits are of designating something as a special use. Ms. Hunter answered that it provides a hindrance to undesirable or problematic uses and requires more commitment from the business owner. She added that it also empowers the Planning Commission to place special limits on use, such as hours of operation, lighting, and building design. Ms. Hunter also asked committee members if there should be greater regulation of banquet halls and auditoriums. She reiterated that designating these as special would ensure that the City's building code is being followed. Pamela Hawkins asked if the zoning code can be used to address issues such as accessibility, to which Ms. Hunter responded yes.

Finally, Ms. Hunter asked committee members if bed & breakfast businesses be left as a special use. Sandra Robinson asked if these uses tend to create problems. Ms. Hunter responded that these uses are very common and they typically do not create problems. After brief discussion Steering Committee members agreed that bed & breakfast should remain a special use.

Co-Chair Richardson asked when the next Steering Committee meeting would be, given that the regularly scheduled Steering Committee for the month of November would conflict with the upcoming election. Ms. Hunter responded that there would be a special joint session of the Steering Committee and Planning Commission held on Tuesday, October 28th from 2:30 pm-6:30 pm. She explained that consultants from Houseal Lavigne Associates would be in attendance, and that this meeting would provide Planning Commissioners and Steering Committee members an opportunity to engage the consultants in a detailed discussion of the zoning code. She also indicated that there may potentially be a follow up meeting of the Steering Committee at a later date in November.

ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Submitted by: Vincent Slocum