



## FLINT MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE Meeting Notes December 16, 2014



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### Members Present:

Jim Richardson, Co-Chair  
Paul Mattern  
Sandra Robinson  
Linda Boose  
Mona Munroe-Younis  
John Henry

Bob Wesley, Co-Chair  
Raynetta Speed  
Barry Williams  
Charles Tutt  
Elizabeth Jordan  
Jackie Poplar, City Council

### Members Not Present:

Bryant Nolden, City Council (excused)  
Isaiah Oliver  
Clarence Pierce  
Pamela Hawkins

Pastor LaTrelle Holmes  
Richard Boone  
Judy Hovey

### 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 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.

Norma Sain of Court Street Village Non-Profit announced that Court Street Village and the Central Park Neighborhood Association were taking part in an LED streetlight conversion pilot project within the Central Park neighborhood. She also invited Steering Committee members to attend an unveiling and celebration event at Court Street Village Non-Profit on Thursday, December 18<sup>th</sup> from 4-6 pm. She then offered thanks to both Consumer's Energy and the City for partnering with the Central Park neighborhood to make this project possible.

### PLANNING COMMISSION UPDATE:

Co-Chair Bob Wesley gave a brief update on recent Planning Commission Activities. He informed Steering Committee members that at their last meeting the Planning Commission was given a presentation on the Draft CIP, as well as an overview of public comments received. They then considered matters related to the placement and development of medical marijuana dispensaries.

### CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP) OVERVIEW:

Kevin Schronce gave Steering Committee members an overview of the draft CIP. He informed committee members that three workshops had been hosted – with close to 100 people in attendance – to present the draft CIP to the public. Presentations on the draft CIP were also given to the

Planning Commission, City Council, and the Council's Planning and Development Sub-committee.

He reiterated to committee members that, to City staff's knowledge, this was the first time that a Combined Capital Improvement Plan had been developed for the City. He explained that the plan provides recommendations for permanent physical improvements and does not include day-to-day operational costs and general maintenance. He also explained that the CIP only provides recommendations for City owned capital and does not include recommendations for other public institutions such as Flint Community School sites or public universities and colleges. He explained that this was due to the fact that the City has no jurisdictional authority to undertake major improvements to these institutions. CIP recommendations were group into three priority areas, urgent, important, and desirable. Based on feedback received through the CIP outreach process, the revised CIP will include notation for all projects that are already funded through grants and other sources. Mr. Schronce added that, while funding for City capital funding is limited, the City does invest approximately \$16 million annually in major capital improvements. Judy Hovey asked if the CIP included recommendations for City Hall, to which Mr. Schronce replied that, at present, there is more than \$1.2 million worth capital recommendations for City Hall.

Mr. Schronce then gave an overview of each chapter of the CIP. He explained that in most municipalities, it would be uncommon to include chapters such as Housing & Neighborhoods or Public Safety, Health & Welfare in the City's CIP. However, given the importance that was placed on these areas by the public during the Master Planning process, staff felt that it was important to include them in the CIP. Mr. Schronce explained that the Housing & Neighborhoods chapter included capital recommendations aimed at neighborhood stabilization and implementing the City's newly developed *Beyond Blight: 5-year Strategic Blight Elimination Framework*. The Transportation & Mobility chapter of the CIP, he explained, focused on street maintenance, sidewalk improvement, and expansion of the City's trail network, pointing out that not all costs identified in the CIP would be paid for by the City, but rather, they could be funded through grant dollars from agencies such as the Federal and State Departments of Transportation.

For the Natural Resources, Open Space & Parks chapter of the CIP, Mr. Schronce cited the City's Max Brandon Eco-Park Project as a good example of the type of projects identified in the CIP. He explained to Steering Committee members that in the project's phase-one implementation, staff discovered that a drainage culvert designed to channel storm water runoff from the parks exterior into the wetlands was broken. This was previously unknown to City staff and Max Brandon Volunteers. Thanks to this project, the culvert will be repaired, reducing flooding incidences in the park.

Economic Development & Education, he explained, was also a chapter which would not typically be included in a municipality's CIP. He also explained that, based on comments received during the CIP outreach process, this chapter would be revised to include recommendations for city-wide commercial property demolition and wayfinding signage in the Innovation District. The Public Safety, Health & Welfare chapter of the CIP, he explained, included recommendations for police and fire facility improvements, as well as improvements to community centers such as Berston Field House and Haskell Youth Center.

Mr. Schronce then outlined the Infrastructure & Community Facilities chapter of the CIP and explained to Steering Committee members that this was by far the largest chapter of the CIP. He explained that the principle recommendations of this chapter were the replacement and/or repair of water and sewer lines, dams, and the repair of municipal service facilities, adding that water main breaks within City limits far exceed the number of breaks in the out-county area. He cited the replacement of Hamilton Dam as an example of a priority project in the CIP, explaining that the City

currently spends \$1 million dollars annually just to keep the dam from breaking.

Mr. Schronce then outlined various comments that had been received during the CIP outreach process. He stated that several residents commented on the confusing designation of “Non-City Funds.” He explained that many people found this term too ambiguous, stating that it should be changed to say “to be determined.” Another point that arose from the outreach process was the importance of including language that explains why the City cannot take out bonds to fund capital projects. Co-Chair Richardson asked if the Steering Committee could review this bond language, to which Mr. Schronce replied yes. Co-Chair Richardson then stated that it was important to explore alternative financing options for water line improvements rather than simply increasing water rates. Barry Williams agreed, voicing concern that the development of the Karegnondi Pipe Line will only raise water rates for City residents. Mr. Schronce replied that staff is recommending annual review of rates and borrowing, adding that this language would be in the revised CIP. Charles Tutt added that the City’s poor credit rating makes it difficult for the City to take on debt. As a result, he added, water rates have become a source of revenue.

Mr. Schronce then explained that the draft CIP did not include recommendations for Oak Business Center, which is a City-owned facility, and that recommendations for this facility would be included in the revised CIP. He also stated that, while the City does not own and cannot undertake capital projects at Flint Community School sites, staff believed that there should nonetheless be language on the potential for partnerships with Flint Community Schools to improve and/or reutilize these sites.

Mr. Schronce then explained that the revised CIP would be presented to the Planning Commission and City Council to be voted on for formal adoption in January. Jackie Poplar asked when the public comment period would end, to which Mr. Schronce replied that it would end on January 13<sup>th</sup>, the day that it is presented to the Planning Commission for approval. Ms. Poplar then asked if the January Council meeting would include a public hearing. Mr. Schronce responded that it wouldn’t, adding that public comment on a municipality’s CIP was not required by State law. However, staff undertook the outreach process and public comment period because public comment was important. Ms. Poplar then asked why turnout was so low for the CIP Community Input Sessions. Mr. Schronce explained that this was likely due to the highly technical nature of the CIP, and he anticipated turnout would be much higher for the upcoming zoning workshops. Sandra Robinson asked if comments could still be made online until the January 13<sup>th</sup> deadline, to which Mr. Schronce replied that it would.

#### **ZONING OUTREACH DISCUSSION:**

Co-Chair Richardson then asked Steering Committee members to engage in discussion as to how best to engage the public in the rollout of the draft Zoning Code given its long and technical nature. Mr. Schronce explained that outreach and public engagement in the draft Zoning Code should be based on past successes and experience, adding that the City was legally obligated to undertake this process and the importance of stressing the draft Zoning Code’s relation to the Master Plan. Megan Hunter added that educating the public on the purpose of the draft Zoning Code and its role in Master Plan implementation would be an important component of the draft Zoning Code’s public outreach process.

Steering Committee members then stressed the importance of reaching out to residents in each of the City’s nine wards and outlining how the draft Zoning Code would affect their neighborhoods and community. Mr. Schronce agreed, stating that it was important to increase the accessibility of public comment opportunities. Ms. Hunter added that it was important to manage expectations among community members related to the draft Zoning, explaining that the City’s Land Use plan has already been adopted and was not open for change.

Ms. Hovey stated that more advanced notice should be given for public outreach events, explaining that many community members had become disengaged with the process following adoption of the Master Plan. Ms. Hunter responded that staff constraints were an important factor to consider, adding that Steering Committee members could provide support for this work. She added that training could be provided to Steering Committee members to act as media and community representatives. Ms. Hovey asked how Steering Committee members could organize and meet with groups to talk about the draft Zoning Code, to which Mr. Schronce explained that standing block club\neighborhood association meetings were a good opportunity. He added that staff members attend 2-4 of these meetings monthly.

Committee members then discussed how best to engage with City Council on the draft Zoning Code rollout, to which Ms. Jordan suggested that organizing a bus tour with Council Members to lay out the details of the draft Zoning Code would be a good idea. Paul Mattern asked if churches\pastors could help reach out to the community. Ms. Hunter responded that Steering Committee members could play an important role in that by reaching out to pastors and congregations at their churches to get the word out. Ms. Robinson suggested presenting the draft Zoning Code at schools and making photos and videos available. Co-Chair Richardson asked if there was a schedule of events available, to which Ms. Hunter replied that staff wanted to consult with the Steering Committee before scheduling any events.

Ms. Hunter then explained that maps and place type\use tables could be included in distributed content. She added that it was important to gain feedback from the community on controversial items such as whether to allow people to keep chickens. Co-Chair Richardson stated that visual tools would help in engaging the public. There was then considerable discussion among Steering Committee members about the importance of focusing on educating the public about the draft Zoning Code, with several Committee members recommending the use of mass media (TV, radio, news, etc...) in getting information out to the public.

Ms. Jordan asked Steering Committee members to identify which members would be willing to take on specific tasks. Mona Munroe-Younis offered to review all meeting materials in advance of any public events. Co-Chair Richardson asked what would happen if too many people came out to a meeting, to which Mr. Schronce replied that staff typically prepare for at least 100 participants and that anticipated attendance was based on feedback garnered through phone calls. Ms. Hovey offered to help staff make phone calls to get the word out.

Ms. Hunter explained that, in addition to hosting workshops in each City ward, staff would also like to host several community open houses to education the public on the role of municipal zoning codes. She stated that similar workshops had been held during the rollout of the City's Land Use Plan. Co-Chair Richardson stated his belief that the goals of these workshops should be different than the Land Use Workshops and that any zoning workshops should be more focused on presenting information and educating the public. Ms. Hunter replied that input from the public would still be a very important component of the outreach process. She also stressed that it would be difficult to push the draft Zoning Code outreach process back given the HUD grant requirements and the fact that the public is very eager to see the process move forward. Mayor Walling then asked Steering Committee members if they wanted to see the zoning outreach process extended. Ms. Hovey asked if it would be detrimental for the City to do so. Ms. Hunter stated that it would not necessarily be detrimental, but she reiterated that the public is very eager to see this process move forward. Ms. Jordan and Mr. Schronce added that businesses are waiting to see what the zoning code will look like.

Mr. Mattern asked to what extent public input could alter the draft Zoning Code, to which Ms. Hunter

added that whether or not to allow chickens is a good example of the type of change that could be made to the draft code based on public input. Ms. Jordan added that public input would be important in shaping any items not specifically regulated in the Master Plan. Richardson stated that the draft Zoning Code is very complex and the more time that the City had to present it to the public the better the process would be. After further discussion, the Steering Committee decided to stick to the schedule, rolling out the draft Zoning Code from January-March with possible adoption in April. They added, however, that it was important to allow for the possibility of extending this period if more time was needed.

**STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP UPDATE:**

Mr. Schronce informed Steering Committee members that staff would be contacting them in the coming weeks to determine their interest in serving an additional year as Steering Committee members. He added that staff would also begin seeking qualified applicants to fill vacant Steering Committee seats.

**MASTER PLAN ANNUAL UPDATE & CELEBRATION:**

Mr. Schronce informed Steering Committee members that there would be a Master Plan Annual Update & Celebration event hosted at the Flint Institute of Arts on January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at 5:00 pm. He explained that this event would provide staff with an opportunity to outline the progress that has been made on implementing the Master Plan. He also stated that a representative from the Michigan Association of Planning would be there to present the City with a Planning Excellence Award.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Submitted by: Vincent Slocum