

CITY OF NORTHVILLE
Planning Commission
January 21, 2014
Northville City Hall – City Council Chambers

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Wendt called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL:

Commissioners:	Present:	Chair Wendt Chris Gazlay Steve Kirk Dave Mielock Marc Russell Anne Smith Carol Maise Sarah Traxler
	Absent:	Jeff Snyder (excused)
	Also Present:	City Manager Sullivan Don Wortman – Planning Consultant

3. MINUTES:

A repeated word (encourage) was removed from page four of the minutes.

Motion by Russell, supported by Smith, to approve the minutes of November 5, 2013 as amended.

Voice Vote: Ayes: All. Nays: None. Motion Unanimously Carried.

4. AUDIENCE COMMENTS: None

5. REPORTS:

- A. CITY ADMINISTRATION:** None
- B. CITY COUNCIL:** None
- C. PLANNING COMMISSION:** None

Another flashing sign was noted by the Speedy Muffler on 7 Mile Road. Discussion took place regarding whether truck storage was allowed at the McDonald Ford location; and the zoning of the location. Chair Wendt requested that Jim Allen submits a special use permit. Discussion took place regarding the new sign on Center Street (it went from a free standing wood sign to an internally illuminated sign.) Administration to check for permit; and Planning Consultant to check regarding interpretation of message units.

D. OTHER COMMUNITY/GOVERNMENTAL LIAISONS: None

6. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Motion by Gazlay, support by Maisie, that the current Chair and Vice Chair maintain their positions for a period of one year.

Voice Vote: Ayes: All. Nays: None. Motion Carried Unanimously.

7. DISCUSSION

JOINT COMMITTEE MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Planning Consultant Wortman showed a power point presentation of the recommendations. He summarized the report findings:

- Purpose of the report
- Five study areas: West Main St./School Property, Post Office Area,; Cady Street, Cady Town and Racetrack Area
- Background information (current Master Plan, 2008 addendum, Middle Rouge River Floodplain, 2006 Market Analysis, guiding principles and applying the background information
- Planning Process: plan for planning meeting, design charrette meeting, common themes and differences, design resolution meeting
- Master Plan recommendations (see report for details)

Recommendations and Conclusions:

- School Properties
 - Renovate and use as office space
 - If vacated, multi-family or senior residential use
 - Old Village School: adaptive re-use sensitive to historic district
- City Hall Property
 - If vacated, prime location for commercial/office mix
 - If retail, needs to be strongly supported by market & not dilute downtown
 - Any use should be self-parked
- Post Office Area
 - If vacated, redevelop into multi-family use
- Current Farmers' Market
 - No consensus on use. Option 1: Low-density residential character.
 - Option 2: Gateway elements
 - Consensus: Gas station/convenience store NOT desirable
 - Form: Similar to GC on N. Center; landscaped front, parking in rear
- E. side of South Center St.
 - Transitional, including a mix of commercial, residential, office uses
 - Brownstones or townhouses
 - Density & height decreases north to south
- Cady Street

- Transitional area
- Key = allow flexibility of uses. Live/work, hospitality, mixed uses (retail ground floor, offices above, residential top)
- Buildings create level view with N. side of Cady St. (4 – 5 stories)
- Street character: pedestrian-scaled atmosphere; strong pedestrian connection with Main
- Racetrack Area
 - Pedestrian-friendly, walkable residential area
 - Grid system of blocks with mixed lot sizes
 - Density & height decreases north to south; Beal Street extended & dividing line
 - Amenities include central square, sidewalks, connection to downtown and Beal Town, and park/open space with river daylighted
- Creative Mixed-Use District (Cady Town)
 - Repurpose existing industrial buildings
 - “Creative” uses, i.e. manufacturing incubator, artist’s studios and galleries, night-time entertainment venues, live/work residential units
 - Some retail that supports the “creative” theme
 - Renovations oriented toward the river.
 - Possible future location for farmers’ market
- Parking
 - Additional public surface parking needed?
 - Public vs. private parking (maintenance & potential for sharing)
 - Site design guidelines to encourage walkability
- Pedestrian Amenities
 - Pedestrian connections with downtown and other residential areas
 - Pedestrian facilities should:
 - + Function well for people of all abilities
 - + Be aesthetically pleasing with street trees, landscaping, pedestrian-scaled lighting, varied pavements & public art.
 - Add gateway elements at intersections (S. Center St./Seven Mile and River Street/Seven Mile)

Planning Consultant Wortman said this was one part of the city’s Master Planning efforts; and modifications are possible. He suggested combining this report into the city-wide Master Plan.

Mr. Presley mentioned a potential project on Cady Street that requires direction; it would be prudent if the Planning Commission began with a discussion regarding Cady Street, as it is a hot topic; there are limits to what the DDA can do; it is not in Cady Town or the creative district; the properties are contiguous with Cady Street; and there is not a lot of talk about expansion. .

Discussion took place regarding the following:

- The possible tear-down of the Flask Building and potential new structure
- It could bring in a residential component on that parcel--environmental study being done
- DDA and parking (TIF funds to building parking can only be captured in the DDA)
- A legislative work group was formed in the House of Representatives to look at legislation relative to tax advantages
- Parking on the north and south sides of Cady Street and public expectations

- Desires previously expressed regarding not wanting development on Cady Street to put economic pressure on the downtown
- Ideas regarding zoning (residential, mixed use, commercial, etc.)
- Trend in transitional mixed use
- The need for increased walkability

Mr. Presley said the committee would like the Planning Commission to review Cady Street and more zoning flexibility built into the Zoning Ordinance; with a pedestrian scale to it, which creates the need for on-street parking.

Discussion took place regarding the following:

- Setback requirements, right-of-ways on both sides
- Non-motorized plan, signage and symbols
- Fears of inadequate parking and not protecting existing businesses, especially along Main and Center Streets (should obsolete structures be protected?)
- The idea of creating a better market on Main Street by allowing first floor commercial use
- What should be the allowable height be on Cady Street?
- Proportion and that allowing an undulation could create interest
- If someone was interested, why not begin by proposing some Zoning Ordinance amendments; instead of a PUD, they apply for a rezoning for height or amend certain elements of the Zoning Ordinance text and it could create an overlay area

Mr. Wortman said the report provides long-range guidance, and expresses that the City is not interested in large-format retail, nor is it appropriate for gas stations, new car washes or convenience stores. He said it is desired to have a pedestrian-scale, mixed use commercial, residential, office that will complement the downtown.

Discussion ensued regarding limitations and how to differentiate uses; the need to have another round of refinements on the city-wide Master Plan; and the idea of old-fashioned corner markets and their decreasing levels of viability in the modern age.

Discussion took place regarding the process regarding the subject matter, i.e. some of the 2008 work was still relevant, update, methodology and public input component, land use elements, assembling a program, and adjust it into the city-wide Master Plan. The Commission agreed to have a Study Session and submit priority-ideas for the Master Plan update.

Discussion continued regarding the DDA strategy meeting; the Planning Commission needing to review the non- motorized study report; the idea regarding the river, a river walk to Hines Park, the fish hatchery; Mr. Wortman to do a report to the Planning Commission; and a shift in perception politically and societally regarding municipal planners, that capturing taxes in good faith may no longer be sustainable and the need to be prepared for that, as well as the idea of must we or should we protect obsolete spaces.

Mr. Presley said the DDA preferred the current four quadrants to be improved, not necessarily enlarged, unless it was a natural outgrowth. He said he felt Cady Street should be residential in character and in use; and there is a large market-driven desire for condos and brownstones.

City Manager Sullivan said a vibrant downtown reflects into the value of residential areas.

ACCESSORY STRUCTURES/PERGOLAS-LANDSCAPE ORNAMENTS

Mr. Wortman presented the requested information regarding accessory structures in the required front yard. He referred to his memo dated January 17, 2014 regarding Board of Zoning Appeals comments relative to their January, 2014 where they discussed Two Front-Yard Setbacks on Corner Lots and the Difference in Interpretation of Expansion of a Non-Conforming Structure.

Mr. Wortman notes other communities and exceptions they make for small garden ornaments; to list the items such as trellis, pergola, etc., and place a size cap on it.

Discussion took place regarding the Board of Zoning Appeals waiting for Planning Commission action. Mr. Wortman said the item they reviewed involved a 300-400 square foot item; and the Planning Commission was addressing something on a much smaller scale.

The Planning Commission agreed they were not comfortable in proceeding until the BZA ruled on the current Zoning Ordinance, and then the Planning Commission can address the matter.

City Manager Sullivan said he would communicate to the BZA that the Planning Commission was not going to amend the Ordinance prior to their decision on their subject application.

Mr. Wortman pointed out the distributed communication from the BZA relative to several members' concerns regarding the two front yard setbacks on corner lots; and the idea of having one front and then a side yard instead; also the difference in interpretation on an expansion of a non-conforming structure. He said the Board's Chair expressed concern that if an Applicant received a variance for say, five feet, that Applicant should be entitled to expand it again in later years. He said he discussed it with the City Manager and it was preferred to make no changes.

In light of her recent resignation, Commissioner Traxler thanked the Planning Commission, noting that she was relocating due to a recent home purchase. The Planning Commission thanked her for her service.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Gazlay, supported by Russell, to adjourn the meeting at 9:19 p.m.

Voice Vote: Yeas: All. Nays: None. Motion Unanimously Carried.

Respectfully submitted, Cindy Gray, Recording Secretary

Approved as submitted: 5/20/14