

Planning Commission  
Regular Meeting  
Wednesday March 3, 2010  
7:00 p.m.

Members Present: A. Parent, T. Schweitzer, J. Hickey, Chairman; C. Gornowich, T. Byle, D. Brown, and T. Korfhage, M. Huizenga. Absent: C. Rypma. Also Present: F. Wash, Planning Director, and P. Dlouhy, CDD-Planning Asst.

Chairman Hickey opened the meeting and M. Huizenga gave the invocation.

Approval of Minutes – February 3, 2010

Motion by D. Brown, supported by T. Korfhage, to approve the minutes of February 3, 2010 as printed. Motion carried.

General Public Comment

There were no comments at this time.

Standale Downtown District Rezoning Discussion

Planner Wash stated that the City Commission and the DDA had been invited to discuss the Standale Downtown District (SDD) zoning ordinance tonight. Pat Goodale is here as a DDA Member and Al Parent is representing the City Commission. Wash related that this ordinance was adopted in July of 2009. Wash related that the SDD directly implements the “Downtown Standale Master Plan” that was approved in 2007.

In 2009 there was a general agreement among city officials to initiate a city-sponsored rezoning of parcels along M-45 between Wilson and Kinney to the new SDD zoning classification. Wash related that he had worked extensively with the DDA on the ordinance requirements.

Wash related that on March 17, 2009, the city hosted an open house for property owners in the “Downtown Standale” area. The open house explained the draft (at that time) SDD and how it might impact certain properties. Most of the public comments at the open house had to do with special assessment questions and snow plowing.

Wash reviewed a Power Point presentation including options for the planning commission to consider as follows:

1. Should the city wait for businesses to request a rezoning?
2. Should a city-sponsored rezoning be initiated for properties in the “Downtown Standale” district?

3. Should the process start with rezoning of City-owned properties?

Wash stated that the slow economy is holding up for the 4-corners project, which includes the vacant lot and area behind the former Fire Station #2.

In response to a question regarding city-owned properties, Wash related that the city still owns the old fire station and is leasing space to a car detailing business.

Wash related that the civic parts of a downtown create interest with public and institutional uses, (i.e., the new fire station, senior meals, meetings, etc. in the mixed use building) create private sector investment.

Planner Wash stated that, as part of the new Walgreen's development, the DDA funded the new landscaped circle area, with the flagpole, brick monument sign, etc. Wash related that the current zoning for Standale does not allow a downtown design. The large front yard setback requirements do not allow "downtown" development. The city had to get a variance for the new fire station.

Pat Goodale asked if buildings in "Downtown Standale" are set back 100 feet? Wash stated that we have parts of a downtown set up now. The requirements are for "build to" lines rather than setbacks in the new SDD Ordinance.

Wash then reviewed the District Regulating Plan map, which shows the businesses located along Lake Michigan Dr. He related that the adjacent residential in-fill will take perhaps 10-15 years. The question is, what about the business district now?

There was discussion about existing setbacks in the DDA District. Wash related that the ordinance will fix and/or reduce some non-conformities in the district.

Wash again related that the decision options are as follows: A city sponsored mass rezoning to the SDD; Let individual property owners request a rezoning; or rezone the publicly- owned properties.

Chairman Hickey asked if the DDA will expand to the county line? Wash stated the district currently starts at the county line and extends to Manzana. The area master planned for downtown zoning is from Wilson to Kinney.

Member Huizenga stated that a city-sponsored zoning would be a focused approach to eventually create the "downtown feel". He felt that now is the time to do it.

Member Byle stated that people could be upset for fear of the future. He suggested that based on the we have one more meeting with the business owners prior to rezoning. Based on the outcome of the meeting, he would then agree with rezoning as a city-sponsored project.

Pat Goodale agreed that it would be good to do a city-sponsored rezoning.

Wash stated that business owners can use more of their properties with the new S.D.D. zoning district. The current setbacks are 100' and the parking requirements are greater than with the new ordinance.

Member Korfhage agreed that the public needs to be well informed. He agrees with the city-sponsored rezoning.

Member Byle reiterated the need for one more informational meeting before the city would initiate a rezoning.

Wash related that the S.D.D. Ordinance establishes approved uses in the district, as well as non-permitted uses in the district. Special land uses are noted. Wash related that the planning commission has the ability to clarify details on a site- by- site basis.

It was the consensus of the commission to be in favor of the city-sponsored rezoning.

Member Schweitzer asked what is envisioned for the "4-corners" city- owned property? Planner Wash stated that the building would be 4 stories on the corner and ending with 2 stories. An R.F.P. was conducted and approved in 2007.

Pat Goodale asked what if an "Auto Zone" wants to come in the middle of the district? Wash stated that there is a provision for a one-story building in the S.D.D. Ordinance. Architectural standards, including material types, signage, etc. with a new urban model would apply.

Member Schweitzer asked how solid the "required" service driveway is? Wash stated that service drives are required, except at the "4 corners" intersection.

Member Gornowich stated that she is not opposed to another informational session. However, as part of the rezoning process, there is a public hearing process. She asked if Planner Wash would foresee any amendments to the S.D.D? Planner Wash stated not at this time. Every ordinance should be checked over time for applicability.

Member Parent asked what the percentage of business owners were at the last informational meeting? Planner Wash stated that the upstairs room at Fire Station #2 was full.

Member Schweitzer asked if there was a timeframe to develop the city-owned property? Planner Wash stated that we have an approved RFP with a developer. We are just waiting for the economy to improve.

Motion by T. Byle, supported by C. Gornowich, to be in favor of holding another public meeting within the DDA district, prior to any rezoning action for the S.D.D. Ordinance. Motion carried 8-0.

### Billboards and the Master Plan

Planner Wash distributed a resolution from the Michigan State Transportation Commission that recommends the Michigan Legislature enact legislation that would prevent any new digital billboards from being installed until the Federal Highway Administration releases its study and findings. Wash stated that we are still waiting for the FHWA report.

Member Schweitzer handed out State House Bill No. 5580, which would put a moratorium in place until January 1, 2012, restricting any new digital billboards, consistent with the State Transportation Commission's resolution.

Wash reviewed a power point, including review of billboard spacing requirements as follows:

- 1,000' from "R" District
- 1,500' from "R" uses
- 2,000' from any other billboard
- 20' minimum setback from the freeway

Planner Wash then reviewed a REGIS aerial map identifying several lots on the east side of US-131 between Ann Street and I-96 along the Grand River. It was determined that these lots were owned by MDOT and are zoned single family residential. They have no future land use designation on the Walker Master Plan Map. Planner Wash recommended that the city amend the Master Plan Map and designate those properties as "Park/Open Space".

Member Schweitzer stated this will preserve scenic value to the area while limiting the potential for more billboards in the city.

Motion by C. Gornowich, supported by T. Byle, to begin the process of amending the Future Land Use Map of the Walker Master Plan to designate the subject properties along the Grand River as "Park/Open Space".

Motion by C. Gornowich, supported by T. Byle, to recommend that the city commission adopt a resolution in favor of HB 5580 and forward that resolution to our local legislators and the governor. Motion carried 8-0.

### Adjournment

Motion by A. Parent, supported by D. Brown, to adjourn at 8:30 p.m. Motion carried.

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Administrative Approval

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Carol Gornowich, Secretary  
Walker Planning Commission