

**CITY OF WIXOM
49045 PONTIAC TRAIL
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
MONDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2016**

Approved
11/21/16

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Day of the Planning Commission at 7:30 p.m. at which time allegiance was pledged to the American flag.

PRESENT: William Day (Chairman), Phillip Carter, Anthony Lawrence, Joe Barts, Peter Sharpe, Ray Cousineau and Sandro Grossi

ABSENT: None

OTHERS: Carmine Avantini (CIB Planning) and Nancy Fisher (Recording Secretary)

Determination of a Quorum:

A quorum of the Planning Commission was present for this meeting.

Agenda:

No additions or changes were made to the agenda.

Approval of the August 22, 2016 and October 3, 2016 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes:

MOTION and seconded by Commissioners Lawrence and Barts to approve the August 22, 2016 and October 3, 2016 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes.

VOTE:

MOTION CARRIED

Correspondence:

Oakland County letter re: City of Novi Master Plan for Land Use Update 2016

Call to the Public:

There were no comments made by the public.

Unfinished Business:

There was no unfinished business listed on the agenda for this meeting.

New Business:

1. **REVIEW OF DRAFT MASTER PLAN.** A work session will be held with the City planning consultant from CIB Planning to review the draft Master Plan update. Proposed is a more user-friendly document along with recent updates to reflect current development and land use conditions in the City.

Mr. Avantini noted that the revised Master Plan is a lot shorter than previously and more graphical and user-friendly. The only thing lacking is that there will be a detailed implementation list which will be reviewed by the Planning Commission. He anticipates that the Commissioners will have a second round of review of the Master Plan. That would be followed by their recommending to City Council that it be distributed for review, sending it to the surrounding communities and utilities who would have 90 days to review and comment. Then there would be a public hearing and finally it would be formally adopted.

Mr. Avantini noted that the 'Introduction' section is the same. Most of the changes including the evolved status of the Ford plant and Twelve Mile Road are now included. The 'History' section was condensed. Commissioner Carter suggested that the first paragraph and second sentence of the History section be

revised from '4 decades' to '7 decades'. Chairman Day suggested it might be nice to include a picture of the Village Center Area (VCA) or West retail in that section. Commissioner Grossi suggested including a picture of the co-op. Commissioner Carter suggested including pictures of the original settlers.

Mr. Avantini noted that there is a tendency to add too much verbiage to the beginning sections of Master Plans so he condensed it to relevant information only. People who are interested in recreation can refer to the Parks & Recreation Master Plan. He may do an 11-inch by 17-inch Community Facilities map. Chairman Day confirmed that the map would be available online. Commissioner Carter noted that the 'Transportation' section references trunk lines, streets, etc. If Act 51 designates things such as a trunk line, that terminology should be used throughout the Master Plan. Mr. Avantini will make sure this is consistent.

Mr. Avantini noted that each section has goals, implementation strategies and objectives. Commissioner Carter noted that it is difficult to read anything in the 'Goals' section due to lack of contrast within the green shaded area. Perhaps, the text should be changed to black. Mr. Avantini agreed that the .pdf which was distributed was not clearly printed. The plan was reorganized to follow themes and topic areas as opposed to function. He encouraged the Commissioners to go back through the Plan for potential omissions and/or deletions.

Commissioner Cousineau noted that there is reference to 400 acres but there is no mention of whether it is City-owned or park land. The total acreage divided by land use should be added. Chairman Day suggested incorporating this information under the 'Community Resources' section.

Chairman Day asked whether the reference to overhead utility lines pertains to new or old lines. Mr. Avantini said it is both. If a tornado comes through and takes out overhead lines, the replacement lines could be buried. This could also be done if roads get widened. Commissioner Barts said that DTE claims the cost is 5 to 1 for underground lines versus overhead. Chairman Day asked about the cost of maintaining overhead lines. Mr. Avantini said that is a point of discussion to examine the cost of potential repairs to overhead lines over a long-term period; i.e., 20 years.

Mr. Avantini noted that the 'Transportation' section cannot address alternate forms of transportation which might be used by millennials. Currently, the automotive industry produces 3 million cars annually and that will drop to 2.3 million per year, based on changing trends. The Transportation Map is also used for special land use requests. Commissioner Carter noted that Napier Road is not depicted on the map from Grand River south to Twelve Mile Road. Is it not a major street? Mr. Avantini will include it. He noted that the major road designations are based on traffic volumes.

Mr. Avantini noted that the Alpha Drive Commerce development where Sherwin-Williams is tried to eliminate the connection to Royal Truck & Trailer. He will not sign off on that until it is restored. The owner does not want it but he told them he would have to come back before the Planning Commission.

Chairman Day noted that in the 'Schools' section only public schools are listed. What about the two private schools (Wixom Christian and Catholic Sienna)? They should be listed on page 8.

It was noted that on page 13, the last section is 'non-motorized'. Chairman Day noted there is no mention of the trail to be completed. Mr. Avantini will review it.

Under the 'Neighborhoods' section, Mr. Avantini is not sure he wants to keep the table detailing housing tenure since it has changed so much. He trains professionals on what is termed 'middle housing' (townhouses, flats and more upscale units which are currently being sought by empty nesters who want to rent nicer houses but with limited lot maintenance). Mr. Avantini said those are usually rented by

millennials. Chairman Day noted that there is a reference in that section to homes built before the 1950's as being historical but he does not believe those homes have historical value. Mr. Avantini will look at that. He noted that there is a lot of new housing going in. Chairman Day confirmed that what is being built now will be owner-occupied as opposed to rental units. If the City gets the second east commercial building, it could be more upscale. Chairman Day noted that there are not currently a lot of high end rentals. Mr. Avantini noted that is likely for that location and for the Poota property. He has talked to Mr. Madsen about upgrading the properties near City Hall since there is demand for that. He feels the Villages are better than they used to be. Chairman Day noted that the majority of crime still occurs there although he does like the new signs. Mr. Avantini said that the units are also nice.

Commissioner Cousineau noted that the City is at the top of the list for rentals and vacant units. That is a negative. Mr. Avantini asked the Commissioners what they want to emphasize about Wixom relative to other communities in the Master Plan. Do they want to compare housing values? Maybe it is not about housing. Commissioner Cousineau believes it is about diversification and housing. Commissioner Sharpe said that Wixom has a relatively low tax rate and that residents can take advantage of the industrial tax base. It is not just about what the structures look like but about the services provided; i.e., proximity to police, fire, etc.). The Fire Department is nestled in the neighborhood. Chairman Day suggested adding something about the proximity to the 'Community Resources' section. Commissioner Grossi suggested including a paragraph about public services and safety. Chairman Day noted that would come under 'Community Resources'. Mr. Avantini noted that they have been doing innovative housing designs and will continue doing that. Commissioner Carter suggested replacing the table with a picture of one of the new townhouses. Mr. Avantini noted that the townhouses are having an open house on November 9th from 5-8 p.m.

Mr. Avantini noted that the table in the 'Business Areas' section is reflective of what is happening nationwide. It discusses the Ford property and the land on the east side of Wixom Road. The future land use at Beck Road and Twelve Mile Road is unknown. He will put a photo of Adept Plastics in this section. Commissioner Carter suggested including signage under the second objective for 'Business Area Goals'. Mr. Avantini noted that enforcement varies by community. He may add additional implementation strategies to this section. One of the goals is to have enough new development (business and industry) to be able to balance the cost of services with the amount of tax revenue. The City has been playing catch-up on this since the Ford plant closed and there is still time to go before this gap is closed. They could include some language regarding sustainability.

Under the 'Community Character' section, Mr. Avantini noted that the City needs to actively enhance the image of the community. The objectives are straightforward. They will dive into Zoning Ordinances when the Master Plan is completed. He does not review plats but wants to clarify things he sees out in the field by changing the wording to be more specific.

Under the 'VCA' section, Mr. Avantini noted that an obvious goal is to construct the east commercial building. There is still an addition area on the north building with the same thing on the east building. The developer told him they need exposure on Pontiac Trail. Chairman Day noted that the developer affirmed that the plan will make the community appear more vibrant. He would rather see the retail along Wixom Road and Pontiac Trail. Mr. Avantini noted that you can turn the corner and utilize some of that. He thinks the west retail was supposed to go to Wixom Road and incorporate the chiropractor and liquor store into a retail center. We need to kick start what was going before the recession which can serve as a catalyst to further development. He is seeing this occur in Fenton now with mixed-use buildings. Chairman Day noted that the banks were unwilling to do something. Mr. Avantini said the private market needs to get involved. It is a great asset but it is incomplete. Mr. Avantini will change the picture in this section of the plan to depict diversity. Commissioner Carter suggested including pictures of large-scale community events to show the City's vibrancy.

Mr. Avantini noted that future land use is what is used in most of the Master Plan. This is tricky since there are areas which will be redeveloped for which they have different proposals. This includes the remainder of the Ford property which has high redevelopment costs due to potential environmental issues. It is envisioned as research and development and job creation. They do not yet know what Twelve Mile and Beck Roads will be. Also, there is the matter of Twelve Mile Road which comes off Grand River. Novi's Master Plan proposes more uses which will be tied into the Suburban Collection Showplace which is more commercial. There is an opportunity to have those relocated into this area off Twelve Mile Road.

Commissioner Carter suggested moving the Future Land Use map to the back of this section, to be followed by the objectives. Mr. Avantini noted that the biggest changes are for the mixed-use sections. There is no more heavy industrial (M-2) zoning and they would like to get rid of it. Technologies have changed and most things are done inside where you will not see those kinds of impacts. The only thing that was zoned M-2 was the Ford plant.

Commissioner Carter asked about the little L-shaped IRO area and wondered whether it was supposed to be transitional. Mr. Avantini said that it might be a transition to the VCA. Commissioner Carter asked about the automotive company in that area. Mr. Avantini said that he will re-examine it. Chairman Day noted that most of the things on Wixom Road would be considered IRO. Chairman Day asked what the difference is between M-1 and IRO zoning. Mr. Avantini said that the big difference is outdoor storage as a special land use in the M-1 district. Commissioner Carter asked whether they are taxed differently. Mr. Avantini said that trucking companies cannot locate in the IRO district because outdoor storage is not permitted. Chairman Day said that he would prefer that most of the businesses along there would fit into the IRO category. UPS would be one of the heavier uses there. Trijicon is high-tech manufacturing but their operations are located inside. Mr. Avantini noted that they might want to change the zoning sooner rather than later.

Commissioner Cousineau asked whether Gunnar Mettala is part of the VCA. Mr. Avantini said that he does not know the zoning but thinks that it is. It is not unusual to have VCA and public park designations. The future of Gunnar Mettala Park will be heavily addressed in the Parks & Recreation Master Plan update. The recent development proposal for the park was the second one. That park needs to be properly planned including a public workshop session. It was essentially done in reverse. Commissioner Carter noted that a lot of people use that park. It surprised him that the City would give it up. Mr. Avantini noted that it does not mean that development of the park is a bad idea to put some housing back there but at much lower density without impacting the vegetation and woodlands. All the best parks he has worked on have had housing looking out on them. Commissioner Cousineau said that linking the park to the VCA is an excellent idea.

Commissioner Carter observed that there was nothing in the map legend for IS zoning. Mr. Avantini noted that IS zoning will be going away since it was intended only to serve the Ford plant. Commissioner Carter noted that there is no paragraph entitled 'Industry' but something called 'light industrial'. Those should be changed to be consistent.

Commissioner Barts asked about the orange multi-family zoning depicted on the Future Land Use map. Chairman Day said that it is a mobile home area which is mandated by the State. Mr. Avantini noted that many of them are bringing in newer units and renting them out. The parks are responsible for maintaining the units. Commissioner Carter noted that there are no pictures in the 'Future Land Use' section.

Mr. Avantini asked the Commissioners what they want the cover of the Master Plan to look like. Chairman Day suggested steering away from photos, perhaps with the exception of the wall with the

benches located at the entry point to the City. Commissioner Carter suggested including the City's logo with the script writing. Mr. Avantini suggested using a photo as a watermark so that it has more of a background effect.

Call to the Public:

None.

Staff Comments:

Mr. Avantini noted that that the Stonegate single-family residential at Charms and Wixom Roads will be heard at the Commission's meeting next Wednesday. He just received revised plans for this. It has already been rezoned and is part of the potential Consent Judgment Agreement. There will be single-use commercial on the corner although he does not know who the tenant will be. Chairman Day would love to see a bank or medical office there. Commissioner Cousineau sought to confirm with Mr. Avantini whether the terms and conditions of the Consent Judgment have been reached but not yet signed. Will Mr. Avantini review the site plan prior to execution of the Consent Judgment? Will he advise the Commissioners of the controlling language of the Consent Judgment? Mr. Avantini has not seen the Consent Judgment and has only reviewed the residential aspect of the development. The City Attorney will advise the Planning Commissioners regarding the Consent Judgment. The Commissioners have seen the residential component before. The applicant has upgraded the elevations. Commissioner Carter noted that many of the neighbors seemed to be primarily concerned about the potential for increased traffic. Commissioner Barts noted that multi-family would have increased the traffic even more.

Mr. Avantini said that the Mayor suggested that he conduct an image building workshop for the City. He will contract with someone to do the community surveys and suggested that the Commissioners be involved. Planners and consultants can do the work but they will have an outside perspective.

Commission Comments:

Commissioner Carter asked what is going on with the development sign in front of the Wixom Food Mart. Mr. Avantini said that it was discussed at the joint session. He has not heard back from the Pootas. Bob Gibbs did the design for that property at a very reasonable cost. Chairman Day noted that when the gas station came before the Planning Commission, they requested changes; however, it was under a Consent Judgment and it must be an amendment to the Consent Judgment. That could be leverage for the City. Mr. Avantini said that they have to make it a win-win situation—good for the City and a good business opportunity for the Pootas. Bob Gibbs' design will allow it to fit into the VCA but take advantage of the traffic volumes. Chairman Day said it would be great to bring the traffic down Old Wixom Road.

ADJOURNMENT:

This meeting of the Planning Commission was motioned and adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

Nancy Fisher
Recording Secretary