



Washtenaw County
Department of Planning & Environment

Planning Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
Monday, June 23, 2008

Members Present

Blackmore, Blistein, Callan, Dopkowski, Gartin, Lewis, Lovejoy Roe, Meyer, Pratt, Solowczuk, Walz

Members Absent

Bobrin (excused), Gray (excused), Grewal (excused), Kelly (excused), Smith, Williams (excused)

Staff Present

Denig, Kowalski, Lenart

Guests Present

Wendy Rampson, Alice Ralph, Gwen Nystuen, Andrea VanHouweling

Call to Order and Roll Call

Lewis called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. Roll Call was taken and quorum was met.

Approval of Minutes

Solowczuk moved to approve the minutes from the May 19, 2008 meeting with the addition of Williams to “members present,” Blackmore seconded and the motion carried.

Approval of Agenda

Solowczuk moved to approve the agenda, Blackmore seconded and the motion carried.

Public Comment – none

Report of the Chair – none

Old Business – none

New Business

City of Ann Arbor Downtown Plan Amendment Review

Lenart discussed the Downtown Plan, noting that it is one of nine within the City of Ann Arbor. Lenart noted that the plan is well organized and will make a good decision making tool for the future. The recommendations are consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan, encouraging the addition of housing units downtown, sustainable development practices, and green building incentives. There are provisions for protection of significant historic resources and the document also addresses TDR opportunities.

Staff has suggested some areas for enhancement, including references to brownfield incentives for redevelopment, and that there is a possibility for conflict since decision making processes are not laid out in the plan. Additionally it would be good to clarify the intention of a “streamlined development review process” and set goals for streamlined development. WATS suggested

emphasizing non-motorized transportation beyond walking in cooperation with the Washtenaw County Transit Plan and Non-Motorized Plan, and Blackmore noted that the County Health Department's suggestion of including grocery stores is an important item to add. Rampson answered questions from the PAB, and Walz suggested adding language to require a "transition zone" around any core areas, specifically around the designated "core area" on South University.

Blackmore moved that the PAB recommend approval with the additions presented by Mona Walz, Solowczuk seconded and the motion carried.

Washtenaw Area Transportation Study Transit Plan Presentation

Blackmore made a presentation on the County Transit Plan, detailing information from the WATS plan and mentioning the AATA (also known as "other agency") plan. She demonstrated the goals and objectives, recommendations and next steps for the plan. Additionally, she showed a video on the SEMCOG plan for an Ann Arbor to Detroit rail.

PAB Retreat Topic Discussion

Denig noted that the best date for the most members is Wednesday, August 27, 12-4 p.m. It will be at Rolling Hills, and Denig asked for suggestions on additional topics. The suggestions include:

- An advocacy role for the PAB, including making sure that the BOC members accurately represent the entire BOC
- Charges and duties, responsibility and membership
- Updating the County Plan between major updates (a specific explanation of how and when that happens)

Denig stated that PAB members can continue to make suggestions via email through the end of the week.

Report of the Director of Planning Services – Patricia Denig – none

Other Items for Discussion

P.A. 116 Consolidated Planning Act Training Follow-up

Lenart updated the PAB on the new Consolidated Planning Act, noting some of the differences in the new act. As of this act, any Planning Commission that was created by resolution must now be created by ordinance; plans must have "Master Plan" specifically in their titles; there is a provision for removing conflicts of interest; townships must have at least one ex-officio member; bylaws are required; there shall be a minimum of 4 meetings per year; the new act allows for intergovernmental agreements; Master Plans may be distributed electronically if desired; minor changes (misspellings, etc.) do not need to go through the entire procedure for changes; a zoning plan is required to have zoning categories for land use; there are subdivision changes; and the County can act as a clearinghouse for municipalities. The changes will be effective on September 1, 2008 – if any PAB members would like copies of the material from the training session they may request them from the department.

Regional Group and Outside Agency Updates

Walz stated that Public Works is continuing to work on the Multilakes expansion. Dan Myers will be meeting with Salem Township, and the developer will be paying for planning expenses. Additionally, several weed control projects have been successful in County lakes.

Dopkowski noted that MORE has experienced a summer lag, but reported that the Township of Milan was able to purchase a County-foreclosed-upon field for a very low price, and that the field might be turned into parkland or a farmer's market.

Solowczuk reported that the WCPARC is scheduled to present on the NAPP program to the PAB at a future meeting, and that they have been working on the Rolling Hills expansion plan. It will be going to the public and includes soccer fields, expanded Frisbee golf, golf resources and a "miracle field."

Lenart reported that the Cities of Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti have endorsed the WMA Open Space Coordinated Park Plan. Additionally, the WMA intends to invite local officials to their meetings to discuss issues in the area and Lenart is working to identify existing publicly accessible parkland on motorized and non-motorized routes.

Lewis reported that the MCJPC had a big meeting including members of the municipalities' boards and planning commissions, and that there is a draft of the transportation section of the combined plan. More people were invited to the meeting than the usual participants and it was a very productive meeting.

Public Policy News

None

Committee Reports – none

Public Comment

Alice Ralph made comments on the zoning amendments as related to the City of Ann Arbor Downtown Plan amendment, specifically as related to the University Village development proposed for S. University. She stated that the community does not support the kind of density proposed, and noted that development in area addressed by the Allen Creek watershed federal grant lacks coordination.

Gwen Nystuen noted that there needs to be a step down district around the core area on South University. She distributed a map demonstrating the core areas in Ann Arbor.

Adjourn

Solowczuk moved to adjourn at 7:49 p.m.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for July 28, 2008 at 6:00 p.m. in the **MSUE lower level Conference Room.**