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Vice Chair/Secretary

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Adrian-Keith Bennett
Kenneth R. Daniels
David Esparza, AIA, LEED
Ritchie Harrison
Gwen Lewis
Frederick E. Russell, Jr.
Rachel M. Udabe

City Planning Commission Meeting

MINUTES
July 11, 2024
5:00 P.M.

I. Opening

A. Call to Order – Chairperson Donovan Smith called the meeting to order at 5:22 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Attendees: Adrian-Keith Bennett, David Esparza, Ritchie Harrison (appeared remote via Zoom, left meeting early), Gwen Lewis, Melanie Markowicz, Donovan Smith and Rachel Udabe

A quorum was present.

C. Amendments to and approval of agenda

Director Todd stated an amendment to the agenda will add a New Business item regarding a procedural matter on the Dalzell PD rezoning.

Commissioner Markowicz moved to approve the agenda with an amendment, seconded by Commissioner Udabe. Motion approved.

D. Points of Privilege Requested

Director Todd announced that CPC Staff member, Chris Gulock has been appointed to the position of Deputy Director.

Commissioner Harrison stated his concern regarding the demolition of Dabls MBAD African Bead Museum at 6559 Grand River Avenue. There has been damage to the building, and the City's emergency demolition was temporarily halted. Commissioner Harrison expressed appreciation to City departments for their assistance and recognition of the historic building.

Commissioner Markowicz commented on her pleasure of the public's protest and the pause of the demolition of this site.

II. Meeting minutes of March 21, 2024

Commissioner Markowicz moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Esparza. Motion approved.

III. Public Hearings, Discussions and Presentations

- A. **5:15 PM PUBLIC HEARING** – the request of Giffels Webster on behalf of Hitsville USA to amend Chapter 50 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, Zoning by amending Article XVII, *Zoning District Maps*, Section 50-17-8, District Map 7 of the Detroit Zoning Ordinance to show an SD2 (Special Development District, Mixed Use), where a B4 (General Business District) and R2 (Two-Family Residential District) zoning classification is currently shown on the area generally bounded by West Grand Boulevard, Milwaukee Avenue, Ferry Park Street, and Holden Street and more specifically known as 1498, 1506, 1510, 1516, 1524, 1528, 1534, 1540, 1546 and 1556 Ferry Park and also 2648, 2650 and 2658 West Grand Boulevard. **(KJ)** 60 mins

Present: Kimani Jeffrey, CPC Staff
Petitioner: Malcolm Davis, Tim McCall, Shannon Pedit, Allen Rawls, Tim McAuliffe, and Nicole Blocker, Representing Motown Museum Hitsville USA

Commissioner Lewis requested to be excused from this hearing. She stated, " I have a contractual relationship with the petitioner." Therefore, Commissioner Lewis exited the meeting room, and she did not participate in the public hearing.

Kimani Jeffrey via PowerPoint presented an overview of the rezoning request of Hitsville USA and based on CPC report of July 9, 2024. He explained this third phase will be the construction of a brand new museum. The location of the site is on West Grand Boulevard. Mr. Jeffrey provided a synopsis of the Hitsville USA's past CPC appearances, and their request for rezoning from B4, R2 to SD2. The current zoning of R2 does not allow for a museum. Mr. Jeffrey showed photos, diagrams, and maps of the Motown Hitsville USA properties and alleyways. He mentioned this future expansion will put in use underutilized or vacant parcels. Mr. Jeffrey explained that the request to rezone some of the B4 parcels to SD2 keeps the zoning consistency of the Motown properties and avoids a spot zoning issue. Also, it brings these parcels in conformance with the Master Plan.

Nicole Blocker described this multi-phase project as follows:

1. The first phase was Hitsville Next. This project combined three homes and now hosts programming for the community. It opened in the Summer of 2021.
2. The second phase was Rocket Plaza at Motown Museum Hitsville USA. It is activated for community use, and it was completed in the Summer of 2022. Further, she explained in 2023 they started on historic preservation of the existing museum, and that completed February 2023. The interior renovations are expected to complete by quarter three of 2025.
3. The third phase is a museum expansion and with their hope success of the SD2 rezoning it is anticipated to start construction in the Fall of 2024.

Malcolm Davis of the developer design team discussed via PowerPoint that the rezoning to SD2 allows for flexibility and accommodates museums. He showed a site plan of the Motown Museum Campus Layout with new plaza and building connections, campus

renovations and updated developments made on the site. He described a modern Motown that allows engagement in spaces such as the 200 seat theatre named Ford Motor Company Theatre.

Ms. Nicole Blocker described the theater as a flex space. Also, the new construction will have two levels with a retail area, and a café area. The second floor will be dedicated to exhibits.

Mr. Malcolm elaborated that the new construction will have a welcome lobby. The flex space of the Ford Motor Company Theatre will not only provide performances, but it will serve as community spaces and banquet center. Also, Mr. Davis described parking and how their deficiency in parking was offset by Henry Ford Hospital agreeing to provide 100 additional parking spaces (letter shared). He described in detail the anticipated patron's shuttle bus routes and schedules (pick-up and drop-offs). He mentioned that the museum has a solid relationship with their neighbors, Coles Funeral Home. Malcolm described their community engagement and displayed a map of neighbors that offer their community support as the following: West Grand Boulevard Collaborative, Dr. Darnell, Brazelton's Flowers, Henry Ford Health System and James H. Cole Homes for Funerals.

He displayed the timeline of the project as the following:

Project Schedule Milestones

Museum Expansion

- Construction begins September 2024
- Opening late 2026

Hitsville USA

- Construction begins September 2024
- Opening late 2025

Mr. Jeffrey stated that Staff recommends that this project is ready, and it is necessary to waive same day action, so that it may prepare to forward to City Council.

Public Testimony

Shawanda Mallory asked if there will be usage of the vacant lot at CVS for parking? She expressed pleasure in the presentation's clarification of the development.

Ms. Blocker responded they do not plan to use CVS' parking lot at this time.

Mr. Jeffrey stated CPC Staff recommends approval of the rezoning from B4, R2 to SD2.

Commissioner Markowicz moved to waive same day action requirement, seconded by Commissioner Esparza. Motion approved.

Commissioner Markowicz moved to approve CPC staff's recommendation on this matter, seconded by Commissioner Esparza. Motion approved.

- B. 6:15 PM PRESENTATION** – The request of MHT Housing and the Detroit City Planning Commission to amend District Map No. 60 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, Chapter 50, *Zoning*, to show a R3 (Low-Density Residential) zoning district where a R2 (Two-Family Residential) zoning district is currently shown for nine parcels commonly known as 17139, 17204, 17198, 17180, 17132 Oak Drive, 3856 West McNichols Road, 17213, 17181, and 17131 Birchcrest, generally bounded by Santa Maria Street to the north, Birchcrest Drive to the east, West McNichols Road to the south, and Quincy Street to the west, consider east **(TS) (PROJECT UPDATE, ACTION PREVIOUSLY TAKEN)** 30 min

Present: Timarie Szwed, CPC Staff

Petitioner: Mya McHallam and Zach Ormsby of MHT Housing

Timarie Szwed presented via PowerPoint and based on CPC report of June 21, 2024 gave an update on the progress of this project and the request to rezone from R2 to R3 zoning classification. She displayed the map of the properties involved in this project as Gesu Catholic Church, Former Rectory and Administration Building, Gesu Parish Center, Gesu Catholic School and Gesu Community Green. It had been requested to be removed by a City Council Member, and now there it has City Council Planning and Economic Standing Committee Public Hearing on July 25, 2024. There have been plan changes as a result of community input, working with PDD development and the site plan review process. Since the site takes up two blocks CPC staff joined in the petition to avoid spot zoning. September 21, 2023 the public hearing was held with CPC and there was public comment at eight comments three in strong support and five in opposition. CPC motioned to approve and expressed the following support: he reviewed the CPC Public hearing of September 21, 2023, Commissioners' concerns and questions that were addressed by the Petitioner and (design, community engagement, two-bedroom unite square footage and traffic). There were over 130 letters of support. There were over 70-100 attendees at each community meeting.

Ms. Mya McHallam presented a recap of development partnership with MHT Housing, Inc., nonprofit 501 (c)(3) and Gesu Catholic Church. The Gesu Church opened in 1922, and the school opened in 1925. GESU Senior Housing Overview with 36-units of affordable senior (55+) independent living housing. All units will be affordable, targeted at 30% (13 units), 40% (3 units), and 80% (20 units) of Area Medial Income (AMI). The housing complex will consist of 32 one-bedroom and 4 two-bedroom units. The development will rehab and repurpose existing on vent building and build new structure attached. Gesu is in the University District neighborhood within Council District 2, across McNichols from the University Detroit Mercy entrance.

Mr. Zach Ormsby discussed the project updates that have occurred because of extensive community feedback and many review exchanges with PDD. He mentioned that the constructed housing complex is now reduced from three to two stories with 36 units, and the community had a strong persistence for two-bedroom units. He stated that per a study conducted by C2G of Detroit, an engineering firm, this location will not have a negative impact on traffic. Also, it meets the City's required parking requirements. Mr. Ormsby related that the improvements to the site plans and renderings have been updated displayed slides with building design updates and preliminary floor plans. He described the community engagement as extensive and positive. The developers had exchanges with PDD regarding the design and roof of the new building, and they were able to determine a balance of designs that will include using similar limestone and bricks to match the University District's neighborhood's look.

Mr. Ormsby described that Gesu has opted for a community commitment, and it will be

empaneling a diverse 15-member advisory board including members of the University of Detroit Community Association (UDCA) wherein final decisions on design and financial approves there will be a voice from the community involved. He mentioned that MHT Housing will receive vouchers of Section 8 of HUD's Code, but this is new senior housing complex will be privately and owned and operated. He stated that the community had concerns regarding affordable senior housing causing a decrease in property values; however, the Housing and Revitalization Department (HRD) researched and provided numbers reflecting similar Detroit neighborhoods that have a senior housing complex nearby and the numbers indicate resulted in long and short term positive property value gains.

Ms. McHallam concluded the presentation update with the project's next steps of MHT Housing project will be to appear before the City Council appearance and completing their financial application plans for this project.

C. 7:00 PM PRESENTATION - To Master Plan of Policies Update, status report east. (PDD Dara O'Byrne, Deputy Director, Julie Connochie, and KJ). 60 mins

This matter was heard after New Business item.

Present: Kimani Jeffrey, CPC Staff
Deputy Director Dara O'Byrne and Julie Connochie, PDD Staff

Kimani Jeffrey via provided a brief introduction of the Plan Detroit project Master Plan Update. Julie Connochie explained Plan Detroit the Master Plan to zone Detroit. She described that it is early stages, as the fact finding, analysis, and visioning phase that kicked off in April and there are a lot more community engagement opportunities to come. To date, they have completed the visioning survey responses with the top issues described, i.e., "Feeling safe in your neighborhood." She described that they plan to conduct staff stakeholder interviews with City departments in conversations as interview type settings wherein departments will identify the what plans or priorities that PDD should be aware of to do their work and accomplish goals. There will also be focus group conversations. Additionally, Ms. Connochie described the Advisory Group that has been formed consisting of 44 participants. This group is comprised of a diverse group of Detroiters from neighborhoods within City Council districts. She displayed a chart that examined the make up of the advisory group with members by race/ethnicity; age; experienced advisor or newcomer; and parent/guardian. Their signed commitment forms are posted on the website of plan.detroit.com. She displayed photos of the members. She mentioned the group has ground rules on respect, it uses different exercises/activities, and members are taken out to the neighborhoods to open the lines of communication and stimulate conversations. PDD plans to create a shared drive as a resource for the group. The consultant team will review the previous completed departmental plans and use all plans to identify key values to determine how the new updated Master Plan will be updated. She described the Citywide Plan Matrix with its plans' percentages from the consultant team.

Also, Ms. Connochie explained the City Voices Tour from July 17 – October 11 which consists of popup stops in all districts at varying times evening and day.

Ms. Connochie explained PDD will provide quarterly updates to the CPC next quarterly update, and they anticipate having workshops for CPC later in the year. The flyers will be distributed, posted to social media, and the website.

Commissioner Lewis asked for a concrete example that would be brought to the advisory

group to test and synthesize.

Dara O’Byrne replied that manage storm water management would be a subject that the advisory group can test and synthesize using ideas and recommendations, policies and presenting it to the Master Plan Advisory Group.

IV. Public Comment – There was no Public Comment.

V. Unfinished Business – There was no Unfinished Business.

- A.** The Request of Ibrahim Bazzi to amend Article XVII, Section 50-17-41, District Map No. 39 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, Chapter 50, *Zoning*, to show a B4 (General Business District) zoning classification where P1 (Open Parking District) and B2 (Local Business and Residential District) zoning classifications are currently shown on one parcel commonly known as 6181 Cadieux Rd. to the east, Berden St. to the south, and Harvard Road. to the west. **(MT) (RECOMMEND APPROVAL)** 20 mins

Present: Director Marcell Todd, CPC Staff
Petitioner: Abe Bazzi and Mitchell Harvey

Director Todd presented via PowerPoint and based on CPC report of June 21, 2024, provided a background of this rezoning The request February 16, 2023, to rezone this property in order to facilitate the development of a fast food restaurant with a drive-thru, Savvy Slider. of P1, B2 to B4. This matter as originally before CPC February 16, 2024, for public hearing and CPC recommended denial. The City administration asked for the request to be withdrawn to allow the petitioner to work out issues on this project. The site is located in District 4 at the intersection of Harper and Cadieux immediately south of Interstate 94 (I-94) commercial corridor (aerial view displayed). It is on the west side of Cadieux, generally bounded on the north by Harper, on the west by Harvard on the east by Cadieux and on the south by Berden. He showed via photos noting that this vacant site (formerly Chase Bank) is bounded by a gas station with a mini mart and immediately to the west abutting the property is a fast-food restaurant, single family residential and immediately to the south an existing church and its parking lot across the street is a medical facility and more residential. He explained the current zoning of the area. If the rezoning is successful the fast-food restaurant will be permitted, yet the drive through would need approval for special land use hearing before the Buildings Safety and Engineering Department (BSEED). He mentioned that PDD found it to be generally consistent with the Master Plan; however, it may bring an intensity of uses and traffic that could potentially have a negative impact on the area. Director Todd stated it is interesting to note that despite the fact that the Master Plan does call for neighborhood commercial character along the Harper frontage it is overwhelmingly a general business character. This is noted particularly at the intersection itself what the existence of four gas stations which occupy each of the corners of the intersection with fast food and other similar uses.

Director Todd explained the community engagement as a number of community meetings held and there is community support for the project. This was further evident during the CPC public hearing and the community’s support. The residents in the immediate area supported the rezoning with appropriate screening, buffering and wall. Two individuals who spoke in opposition with traffic concerns and that the restaurant may become a youth hang out or attract unwanted loitering. Therefore, after the public hearing the request for traffic concerns and design were further reviewed. CPC Staff, Department of Works, Traffic and Engineering Staff and PDD Staff worked together with the developer and created a revised site plan

(shown). This new layout shifts the building to the north more closely to the intense commercial activities along the intersection of Cadieux and Harper and then providing the parking and circulation functions onsite immediately abutting the existing parking lot of the church to the south. PDD will do a site plan review essentially, they are saying this is the only site plan they will approve.

Mr. Harvey of the developer team stated the new site plan pushes the building as far to the northwest as possible. This plan revision will help get the building as far away from the neighbors as possible and it directs commercial activity farther. He explained they are able to accommodate the ten-foot buffer providing the residents some privacy and a four foot masonry wall and additional screening providing the separation between the restaurant and the neighbors to the west with fairly minimal impact on the traffic.

Commissioner Esparza related his concerns on the circulation of vehicles in the parking lot with cars entering from Cadieux to park and vehicles entering to get to the drive through.

Commissioner Markowicz expressed concerns about the 28 parking spaces wherein patrons may hang out, loiter, and play loud music in the parking lot disturbing the neighbors late at night.

Commissioner Markowicz and Commissioner Bennett expressed concern regarding the trash enclosure being too far from the building.

Director Todd stated it is suggested that this design and solution would limit the vehicular access points closer to the intersection because of the bus stations, distance for the trash compactor, and the internal circulation. There might be an issue with any traffic stacking in an uninterrupted curb length temporarily for those vehicles that are looking to enter when refuse is being picked up. He explained that this is a unique matter, and the plan is directly in response to the desires and preferences of DPW Traffic Engineering and PDD for traffic flow and design.

Commissioner Udabe expressed concerns with the small square footage of the building and so much space used for cars, and that there are already many fast-food restaurants in the building and options for different use that is more beneficial to the wellbeing of the residents of the area.

Director Todd stated that CPC Staff is recommending approval of the rezoning from P1 and B2 to B4. Also, he stated that PDD is asked to take a closer look at this area in relation to the Master Plan.

Commissioner Lewis moved based on Staff's recommendations for motion for approval, seconded by Commissioner Markowicz. Motion approved. The waiver is granted. Commissioner Lewis accepted Commissioner Smith's comment that the applicant has to go through the site planning process with CPC Staff. 3Yays 3Nays. Motion Failed

Before it comes to City Council, Planning and Development Department, and Traffic and Engineering Department to look at before it comes to City Council some of that reasons for stalemate for zoning and the site plan is problematic about noise public safety, excessive parking, hanging out in the parking lot, and navigating the site as far as traffic is concerned. Perhaps it should have two curb cuts going one way close to

building, so that people can exit. The trash enclosure is closer to the building, seconded by Commissioner Esparza. Motion approved.

Commissioner Chair Smith directed that CPC Staff add these comments with this item for City Council.

Commissioner Markowicz moved to added in the recommendation to City Council that Planning and Development Department take a look at this area as part of the City of Detroit Master Plan of Policies and to take a look at the best land use in zoning for this area, seconded by Commissioner Lewis. Motion approved.

VI. New Business –

This matter was handled early and after the 6:15pm Presentation.

Director Todd provided an explanation of the CPC Memo dated June 17, 2024. He explained that a proposed housing project at a section of Vermont and Dalzell in the Corktown area immediately to the east of the train station was authorized by CPC on May 2, 2024. He stated there was a procedural matter that was inadvertently missed. The zoning ordinance provision 50-3096 requires that PDs are a minimum of two acres in size if this is not the case than a waiver is necessary. The property in question is about .37 acres in size. Therefore, the waiver is important to share when this matter is heard by City Council.

Commissioner Lewis moved to allow a PD to exist below the two acre requirement, seconded by Commissioner Markowicz. Motion approved. The waiver is granted.

VII. Committee Reports – There were no Committee Reports; however, Director Todd mentioned that a meeting date will be set soon.

VIII. Staff Report – Director Todd and CPC Staff discussed the following:

- 1) Director Todd invited CPC to the Michigan Association of Planning Conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on September 25-26, 2024, and asked Commissioners to state that they are interested in attending the conference.
- 2) Deputy Director Gulock announced the upcoming City Council public hearings for July 18 pertaining to the child care ordinance, July 25 the rezoning hearings pertaining to Vermont, Dalzell, Perfecting Church, Harper and Van Dyke car wash. Additionally, he mentioned the Core City matter will be voted on and the Ambassador Bridge matter will be in September.
- 3) Director Todd explained that there is a permit request for Hart Plaza alterations. This type of request is handled at the staff level with CPC Staff and PDD Staff. The General Services Department has contracted Smith Group as the architect of record.

Jamie Murphy presented via PowerPoint the planned Hart Plaza renovations. She mentioned that it will repair the part of the plaza that slopes steeply and connects to the River Walk. The alterations and upgrades will make Hart Plaza more accessible for disabled individuals. The “Gateway to Freedom” monument will remain. Ms. Murphy displayed renderings of the lower-level plaza and upper-level plaza with railings and plantings. The developers will put in a physical pathway from one level of the plaza to the other on each side. The changes will include renewed paving with more lawn and plantings and seating areas on the lower level.

- 4) Director Todd discussed existing zoning single family residential. He stated that zoning will remain on the overlays and giving something unique and different for that particular solar area. He gave a synopsis on the Solar Initiative.

IX. Member Report – There was no Member Report.

X. Communications –There were no Communications.

XI. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.