

**Donovan Smith**  
Chairperson  
**Melanie Markowicz**  
Vice Chair/Secretary

**Marcell R. Todd, Jr.**  
Director  
**Christopher Gulock, AICP**  
Deputy Director

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

## City Planning Commission Meeting

**MINUTES**  
**November 21, 2024**  
**5:00 P.M.**

### I. Opening

A. Call to Order – Chairperson Donovan Smith called the meeting to order at 5:24 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Attendees: Adrian-Keith Bennett, Kenneth Daniels, David Esparza, Ritchie Harrison, Gwen Lewis, Frederick Russell, Donovan Smith and Rachel Udabe

A quorum was present.

C. Amendments to and approval of agenda

**Commissioner Daniels moved to approve the Agenda, seconded by Commissioner Bennett. Motion Approved.**

II. Meeting minutes will be provided at the next meeting.

### III. Public Hearings, Discussions and Presentations

A. **5:15 PM PUBLIC HEARING** – The request of the Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA) to amend Article XVII, Section 50-17-33, District Map No. 31 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, Chapter 50, Zoning, to show an R5 (Medium Density Residential District) or PD (Planned Development District) zoning classification where an R2 (Two-Family Residential District) zoning classification is shown at 700 Conner Street, 692 Conner Street, 686 Conner Street, 682 Conner Street, 678 Conner Street, 672 Conner Street, 703 Navahoe Street, 693 Navahoe Street, 687 Navahoe Street, 681 Navahoe Street, 675 Navahoe Street, and the vacated Freud Street and public alleys located between Conner Street and Navahoe Street.

**(DP)**

**45 mins**

Present: Eric Fazzini, CPC Staff

Petitioner: Paul Ransom and Navid Mehran, GLWA

Director Marcell Todd acknowledged on record a letter received from the organization

representing the community as Jefferson-Chalmers Water Project. He explained the letter requests that CPC carry this public hearing into the new year to allow residents more time to participate (copies distributed).

Eric Fazzini presented via PowerPoint and based on CPC Report dated November 20, 2024, the Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA) rezoning request from R2 to R5. GLWA submitted this request to permit construction of a new pumping station and rerouting of Freud Street. Mr. Fazzini stated that PD may apply; however, CPC Staff is not recommending it. The R5 zoning classification permits a pumping station and a conditional use approval is required. The site is in District 4 in the Jefferson-Chalmers neighborhood. The site is west of Harding Street and Marina District and east of Phillip Street. Mr. Fazzini provided a brief history of the current Freud Pump Station at 12300 Freud Street (constructed in 1954). The existing Freud pump station manages both sanitary and storm water. The proposal for new construction of Freud Pump Station will allow GLWA to access the sewers and block flow for maintenance. Mr. Fazzini explained the reroute was approved by City Council in July 2024 when the petitioner asked to vacate. GLWA has not started the street rerouting. He explained their proposed rerouting plans as Freud Street will bend to the north of its current location between Tennessee Street to the west and Algonquin to the east, and it is a three block area. The middle block would contain the proposed pumping station. There is utility work being done at the present time. He displayed photos taken on November 20, 2024, and he reviewed the zoning of the surrounding properties as primarily R2 and some R1 to the east. He showed pictures of the homes on Freud Street. He stated the home address of 235 Freud is vacant and will be demolished with the project. The white house address of 237 Freud is occupied and unaffected. The building will be approximately 48 feet tall with a completely enclosed courtyard for mechanical equipment, i.e., transformers and generators. There will be a loading dock, parking lot, raingarden and landscaping added around the site (renderings shown).

Paul Ransom of GLWA discussed the proposed Freud Sanitary Pump Station via PowerPoint. Mr. Ransom provided system background information, maps and comparison diagrams regarding the existing two large pump stations as Freud pump station (36 feet below ground) and the Conner Creek pump station (32 feet below ground). The Freud Pump Station services the Ashland Relief Sewers and Fox Creek Relief Sewers, and the Conner Creek Pump Station services the east and west Jefferson Relief Sewers. Notably, due to its depth, the Freud Pump Station is the work horse of the area and southeast Michigan. The Freud Pump Station handles the flow at the earliest, and it is imperative that it operates and empties out flow efficiently and be well maintained. Currently, there is no way to get to the wet well to clean it out. Since it was built in 1955, it is not designed with present day safety standards. Therefore, Mr. Ransom gave three reasons why this new construction is necessary 1) cleaning and maintaining, 2) ability to keep sewer water levels low, and 3) assist in preventing basement backups.

Also, GLWA's Paul Ransom displayed a map showing the paths for the 16-foot Ashland Relief Sewer and Fox Creek Relief Sewer come together at Algonquin and Tennessee. These lines run parallel, and it is the only place to put it to capture both relief sewers, so they can be isolated from the Freud pump stations. If not, it would require one for each to have its own specific facility.

Mr. Ransom explained the rerouting on Freud Street via map diagram. Mr. Ransom discussed that GLWA purchased 22 parcels as all the properties that are necessary to fit the road right-of-way into, the shaft and the building. He explained the building has to be

this size, so that it may contain operations of the crane, noise and odor. They have attempted to minimize the height as best as possible but it is needed to get the pump above the piping (diagram shown).

Mr. Ransom stated there had been a slight delay with GLWA's community engagement, and they have presented before City Council Member Latisha Johnson at Department of Neighborhoods (DON) meetings regarding the relocation right-of-way of Freud Street. He displayed GLWA's upcoming community engagement meeting dates as December 11, 2024; March 19, 2025; May 21, 2025 and September 17, 2025 to be held at the Eastlake Baptist Church on 12400 East Jefferson Avenue. Also, Mr. Ransom mentioned that GLWA attends meetings monthly with the District 4 Community Advisory Council. He displayed a project website [glwater.org/freud-sanitary-pump-station](http://glwater.org/freud-sanitary-pump-station) for further information.

Mr. Ransom responded that an initial design of precast concrete panels façade was unfavorable with the community. GLWA consultants examined the area's surrounding aesthetics, and selected the macadam yellow style brick. He explained that unfortunately the community did not like that design, since it reminded them of a prison. Mr. Ransom stated that GLWA offers flexibility on the exterior design, since it will not be constructed for three years. There will be time to decide on a design that mostly appeases the neighbors. This was in response to Commissioner Smith's questions.

Mr. Ransom stated that this will not prevent basement backups; however, it will ensure that the Freud storm station is operating at its peak. Also, it will be able to keep the water levels low at the sewers, so they can help to prevent it. Further, he explained that the sewers running from the house are handled by DWSD, and GLWA runs the interceptors to keep the flow low, keep it moving, and get it out. This was in response to Commissioner Smith's questions.

Mr. Ransom responded that the entire building is designed as a shell to maintain and hold in any items that exist in there and for the odor as the sewers are 65 feet underground. It is not like a waste treatment plant where it's open waste water systems. This is all enclosed ventilation on top of the building to ensure that if they are spewing out any odors that it is being maintained. Further, he answered that GLWA examined with DWSD to review their complaint logs for odor for the existing Freud station, but there were none listed for that area. Therefore, he explained that when they operate another sanitary systems the odor is not a large concern as with a water treatment center. This was in response to Commissioner Bennett's question.

Commissioner Lewis requested that CPC Staff obtain in writing from City agencies namely Buildings, Safety Engineering, Environmental Department (BSEED), Department of Public Works (DPW) and Planning and Development Department (PDD) that the statements GLWA made are accurate and that this is the only location that the new pump station can be placed. Additionally, Commissioner Lewis requested CPC Staff research for spot zoning and possibly a Law Department opinion on spot zoning for this proposed rezoning.

Commissioner Lewis requested that at the next meeting GLWA clarify the mitigation of flooding since there were some contradictory statements made at the current public hearing.

Mr. Ransom responded that the project costs \$138 million, and the funding is from

Michigan Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF). This was in response to Commissioner Udabe's questions.

Mr. Ransom responded that they have not begun building the shaft, but the work being done right now is DTE gas and DTE electric. Also, it is expected that AT&T and DWSD will have work to do in the area. He stated the estimated completion date is November 2028. This was in response to Commissioner Russell's inquiries.

Navid Mehram of GLWA answered that since GLWA does not typically build new infrastructure, and although they were corresponding with DWSD and DPW, the delay in community engagement was an oversight. GLWA did become aware of the community engagement, and they have had multiple meetings with the community and sent out 1200 flyers and door knockers. He stated that he has apologized to the community personally for this misstep, and GLWA has improved their communication plan. This was in response to Commissioner Harrison's community engagement inquiries.

Mr. Fazzini stated that CPC Staff will conduct additional research on the height requirement in R5. This was in response to Commissioner Harrison asking the maximum height for R5.

#### Public Testimony

Vanessa Cartwright commented as a long-time resident of Freud Street, and she expressed her surprise of the project. She does not feel the project is fair. She does not trust it, and she complained to having an odor in the area.

Paul Ransom responded that at community engagement they said they can smell something, but this was clear that the smell comes from another source; however, they are willing to address in the future with the community.

Michael Cooper commented his concerns on additional vacant land in the area. He expressed being treated like a secondhand citizen when it comes to height of the building and having to look out at a 50-ft tall building. He says it is unfair. He asked if they will buyout others and offer for people to leave the area.

Mr. Ransom responded there has been no further discussion on buyouts.

Jay Juergensen commented and referred to a submitted packet of documents from Jefferson-Chalmers Water Project organization to CPC for their review regarding a variety of concerns of this project. He expressed concern that construction of utilities has already been initiated in the area. He explained that the proposed land use is industrial, it is an industrial encroachment into a residential neighborhood, and the applicant is masking the use with R5 rezoning request. He requested that CPC allow Jefferson-Chalmers Water Project to present their concerns before CPC and their request for an extension of this hearing.

Mr. Rue commented and asked about the project's contractors, and how many minorities or African Americans do they presently employ. He commented on the sewer overflow that comes into the City from the suburbs. How many minorities are employed with GLWA and their bidding process for this project?

Mr. Ransom responded that this project was out for bid with requirements in

procurement. The bid was a public bid, and there is a business and diversity that weights on total score given

Samsung caller #SMS908U, a woman commented and asked what type of impact will the industrial pumping station in a neighborhood have on property value of the nearby residents. They will be looking out windows and seeing this proposed 48-foot building. Is there other vacant property on the other side of the pumping station going towards downtown Detroit that can be utilized instead of coming in to the neighborhood?

Mr. Ransom: Moving to the west side of the Freud station is not possible to use for this function since the Fox Creek and Ashland sewers do not run on that side of the station.

Navid Mehram clarified that the height of the facility is due to the large equipment and the extra 8 feet is for screening of the HVAC on roof. The facility is unmanned.

**Commissioner Lewis moved to continue this public hearing to January 16, 2025, at 5:15 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Daniels. Motion Approved.**

**B. 6:00 PM PRESENTATION** – Board of Ethics Training  
(Michael O’Connell) 45 mins

Present: Michael O’Connell and Dawn Widman, Board of Ethics

Michael O’Connell, training specialist, presented via PowerPoint a training session on the City’s Ethics Ordinance and the Detroit Board of Ethics (BOE). He explained the ordinance establishes ethical practices and standards of conduct for public servants or those providing services to the City under contract. He described the Board of Ethics department and their responsibilities and how the department manages intake of complaints and procedures. Mr. O’Connell educated Commissioners on the various BOE disclosure forms, and discussed different scenarios that may require an advisory opinion, i.e., potential conflict with serving on City Planning Commission and their current job. He reviewed acceptable gifts and gratuity, bribes, and campaign activities. During the training session, there were many examples or possible scenarios proposed and discussed. He mentioned Board of Ethics meetings are held on Wednesday and location.

Dawn Widman discussed her role as an ethics investigator, the BOE investigation procedure and possible penalties imposed after a BOE decision or disposition.

**IV. Public Comment –**

*This matter was handled earlier in the meeting.*

There was no Public Comment.

**V. Unfinished Business –** There was no Unfinished Business.

**VI. New Business –**

**A. Proposed 2025 Schedule of CPC Meetings**

*This matter was handled earlier in the meeting.*

Director Todd confirmed that the suggested changes to the 2025 meeting dates as discussed were made to the schedule.

**Commissioner Russell moved to accept the 2025 CPC meeting schedule with September 11, 2025 being a tentative community meeting date, seconded by Commissioner Bennett. Motion Approved.**

**VII. Committee Reports** – There were no Committee Reports.

Director Todd requested more time for Commissioners to consider if they were or have interest in taking seats on the CPC committees.

**VIII. Staff Report** – There was no Staff Report.

**IX. Member Report** – There was no member Reports.

**X. Communications** – There was no Communications.

**XI. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.