

Meeting Minutes

CITY PLAN COMMISSION MINUTES

(Comprehensive Planning)

Monday, November 24, 2003, 4:00 pm PRESENT: Plan Commission Members: Chairman Mayor Wescott; Mike Phillips; Fred Steffen; Bud Flood; Karen Aldinger & Lois Feldman (Excused, Ann Shannon)

Other Committee Members: Ald. Molski; Ald. Markham; Lee Beveridge; Stephanie Lind; Carl Rasmussen; Bob Freckmann; Liz McDonald; Mark Seiler; Bill Carlson

ALSO PRESENT: Comm. Dev. Dir. John Gardner; City Clerk Victoria Zdroik; Jeff Schuler, Dan Bowers, and Sara Nimmer of Po. Co. Planning; City Parks Dir. Tom Schrader; Amy Heart

Chairman Wescott referred to Jeff Schuler's memo which states that the long-awaited Report on the Economy of Portage County has been scheduled for presentation on Wednesday, December 10 at 7:00 p.m. at Ben Franklin Junior High School. This is a very important presentation and encouraged attendance.

1. COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

Housing

Transportation

Jeff Schuler recommends commissioners read over the changes they made to the Housing element at the last meeting for review at the next meeting. He felt that due to the abbreviated schedule today, our time would be best served by explaining transportation and getting started on one of the aspects of it.

Ald. Markham felt pages 13, 14, & 15 of the preliminary goals seem to overlap and could be melded together.

Chairman Wescott noted the Transportation Development Plan is before the Transportation Committee who will go through it chapter by chapter and forward a recommendation to the Council.

Jeff Schuler reviewed the statute language for what we need to look at in the Transportation element that includes highways, transit, railroads and air transportation., but also very important are bicycle and pedestrian transportation. We will eventually produce a map that identifies how the streets are classified and possibly an additional street map where the city can go on record saying this is where we think the future street network could go. Your ideas are important on how you think city streets should continue beyond your borders. We will be looking at making policies for all types of transportation. Because of existing sidewalks, the green circle trail, and bike paths, you have an area that allows for review of multi modes of transportation and staff thought a good place to start would be pedestrian and bike paths.

Dan Bowers, Assistant Co. Planner, noted the issues identified by city and county staff on page 2 and the attached maps indicating the current functional class system, the study alternatives, and truck routes. There seems to have been a lot of discussion from previous meetings that deals with pedestrian and bike routes. Staff will do a lot of listening today and get feedback from commissioners.

Jeff Schuler noted arterial streets mainly carry cars and trucks with limited access to local properties and are the most intense use. The purpose of a local street is to access property and are the least intense use. Collector streets are larger and funnel traffic toward the arterial streets.

Lois Feldman noted 20 years ago, the decision was made to put sidewalks on both sides of the street around Washington School. One of the arguments for putting sidewalks on both sides was then property owners on both sides of the street share the cost.

Bud Flood felt there should be sidewalks on both sides of major collector streets.

Karen Aldinger noted the city has a more difficult time planning sidewalks where they connect with Park Ridge and there are no sidewalks.

Chairman Wescott questioned why sidewalks were not put in on the south side of Highway 10 East by Target and Frank's Hardware.

John Gardner responded at the time, it was under the jurisdiction of the Town of Hull and the county and the feeling was that sidewalks on one side of the street were sufficient.

Tom Schrader, City Parks Director, noted the BikePed Plan states it is safer to have sidewalks on both sides of the road. When you have them on just one side, people pulling out of driveways tend to just look in the one direction. The Park Commission had suggested widening the pavement in subdivisions by 3'-4' instead of having sidewalks. It would make the roadway more pedestrian-friendly and would not be gobbling up green space with sidewalks in subdivisions that are not heavily traveled.

Ald. Molski noted it used to be city policy that if you didn't have curb and gutter, sidewalks were not required. Curb and gutter doesn't go in unless storm sewer is in.

Ald. Rackow feels the meaning seems to be sidewalks on both sides of all urban principal arterials, urban minor arterials, and urban collectors.

Dan Bowers responded they could include that if that is what you want.

John Gardner noted if the next logical step is a capitol improvement program based on what you are suggesting, should engineering be planning for sidewalks on Green Ave., or do you mean there should be sidewalks on principal arterials such as Hwy. 66 and Bus 51.

Lois Feldman questioned whether we have had any safety issues along Green Avenue.

Karen Aldinger noted with regard to Brilowski, I think they narrowed the car lanes and added the extra 2'-3'. The lines are not visible, especially in the winter. Your really just as close to the cars. There is more and more traffic and its just not safe.

Tom Schrader noted it is interesting that the older part of the city, when times and money were hard, are all sidewalks. With the newer generations, no sidewalks.

John Gardner noted many years ago, there weren't as many cars and more people expected to walk. Lots were narrower and the cost wasn't as great to put sidewalks in.

Lee Beveridge noted it seems we are dealing with some areas that need sidewalks for safety with higher traffic volume and speed limits.

Liz McDonald felt with the increase in commercial and residential development along Brilowski Road, the complexion of the area has changed and sidewalks are needed.

Ald. Molski noted based on the traffic along Green Avenue, if sidewalks are needed anywhere, they are needed there.

Jeff Schuler felt staff should put a map together with existing sidewalks and the sidewalk suggestions, for the commission to review before a final decision is made. He feels the commission needs more information.

Lois Feldman expressed concern with the timeline if we say sidewalks should go in. We can certainly say with new development, there has to be sidewalks.

Ald. Markham feels we need information on existing city policy for new development and capital improvements.

Ald. Rackow noted the consensus seems the first priority should go to the urban principal arterial, next urban minor arterials, and followed by urban collectors.

Ald. Molski years ago, when you purchased a lot and there were sidewalks abutting the lot, you had to put sidewalks in. She doesn't know what happened to that policy. Many people build out in the subdivisions because they want the big lots and no sidewalks.

Tom Schrader reviewed the progress with regard to the Bike/Ped Plan on the attachment. He noted the numerous completed projects, on-going projects, new/future projects, and the grants applied for between 1998-2003. He expressed concern about widening roads and existing trees.

Stephanie Lind stated she gets a lot of complaints about safety issues on Division Street near the Franklin Street and Fourth Avenue intersections. The students would like to see the city take a more active approach to make the city more biker-friendly with bike paths and bike crosswalks so they don't get hit by cars.

Mark Seiler stated the Fourth Avenue intersection has become dangerous with the increased volume of traffic going to the hospital.

Carl Rasmussen stated he would be interested to see the comparison map with regard to the effect on Schmeeckle with sidewalks on both sides of North Point Drive and Michigan Avenue.

Bob Freckmann noted he is not sure if we can come up with a satisfactory hard rule. Maybe we would be better off to have clearly stated objectives and priorities. There has to be some flexibility.

Liz McDonald noted with regard to bicycle and pedestrian safety that doesn't require building or changing anything would be eliminating the right turn on red.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

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