

CITY OF HUNTINGTON WOODS
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
DRAFT MINUTES
February 17, 2022
7:00 p.m.
In Person Meeting – Huntington Woods Commission Room

Commissioner Mike Wright called the Meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

PRESENT: Gail Linden, Mike Wright, Rick Polan, Chris Golembiewski, Todd Sperl, Bob Paul, Jill Ingber, Blake Moore, Sheldon Kohn

ABSENT: None

City Staff Present: Zoning Administrator, Hank Berry.

AGENDA ITEMS:

Matter of the Master Plan work session

Anne Marie Kerby from MKSK Planning attended via zoom to present the updated plan.

Master Plan Revisions include: more photos in each section of the plan, reordered and expanded on some existing conditions sections, defined and expanded upon sustainability, refined recommendations in some sections, and edited and simplified the Action Plan based on Planning Commission feedback.

Summary of Engagement:

- Engagement focused on confirming and refining goals and strategies in the previous Master Plans and identifying new priorities
- Community's top priority improvements for Huntington Woods are:
 - Stormwater Management
 - Road Maintenance and Construction
 - Increased Sustainability
 - Parks and Recreation Opportunities
- Residents also noted that diverse housing, crosswalks and street improvements, and safety should also be incorporated into the Master Plan

Future Land Use

- Preserve residential land use

- Focus investments along Woodward, 11 Mile, and Coolidge Sustainability

- Create a Climate Action Plan to establish benchmarks and track best practices
- Climate Action Plan would include:
 - Energy efficient and alternative energy methods
 - Mobility options
 - Stormwater management and greenspace
 - Waste reduction and management
 - Policies changes
 - Enhance quality of life

City Campus Area Recommendations:

- The city should focus on rehabbing and upgrading the Public Safety Building. A RFP could be sent out as well to rehab the building.
- The City should consider issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) to gauge developer interest in the sirt (without making a decision on whether or not to partner to proceed with redevelopment of the property).

DEI Plan Summary (study completed by Volar Consulting and Jade Strategies):

- Overview:
 - Assessment of diversity, inclusion and equity in the City
 - Engaged City Commissioners, released a survey, held focus groups and one-on-one conversations
- Summary of Findings:
 - Large majority of residents desire diversity
 - Areas most lacking in diversity are race/ethnicity and income
- Common Themes:
 - Dedicate more resources for more services for seniors
 - Lack of diversified housing
 - Barriers to entry to City

Economic Development Strategy:

- Overall Recommendations:
 - Business Development/Retention Program
 - Marketing/Brand Strategy
 - Diverse Housing Options
 - Working with Woodward communities, adjacent communities, Oakland County, SEMCOG, and MEDC.
 - Resources and Incentives:
 - Commercial Rehabilitation Abatement
 - Community Revitalization Program
 - Brownfield Act 381
 - The Michigan Strategic Fund
 - Municipal/Non-profit Public Private Partnerships

Summary of Preservation Plan:

Recommendations:

- Consistently enforce historic district regulations
- Develop marketing materials for the preliminary design stage
- Continue to implement Hill Historic District and Rackham Golf Course Final Report recommendations
- Provide education on Residential guidelines and historic resources

Action Plan Revised:

- Simplified the Action Plan tables and just noted main topic area
- Added priority rating and responsible partners columns
- Added more sustainability actions
- Consolidated and removed some action items

Next Steps:

- Kick off Meeting with Planning Commission
- Existing conditions and analysis and plan outline
- Working session with planning commission
- Community visioning forum and survey
- Developer/property owner roundtable
- 2 working sessions with planning commission

WE ARE HERE:

- Review and edits to draft plan
- Planning commission forwards plan to City Commission
- City commission approves distribution of the plan
- Planning commission public hearing
- City commission public hearing and adoption

Bob Paul: No Comment on the plan

Kohn: I am happy to see that the plan is more concise, and the action plans are more concise now.

Berry: Sheldon is referring to the priority list. One of the largest items on there is the safe routes to school.

Sperl: Most of my questions were answered. The priority list is important, and I appreciate the edits that were made.

Polan: How are we addressing diversifying our housing?

Kerby: In the Economic Development Strategy section talking about how there could be mixed-use development and diversified housing along the perimeter corridors. Whether those be apartments or townhouses.

Polan: Do we need to include any of that in the zoning portion?

Kerby: Those types of housing would already be allowed under the zoning of those corridors.

Ingber: I thought the changes were good. Sustainability being defined was what I was looking for, and it was there.

Golembiewski: No questions.

Moore: Nothing to ask or add.

Linden: I think we need to distinguish under land use where it says there are not a lot of vacant properties in Huntington Woods, it should state there are not a lot of vacant land properties instead. Under demographics, many are stated to be from 2019 and in other places it's missing so I want to be consistent. When you're talking about existing housing conditions, I think something that should be coming up when we're talking about dealing with seniors or other people for their ability to live in their homes, I think we should bring in something about universal design and workshops, and whatever else for our communities or for the builders to try to make them more aware of trying to keep people in their homes and have these tools available for them. The one thing I didn't like was under 2019 statistics, when you were talking about economic existing conditions – we are not in 2019, we are in 2022 and we've lived through COVID, and this report does not reflect that at all whether it's unemployment or whatever the case might be and I think it needs to be in the report that when you look back at it five years later or ten years later, it's noticed that we are not just relying on statistics that we got off of data sheets. The other thing is that you talked about 11 mile road, and repurposing the lanes and working with Berkley, and you mentioned about Birmingham's plan that you are going to forward to us. Nowhere have we discussed already that Pleasant Ridge and Ferndale are going on a road diet from 8 mile road, to 696. That needs to come into play because we are in between Pleasant Ridge and Birmingham, so I think we need to address what is going on to the south.

Kerby: If there is missing references for existing data, we will make sure that is put on there. The language change for existing land use, in regards to vacant land properties instead of vacant properties is something that can be done. As far as the economic existing conditions, we are working off data from the 2019 census SEMCOG data sources. I can check back in with CIB Planning to see if they have anything else they can add in that section. I agree with you, and with the times that we have experienced since 2019 there is a few other things that could be added in that section.

Berry: As far as the road diet, it is something that is not going to be in the Master Plan, it is just something that is going to happen. We have had meetings with MDOT, and have just received Birmingham's very recent resolution to go on a road diet. The goal with the Master Plan, if it gets approved, and we can approve it and send it on tonight to the City Commission, is that you can approve it with references to what has been discussed at the meeting.

Wright: Nothing else to add. Like Sheldon, I appreciate the conciseness that has been adopted.

Wright opened the meeting for public participation. Comments are limited to 3 minutes.

Kris Guccione 10704 Ludlow: How are we going to manage the development of the Woodward Corridor? Are we going to hire somebody to help manage that development?

Wright: The city does not own that property so we would somehow have to entice those landlords to want to do it, or sell it.

Polan: We are providing recommendations and resources for those private business owners to move forward and allow for redevelopment in those areas. We are opening it up to say that the City of Huntington Woods is open for redevelopment of that area, and assist by providing resources through the Master Plan.

Guccione: What kind of resources can we provide?

Polan: So in the Master Plan there's some specific organizations that we point those land owners to, funding and what not.

Guccione: Is that you Hank or is someone going to be hired to do that?

Berry: What we do, is exactly what Rick has said, we provide a framework, somebody has to come in with a proposal. City of Huntington Woods has exactly zero property on Woodward so it has to be property owner driven, and as far as improvements to the other part, that's all MDOT. We have nothing to bring to the table other than suggestions and resources.

Guccione: Why are we narrowing 11 mile and adding a light with a crosswalk? That seems like we're paying for two of the same things.

Berry: The only cost would be the light, if we choose to go that route. Right now, this is our wish list but it gives us the options that would be most helpful in helping Huntington Woods thrive.

Guccione: The other thing that I wanted to talk about was the electric charges. We are a one square mile city, if we have electric cars – wouldn't we have them at our house?

And if someone is visiting the city, wouldn't they be visiting a resident? Why can't they just charge at my house?

Berry: There is often grant money, or other funding sources available, and if that is the case – the City of Huntington Woods would like to be as green as possible, and avail themselves of any financial opportunities to do so. If there was funding available through the DTE Grants or state grants, to put a charger at different city buildings, we would certainly want to look at that.

Susan Considine, 12727 LaSalle: The whole stormwater analysis really has to be gone over at building level, at the permit level. I want more attention paid to renovations that pay attention to the slope, and where the stormwater will runoff to. I would like a resident feedback group to be consulted about these issues.

Wright: That is all a part of city code and does not have a part in the Master Plan. They're all valid points, but they have nothing to do with the Master Plan, that is all building code.

Hal Stack, 13108 Talbot: What I wanted to acknowledge is that this is definitely an improved plan, it's much better than the earlier drafts. I have a couple of questions, two of the objectives relating to collaboration and privatization, are linked with sustainability. I am not sure how those relate to sustainability. It is also very unclear what would be privatized. It is not clear what kind of collaboration you might be talking about. Are there specific ideas about what to privatize and what to collaborate on?

Berry: When we are talking about collaborating with other communities, we already do. Our dispatch is shared with Berkley after hours, we share an incarceration space with them on a temporary basis. We work with other communities as far as fire cooperation, mutual aid agreements and things of that nature. What we are looking at is nothing specific, but would be remiss if we did not look for opportunities for collaboration.

Stack: Is that true for privatization as well?

Berry: privatization can be different things. Privatizations and public-private partnerships are two different things. As far as privatization, that could mean something as simple as does it make sense for the city to bid out leaf collections, or the sidewalks. That's where we might look for other opportunities for that. We just want to look at the opportunities.

Stack: Why is the city's 2019 energy plan not reflected in this plan?

Berry: We are long past the 2019 plan and are currently working with Veregy which is an energy savings resource company.

Stack: So it is not the same thing?

Berry: It is not the same thing. We are at an implementation and technology stage beyond the 2019 study. The 2019 Study did not come through the Planning Commission.

Wright closed public participation.

Motion to recommend the Master Plan Second Draft to the City Commission:

Moved by Sheldon Kohn and seconded by Blake Moore to recommend the Master Plan Second Draft to the City Commission.

Ayes: Golembiewski, Kohn, Linden, Polan, Wright, Sperl, Paul, Moore, Ingber

Nays: None

Absent:

The Motion Carried.

ADJOURNMENT:

Moved by Gail Linden and seconded Jill Ingber by to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting.

Ayes: Golembiewski, Kohn, Linden, Polan, Wright, Sperl, Paul, Moore, Ingber

Nays: None

Absent:

The Motion Carried, meeting adjourned at 8:04 pm.

Submitted
Amy Berry - Recorder