

St. Louis Planning Commission
Wednesday March 14, 2018

A regular meeting of the St. Louis Planning Commission was called to order by Chairman Doepker at 5:30 p.m.

Acting recording secretary Kurt Giles called the roll.

Present: Doepker, D. Kelley, Giles, S. Kelly, J. Kelly, Palmer, Whitford

Absent: A. Kelly, Reed

Also Present: R. Echtenaw, St. Louis Sentinel

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Doepker.

Motion made by Reed, supported by D. Kelley, to approve the minutes of the last meeting on October 4, 2017. All ayes, Motion carried.

Member Giles advised the Planning Commission that on March 6, 2018, the City Council had approved a motion to delegate the authority to the Planning Commission for final approval of the updated Gratiot County Master Plan (GREAT Plan). This eliminates any need for the Great Plan to go before the City Council for approval following the required public hearing and adoption of a resolution by the Planning Commission. The next regular scheduled meeting of the Planning Commission is the proposed time for the public hearing and adoption of the resolution approving the GREAT Plan. Approval of the GREAT Plan requires at least 2/3 of members voting to adopt the resolution for approval. Member Palmer joined the meeting during this discussion and in time for the vote.

Motion made by Giles, supported by D. Kelley, to establish the date and time for the Public Hearing of comments on the GREAT Plan as April 11, 2018 at 5:30 p.m. or as closely thereafter as possible. All ayes, Motion carried.

Giles advised the Planning Commission there was no new business but there has recently been some interest on the part of a solar energy developer to explore possibilities for re-use of the former Velsicol plant site that include a solar array.

Motion made by D. Kelley, supported by J. Kelly to adjourn at 5:50 p.m. All ayes, Motion carried.

Kurt Giles
Acting Recording Secretary

Wednesday April 11, 2018
Saint Louis

A regular meeting of the St. Louis Planning Commission was called to order by Chairman Doepker at 5:30 P.M.

Present: Doepker, D. Kelley, Giles, Reed, S. Kelly, J. Kelly, Palmer, Whitford, A. Kelly
Also Present: Keith Risdon-Utilities Director St. Louis

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Doepker.

There was an error on the previous minutes from Wednesday, March 14, 2018, it stated a motion was made by Reed but he was absent at that meeting. The corrected states-Motion made by J. Kelly, supported by D. Kelley, to approve the minutes of the last meeting on October 4, 2017. All ayes, Motion carried.

Motion made by D. Kelley, supported by J. Kelly to approve the corrected minutes of the last meeting on March 14, 2018. All ayes, Motion carried.

At 5:32 P.M. Chairman Doepker opened the public hearing for the Proposed Master Plan. There were no written input or calls regarding this matter. Chairman Doepker asked the audience if there were any issues, no one responded. Chairman Doepker closed the public hearing at 5:34 P.M.

Kurt Giles recommended the adoption that formally approves the Revised Master Plan Resolution 2018-01.

The following preamble and resolution was offered by member Reed, and supported by member D. Kelley:

WHEREAS, Act 33 of 2008, as amended, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA) authorizes the Planning Commission to prepare a Master Plan for the use, development and preservation of land in the County of Gratiot; and

WHEREAS, the representatives from the St. Louis Planning Commission prepared an updated Master Plan and Future Land Use Map and submitted the plan to the St. Louis City Council for review and comment; and

WHEREAS, on August 15, 2017, the St. Louis City Council received and reviewed the proposed Master Plan prepared by the Planning Commission and authorized distribution of the Master Plan to the Notice Group entities identified in the MPEA; and

WHEREAS, notice was provided to the Notice Group entities as provided in the MPEA; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on April 11, 2018 to consider public comment on the proposed updated Master Plan, and to further review and comment on the proposed updated Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the St. Louis Planning Commission finds that the proposed updated Master Plan is desirable and represents the goals, objectives and strategies of the City of St. Louis;

THEREFORE BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:

1. **Adoption of 2017 Master Plan.** The St. Louis Planning Commission hereby approves and adopts the proposed Master Plan, including all of the chapters, figures, maps and tables, and the Future Land Use Map as revised, contained therein.

2. **Effective Date.** The Master Plan shall be effective as of the date of adoption of this resolution.

Yeas: Reed, D. Kelley, Giles, S. Kelly, A. Kelly, J. Kelly, Palmer, Whitford, Doepker

Nays: None

Absent: None

The Chairperson declared this Resolution adopted.

Kurt Giles advised the Planning Commission of a Lot Split/Combine request at 510 Essex Drive. The agreement would take the east portion of Lot 97 frontage which measures to 32 ft 6 in at the front from 510 Essex Dr. This would be combined with existing parcel 53-850-096-00. This would make a straight property line for parcel 53-850-096-00. Planning Commission was concerned with the split/combine creating a nonconforming parcel relative to the existing accessory building on the Leonard Property.

Motion made by J. Kelly, approved by D. Kelley, to approve the split/combine contingent on side yard setback compliance.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Doepker, D. Kelley, Giles, Reed, S. Kelly, J. Kelly, Palmer, Whitford, A. Kelly

Nays: None

Motion carried.

See supplement for follow-up on side-yard setback compliance.

Kurt Giles advised the Planning Commission about a presentation that he attended regarding the concept of a Solar Farm at the former Veliscol Site. It would use a portion of the property for the farm with the solar panels being installed on concrete blocks not in the ground.

Motion made by D. Kelley, supported by Giles to adjourn at 6:06 P.M. All ayes. Motion carried.

Dori Foster

Recording Secretary

No meeting was held May, June, July, August, September, October.

Wednesday, November 14, 2018
Saint Louis

A regular meeting of the St. Louis Planning Commission was called to order by Acting Chairman Donna Kelley at 5:30 P.M.

Kurt Giles advised the Planning Commission that Chairman Doepker was excused from the meeting. Giles made a motion to appoint Donna Kelley as acting Chair, supported by Whitford. All ayes. Motion carried.

Present: D. Kelley, Giles, Reed, S. Kelly, J. Kelly, Palmer, Whitford, A. Kelley

Absent: Doepker (excused)

Others in Attendance: Keith Risdon-Utilities Director, Jacob Gregory-Resident, Doug Shelton-Community Member, Nathan Workman-Resident, Rosemary Horvath-Gratiot County Herald, Carolyn Studley-Community Member, MaryAnne Evans+Justin-Community Member, Bridget Vermeesch-Community Member, Michael Makera-Community Member, Richard Duggan-Community Member, Heather Therrien-Community Member, Sandy Melow-Community Member, Ray Melow-Community Member, Rich & Vicki Henry-Resident's, Glenda Johnson-Resident, Chris Hale-Resident, Dennis Maloney-Community Member, Ruth Sanger-Community Member, Joe Sanger-Community Member, Jennifer Workman-Resident, Rick Lopez-Resident, Brooke Seaman-Community Member, Kevin Stedman-Community Member, Audra & Jeff Stahl-Community Members/Jer-Den Plastics, Karmen Spencer-Resident, Valerie Kerr-Resident, Kim Hagerty-Resident, Cathy Hanley-Resident, Mona Hirson-Community Member

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Acting Chairman D. Kelley.

Motion made by J. Kelly, supported by Reed, to approve the minutes of the last meeting on April 11, 2018. All ayes, Motion carried.

Kurt Giles advised the Planning Commission that he was going to present the Site Plan Review for Jer-Den Plastics before the Special Use Permit request for 1001 W. Washington. Kurt stated that Jer-Den would like to add on a roughly 9,880 sq. ft expansion. Jeff Stahl from Jer-Den Plastics advised the Planning Commission that there would be no changes in traffic, they would like to add a drive to the side of the building which would run parallel to it. Kurt advised that the City recommends approval of the Site Plan for the expansion to Jer-Den Plastics. Motion made by Reed, supported by Giles to approve the site plan for Jer-Den Plastics. All ayes. Motion carried

Kurt Giles advised the Planning Commission of a Special Use Permit application for a Homeless Shelter at 1001 W. Washington. Kurt introduced Pastor Jake Gregory from Church of the Nazarene and Pastor Nathan Workman from Church of God. Pastor Nathan advised the Planning Commission that they are asking for approval for a short-term permit till the end of March 2019 to operate a Homeless Shelter out of the Church located at 1001 W. Washington Street. Nathan

stated that roughly a year ago they started to realize the needs of Gratiot County regarding homelessness were apparent. In 2017 there were roughly 600 persons considered homeless. Now homelessness looks a lot different here verses other towns. There are roughly 252 living under the elements-in cars etc. This 252 includes youth and kids. Nathan stated that Hope House has received 501©3 Non-profit status which allows them to operate.

Pastor Jake Gregory stated that they would like to operate out of the South East part of the building. They have 4,200 sq. ft of useable area. They would be using (3) three rooms for sleeping, a resource room and an office. The lower level would have a large open room as well. The shelter area would be separated by a fire wall and double doors for security from the church area. The shelter will follow all the fire safety requirements and egress. Showers will be taken at Church of Christ guests will be responsible for means of getting there and back. Dial-A-Ride out of Alma does operate over here and will be accessible for guests to use. There will be an intake process for guests, the sex offender registry will be checked, a background check will be performed as well. For guests, the program will run for 30 days which during this time staff will work with guests to help them be self-sufficient. They will be reevaluated at the end of the 30 days to see if they need more assistance. There will be no drugs or weapons allowed. All medicines will be locked up. Guests will help do chores around the shelter. Guests will check in at 6:00 P.M., they will be searched along with their bags. Dinner is at 7:00 P.M. which is provided by volunteers off site and brought in to the shelter. They will turn the lights out at 10:30 P.M. with wake-up time the next morning at 7:00 A.M. breakfast will be served then everyone has to be out by 8:00 A.M. The shelter will be closed from 8:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. for cleaning and inspecting the church. Pastor Jake stated that they have spoken with other homeless shelters around the state to gather information to help them run this shelter. Volunteers will work at the shelter in shifts to help keep watch over the guests. There will be 3-5 roughly per shift with the overnight one having at least one person awake all night. Guests will be watched for attempting to leave the shelter, going outside, staying in their rooms, and not disturbing others. There is plenty of parking for the shelter, there is a smoking area and the parking lot has flood lights. If more lights were needed they would be installed. A policy manual for the shelter had also been supplied to Planning Commission.

Planning Member Reed asked where the roughly 300 other homeless people were at? Pastor Jake stated they stay at local hotels, families are doubled up in houses, some are couch surfing from place to place. This causes families to be split up.

Planning Member Palmer questioned background checks and how that was going to be done. Pastor Jake stated everyone would be checked, they would be utilizing ICHAT and SOR through the State of Michigan.

At 5:58 P.M. Acting Chairman D. Kelley opened the public hearing for the Propose Homeless Shelter at 1001 W. Washington. A written statement had been sent by area resident Kevin Beeson prior to the meeting which had been provided to the Planning Commission. Chairman D. Kelley asked the audience if there were any questions and/or public comment.

Kevin Stedman from the high school read a letter from Principal Jennifer McKittrick who was unable to attend. It stated that many families will benefit from the shelter, youth that move from house to house struggle greatly in school and with their home lives. They are separated from

their parents. This shelter will help to keep these families together. They need safe housing and want nothing more than to be back on their feet. A lot of these parents are not looking for hand-outs they just want to be together. Kevin stated they both recommend the approval for the homeless shelter.

Planning Commission Member A. Kelly stated that 23 students in our district are currently homeless.

Rick Lopez Pastor of Resurrection Life Church stated they receive lots of calls for help. They have put families in hotels and helped as much as possible but there are numerous times that they have to say no and turn people away. Pastor Lopez recommends approval for the shelter.

Carmen Spencer has been helping homeless people for quite some time. Carmen stated that the need for the shelter is tremendous. She supports the shelter 100%.

Audra Stahl CEO for Child Advocacy a non-profit center of Alma stated that they deal with homeless families needing assistance on a weekly basis. She recalled this past summer watching a man out her window at Wright Park sleeping in the gazebo. She hopes the planning commission will consider this project because it is greatly needed.

Richard Duggan stated that he highly supports the shelter but has issues with it being so close to where he lives. He stated he lives alone and is very worried about the placement of the shelter. He hopes that nothing will happen but watching stories on TV, you never know.

Jennifer Workman, wife of Nathan Workman stated that there are a lot of homeless living here in St. Louis. She has seen them sleeping in the cemetery at night. They are here.

Kevin Beeson Supervisor of Pine River Township stated I would hope as a Planning Commission you would check your zoning ordinance that you are enforcing and make sure you are able to grant this use in a residential district. I am not able to find a shelter of this sort that is allowed. I personally believe that we are stretching it because we can't find anything in the ordinance that talks about homeless shelters. An ordinance is to protect the value of people's property. This shelter will affect property values if it develops and continues. Someone could look at my house and think you are across the street from a homeless shelter. Put it next to your house and you will understand the issues we are discussing.

Planning Commission Member Giles stated that the shelter is not allowed by right, but it is not prohibited either. It is proposed as a special land use permit, we believe it may be permitted by special land use. The City has also spoken with the city attorney as well.

Acting Chairman D. Kelley asked if there were any more questions from the audience. There were none. At 6:20 P.M. the public hearing was closed.

Motion made by Reed, supported by A. Kelly to accept the temporary Special Land Use Permit for the Homeless Shelter.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: D.Kelley, Giles, Reed, S. Kelly, J. Kelly, Palmer, Whitford, A. Kelly

Nays: None
Motion carried.

Kurt Giles advised the Planning Commission that there was no other business to report.

Motion made by J.Kelly, supported by Whitford to adjourn at 6:20 P.M. All ayes. Motion carried.

Dori Foster
Recording Secretary

No meeting was held in December.