

Mt. Pleasant Planning Commission
Work Session Minutes
February 7, 2013

Chairman Smith called the work session to order at 8:50 p.m.

Present: Brockman, Hoenig, Holtgreive (Vice-Chair), Shellady, Kostrzewa, Quast, Smith (Chair), one vacancy.

Staff: Gray, Murphy.

Others: Alan Bean and Rob Eggers, Spicer Group, addressed the Commission regarding the Master Plan Update.

Mr. Eggers gave an overview of the 11 components and provided an update on the progress.

Mr. Eggers reported that they have been working with the City's Community Information Director, Heather Smith to provide information on the City's web site, Facebook, Twitter, etc.

Mr. Eggers noted that they are looking for some feedback from the Commission on the sections of the Master Plan that they are currently working on: Neighborhoods and Downtown.

Neighborhoods: Mr. Eggers indicated they would like some discussion on the M-2 zoning districts and density, and whether the Commission feels that the current line is where it needs to be or if it should be moved.

Chairman Smith noted that the jagged line currently in place was placed based on the M-2 and Single-Family residential at the time; and noted that the line has changed over time. He commented that he feels there needs to be some flexibility based on how the neighborhoods are being used.

Commissioner Quast stated she feels that it is important for the single-family home owners to have some assurance that the M-2 zoning will not spill over into their neighborhoods, but acknowledged that perhaps the current line is not good. It was also noted that density isn't a bad ~~think~~ *thing* if managed properly. Staff commented that the 900 square feet of land area per person may not be the right number; however, noted that it does have a basis.

Discussion took place on the fact that the line will always be challenged and a natural barrier, although not practical, would be ideal.

Discussion took place on the demand for housing and redevelopments, and on the dwindling number of high school graduates and how that affects CMU enrollment. It was noted that the student housing in the city will always be in demand as it is close to campus and within walking distance to businesses; however the housing demand in the township may decrease.

Mr. Eggers and Mr. Bean shared a map showing the location of rental properties in the city, noting that Mt. Pleasant is made up of 64% rental property.

Based on the discussion, it was suggested that rather than defining the line, the Commission may want to look at defining the conditions and if density is on the table for discussion, form is important.

Mr. Eggers and Mr. Bean shared some models of various high-density neighborhoods; with various configurations. The Commission agreed that they would be willing to look at an increase in density in the M-2 neighborhood if modeled based on one of the designs shared, with individual detached houses or smaller scale attached housing around the block, and one central parking area in the middle of the block serving all properties. Other models with larger attached complexes were not as well received.

Downtown: Mr. Eggers suggested setting up a meeting with the Planning Commission, Downtown Development Board and the CBD/TIFA to discuss top priorities for downtown. Commissioner Quast noted that the goals for these groups would focus on different things. Commissioner Brockman noted that the City Commission has more input on Downtown issues.

Mr. Eggers noted that they want to make sure the Master Plan is not getting in the way of Downtown goals. He noted that they will also be looking for input from downtown business owners through an on-line survey, and will be encouraging the "meeting in a box" element also.

Mr. Bean described the "Meeting in a Box" process, and provided the Commission with a handout describing the process. Mr. Bean noted that this could be done simultaneously with the on-line survey. The Commission was asked to identify any service groups that they would be willing to present to and provide that information to staff so we can try and get on their agendas. A meeting date of March 21, 2013 was set for 6:00 p.m. at which time the Meeting in a Box materials will be distributed.

Mr. Eggers also noted that they will be working on setting up an open house for the public, and will try and coordinate it with the Mt. Pleasant Center open house.

Motion by Brockman, support by Dailey to adjourn.

Work session adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

bam