

A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BERKLEY CITY PLANNING COMMISSION WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 7:30 P.M. JUNE 23, 2015 AT CITY HALL BY CHAIRPERSON BARNETT.

PRESENT: Martin Smith Mark Richardson Dottie Popp
 David Barnett Ann Shadle Eric Murrell
 Joe Tangari

ABSENT: Tim Murad Michele Buckler

ALSO PRESENT: Kurt Hite, 3525 Robina
 William Kulpa, 3538 Robina
 Lea Luger, Yad Ezra, 2850 Eleven Mile
 Harold Remlinger, Birmingham
 Bob Bronstein, 3071 and 3052 Twelve Mile
 Glenn Pavey, Franklin
 Matteo Passalacqua, 3669 Robina
 Rebecca Riggs, 2969 Robina
 Mitch Brown, 3012 Robina
 Jessica and Bryan Wallace, 3525 Griffith
 Alan Semonian, 3336 Twelve Mile
 Cinda Coon, 3116 Twelve Mile
 Mark Coon, 3116 Twelve Mile
 Jennifer Taylor, 3257 Robina
 Andrew Ray, 3257 Robina
 Tara Hayes, 1021 Oxford
 Alan Kideckel, Councilmember
 Tina Edgar, Council Liaison
 Amy Vansen, City Planner

* * * * *

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

**It was moved by Commissioner Smith to approve the agenda.
Supported by Commissioner Murrell.
AYES: Murrell, Richardson, Popp, Tangari, Shadle, Smith, Barnett
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Buckler, Murad
Motion Carried.**

* * * * *

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**It was moved by Commissioner Richardson to approve the minutes of May 26, 2015.
Supported by Commissioner Shadle.
AYES: Murrell, Richardson, Tangari, Popp, Shadle, Smith, Barnett
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Buckler, Murad
Motion Carried.**

* * * * *

COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Vansen brought to the Commission’s attention the following items: Downtown Development Authority minutes, an article Commissioner Smith recommended on suburban sprawl, the City’s proposed Master Plan amendment, communications from Oakland County and Huntington Woods regarding the proposed master plan amendment, letter regarding RZ-01-15, and communication regarding the Woodward Complete Streets recommendation.

* * * * *

CITIZEN COMMENTS

None.

* * * * *

1. **SITE PLAN REVIEW: SP-03-15** Yad Ezra, 2850 Eleven Mile Road, between Robina and Kipling, is requesting site plan approval for an addition.

Harold Remlinger, architect, and Lea Luger, representative for Yad Ezra, were present.

Ms. Luger stated that Yad Ezra had purchased this building in 2001. The organization provides kosher food for low income, Jewish families. However anyone can come to the Yad Ezra food pantry regardless of his/her religion. Yad Ezra partners with Gleaners and Forgotten Harvest. Recently, the community gardens at LaSalette has provided fresh produce. 1300 families are provided with food per month. Yad Ezra is opened 5 days per week. It has 5 full time employees and 150 regular volunteers.

The intent of the greenhouse addition is to provide new volunteer opportunities in sustainability, food justice and the local food movement.

Funding for this project has been secured.

Mr. Remlinger explained that the addition would be finished in glass and brick. This greenhouse would be a showpiece. He provided samples of the building materials. The area directly south of the greenhouse addition would have movable racks. Hydroponics would be utilized. He estimates that about 24,000 pounds of leafy green vegetables will be grown annually.

There was some question regarding the setback from the building addition to the property line and having proper fire separation.

Mr. Remlinger advised that the west elevation may change due to venting requirements. The window details were being worked out: perhaps movable louvers on the ceiling and guillotine style windows on the lower portion of the wall. Mr. Remlinger clarified that there would be no grow lights used in the greenhouse and that supplemental lighting in the winter is not anticipated.

It was moved by Commissioner Smith to approve SP-03-15 with the following conditions:

- **All signs comply with Berkley City Code**
- **A bike rack for at least two bicycles be installed on the site in accordance with Berkley City Code.**

Supported by Commissioner Richardson.

AYES: Murrell, Richardson, Popp, Tangari, Shadle, Smith, Barnett

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Buckler, Murad

Motion Carried.

* * * * *

2. **PRESENTATION:** Presentation by LSL Planning regarding proposed improvements to Robina immediately north and south of Twelve Mile Road.

Brad Strader and Michelle Foster of LSL Planning were present. Mr. Strader presented a powerpoint. He stated that the City's 2007 Master Plan called for a public gathering place to be developed in the downtown. He explained that the state of Michigan is working with communities to develop vibrant places. MyPlace and the Michigan Municipal League assisted the City of Berkley last year in determining how Robina could be improved.

The Downtown Development Authority has taken the next step to see what can be built here. A sub-committee composed of DDA members, City Council members, and Planning Commissioners developed goals for the area improvements. It needs to protect businesses, be walkable, a gathering place, something different, permanent, provide programming, consider what it will look like year round, and low maintenance.

He reviewed that the sub-committee had considered keeping Robina the same width, removing on street parking and widening the sidewalk, closing the street during the summer, or permanently closing the street. The committee is recommending a permanent street closure.

He reviewed the responses received last Saturday at Art Bash. Most of the people polled were in favor of closing Robina.

Mr. Strader stated that a hawk signal which is pedestrian activated could be installed to help pedestrians safely cross Twelve Mile at Robina and connect the two halves of the Robina plaza.

Chairperson Barnett opened the meeting for public comments at 8:11 PM.

Cinda Coon, 3116 Twelve Mile, had concerns about Robina traffic turning into alley, traffic being too fast. They wondered how the PNC drive through would operate. She was concerned about the loss of parking and concerned that businesses were not involved.

Mark Coon, 3116 Twelve Mile, wanted to make sure that space was programmed and wondered if that cost had been thought through. Maintenance also needs to be considered. The parking on Robina is valued greatly by the abutting businesses.

Jessica Wallace, 3525 Griffith, is concerned about kids on the street and fast moving traffic cutting through the alley. She thought the proposed signal at Robina was a terrible idea.

Bob Bronstein, 3052 and 3071 Twelve Mile, was concerned about the loss of parking and the alley traffic.

William Kulpa, 3538 Robina, was against closing Robina for safety reasons. He was concerned that those polled at Art Bash were not Berkley residents.

Alan Semonian, 3336 Twelve Mile and Chairperson of the DDA, stated that the DDA supports this proposal. Visitors to the city and the downtown are a good thing. Two Robina businesses are on the sub-committee and they support this proposal. Public Safety issues need to be worked out. If the issues can't be resolved, then the DDA would be in favor of a seasonal closure. This space would allow more things to happen in the downtown and that would be a good thing for the City. More pedestrians mean more people shopping and dining in the City.

Seth Jones, 3514 Robina, was in favor of the proposal. He was concerned about noise and light levels. He is concerned that public seating would encourage people to loiter after restaurants close at 2AM. He suggested enforcing park hours for the space. He thought seasonal use would be more practical and thought that the space would not be used during the winter months.

Matteo Passalacqua, 3669 Robina, was in favor of the plan. He wanted to ensure that the end treatment of Robina was also aesthetically pleasing.

Rebecca Riggs, 2969 Robina, was happy with the proposal for the residents and the businesses.

Hearing no further comments, Chairperson Barnett closed the public comment section at 8:29 PM.

Commissioner Tangari was curious if bicyclists had been considered in this design. He also thought that sustainable stormwater management should be incorporated into the design. It was also his observation that whenever improvements are made for pedestrians, businesses benefit.

Commissioner Smith indicated that this proposal has ripple effects which need to be considered as well in any capital improvements.

Mr. Strader stated that these comments would be incorporated into the final report which would be forwarded to the Downtown Development Authority. At that point, next steps would include working out details to resolve traffic issues and developing cost estimates.

* * * * *

CITIZEN COMMENTS

None.

* * * * *

LIAISON REPORTS

Commissioner Popp advised that the Downtown Development Authority minutes were provided and were complete.

Commissioner Murad was absent so there was no report from the Chamber.

Commissioner Richardson reported that the Environmental Advisory Committee provided a bike corral at the Art Bash. However the location was moved and the corral was not well utilized as in years past. So it seems that the change of location confused would-be customers.

Chairperson Barnett reported that the City Council approved the rezoning on Buckingham.

* * * * *

STAFF/COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Smith asked for an update on the Coolidge striping stating that it is currently unsafe.

Commissioner Richardson stated that the Coolidge resurfacing between Webster and Twelve Mile will be finished ahead of schedule and under budget. Given the City's Complete Streets Policy, the bike path along that portion of Coolidge needs to be replaced.

Commissioner Murrell observed that five votes were needed to pass a motion regardless of how many commissioners were absent.

Commissioner Shadle thanked everyone that attended the meeting and asked them to continue to be involved. She observed that this improvement would take a long time to implement.

Chairperson Barnett also thanked everyone for attending. He agreed that this project had a long way to go and had many issues to resolve.

* * * * *

There being no further business, Chairperson Barnett adjourned the meeting at 8:46 PM.