THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BERKLEY CITY PLANNING COMMISSION WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 7:00 PM, FEBRUARY 25, 2020 AT CITY HALL BY CHAIR KRISTEN KAPELANSKI

The minutes from this meeting are in summary form capturing the actions taken on each agenda item. To view the meeting discussions in their entirety, this meeting is broadcasted on the city’s government access channel, WBRK, every day at 9AM and 9PM. The video can also be seen, on-demand, on the city’s YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/user/cityofberkley.

PRESENT:  Mark Richardson    Tim Murad       Kristen Kapelanski
          Lisa Kempner        Greg Patterson
          Martin Smith       Matt Trotto

ABSENT:   Michele Buckler
          Jeffrey Campbell

ALSO PRESENT: Erin Schlutow, Community Development Director
              Ross Gavin, City Council Liaison
              Wendi Zabramski
              Kurt Hite
              Members of public

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APPROVAL OF AGENDA
It was moved by Commissioner Richardson to approve the Agenda supported by Commissioner Trotto.

AYES: Kempner, Murad, Patterson, Richardson Smith, Trotto, Kapelanski
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Buckler, Campbell

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APPROVAL OF MINUTES
It was moved by Commissioner Murad to approve the minutes from January 28, 2020 and supported by Commissioner Kempner.

AYES: Murad, Patterson, Richardson, Trotto, Smith, Kempner, Kapelanski
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Buckler, Campbell

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COMMUNICATIONS
An email was received by the Community Development Department related to the parking modification discussion. The author of the email noted parking has been a continuous problem and the proposed modifications will make such problems worse.

The Planning Commission received the latest edition of the Michigan Planner newsletter.

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CITIZEN COMMENTS
None.
1. **MASTER PLAN 2020:** Community Development Director Schlutow provided an update to the Planning Commission regarding the community engagement activities that had been completed thus far by planning consultants Carlisle Wortman and city staff. Director Schlutow asked the Planning Commission to conduct the same activity, in order to ensure all city boards and commissions were able to lead their voices to the development of the Plan.

Director Schlutow asked four (4) questions directed to the PC:

1. What do you like about Berkley?
2. What do you want to see improved in Berkley?
3. What do you want to see changed in Berkley?
4. What do you think is missing?

Responses were logged and sent to Carlisle Wortman and will be included in the lists that will assist the City in developing the goals and objectives in the Master Plan.

2. **DISCUSSION:** Review and discussion for ordinance text amendment for modifying parking requirements.

Director Schlutow summarized the February 18, 2020 memo, which recommends a Zoning Ordinance text amendment that would allow the Planning Commission to grant a parking modification during site plan review. This approach has been implemented in other communities wherein the applicant can provide fact or is able to demonstrate that an alternate parking calculation is more appropriate to their proposed use of the property. Such modification would not run with the land, as a variance, but would be specific to the use of the property and site plan.

Chair Kapelanski opened public comment on the discussion item.

Wendi Zabramski noted that the parking problem has not been addressed for several years. She noted that there is not enough parking for several downtown businesses and the overspill goes into the residential neighborhood. Businesses instruct employees to park their vehicles on the residential side street. Ms. Zabramski offered suggestion such as shared parking agreements, development of municipal parking lots, permit parking on residential side streets, wayfinding signs for public parking, and the calculation of usable floor area for parking requirements. Ms. Zabramski suggested a comprehensive traffic study.

Kurt Hite recommended a limit to the modification threshold of ten percent with reasons, such as the inclusion of green space or buffer area. Mr. Hite noted the parking study within the Downtown Master Plan had some problems.

Chair Kapelanski addressed the comments received from the public and why the parking modification discussion has come about.

Commissioner Kempner stated that a threshold modification at 10 percent could be entertained without requiring proof from developers.

Commissioner Patterson agreed that this should only apply in certain circumstances.

Chair Kapelanski provided examples where the parking modification would be beneficial for developments where a variance would not be possible because there is not a demonstrated hardship.

Commissioner Murad discussed the example of La Salette and allowing a minor reduction could be beneficial.
Commissioner Smith noted the proposed amendment is for Planning Commission to have discretion in those cases, but it is not intended to be every case. Smith noted that a percentage threshold may not be needed. It should be kept simple.

Commissioner Kempner asked if the City Attorney had reviewed the proposed ordinance language and had offered any comments.

Director Schlutow responded that the City Attorney had reviewed the proposed ordinance and had offered suggestions similar to what the Planning Commission had been discussion. Director Schlutow also addressed concerns that had been brought by the public and the Commission.

Commissioner Richardson noted he had some written comments to provide to the city. He noted that he was in agreement with the proposed amendment and would support having the applicant jump through some hoops to provide a parking plan demonstrating the reduced need for parking.

Commissioner Trotto inquired about addressing future modification of size of parking spaces in addition to the numerical requirements.

Commissioner Smith agreed that that should be included in future parking discussions.

Director Schlutow noted the discussion and agreed make edits and bring it to the Planning Commission at a later date for further discussion.

3. **DISCUSSION:** Review and discussion for ordinance text amendments for projects requiring site plan approval.

Director Schlutow summarized the February 18, 2020 memo, which recommends review of Article VI, Division VII of the Zoning Ordinance pertaining to projects that require site plan review.

Chair Kapelanski opened public comment on the discussion item.

Wendi Zabramski noted that the existing changes had been made several years prior and afforded too much discretion to administration.

Kurt Hite noted that fewer projects should be allowed for administrative approval. He stated the Planning Commission review and approval allows for projects to be better reviewed and public comment opportunities.

Commissioner Smith and Commissioner Murad discussed the 50 percent façade change threshold and the history of the change.

Chair Kapelanski inquired how peer communities address reviews for adding parking and impervious surface to a property.

Commissioner Smith discussed the façade change 50 percent threshold and that figure should be reviewed. Commissioner Murad referenced a specific project wherein the façade change and site improvements should have warranted a review by the Planning Commission.

The Commission reviewed the language related to accessory structures. Chair Kapelanski requested how peer communities address reviews for accessory structures.

The Commission discussed the standards for review.

Director Schlutow stated that the current Zoning Ordinance does not contain specific language that
determines how revisions on an approved site plan should proceed; specifically, what type of changes would constitute a major or minor revision that would need to return to Planning Commission for review.

Chair Kapelanski suggested examples of minor revisions on a site plan that could be reviewed and approved administratively.

The Planning Commission discussed granting site plan approval extensions. Commissioner Smith was in favor of granting the extension. Commissioner Trotto inquired what would happen if a site plan received approval from the Planning Commission but then the Master Plan is adopted or ordinances change, would the site plan be beholden to the former zoning requirements.

4. **DISCUSSION:** Review and discussion for ordinance text amendments related to administrative review for dimensional variances.

Director Schlutow summarized the February 18, 2020 review letter detailing the current Zoning Ordinance section which allows for administrative review for dimensional variances to be conducted by the building department. The building official and city planner are specifically named to act as the ZBA during the administrative review.

Director Schlutow stated that administrative approval for dimensional variances is not common practice and recommends that this administrative authority to be removed from the Zoning Ordinance.

The Planning Commission agreed and directed city staff to set the public hearing to repeal Section 138-603.

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**LIAISON REPORTS**
Commissioner Richardson reported for the Environmental Advisory Committee. The Rain Barrel workshop at the Berkley Public Library had an attendance of 70 individuals and approximately 40 purchased rain barrels. A stormwater workshop will take place at the Berkley Public Library to discuss stormwater detention standards and what homeowners can do on their own property.

Commissioner Murad reported that Art Bash will take place on May 30, 2020.

Commissioner Trotto was unable to attend the DDA. He offered his liaison seat to another member of the Planning Commission, if they were available to attend those meetings. Lisa Kempner offered to take that responsibility.

Commissioner Patterson reported for the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. He reported the Oxford Merchants Park and the plan have been uploaded to the MDNR’s website and hope bids to go out March or April.

Commissioner Kempner reported on the Master Plan Steering Committee and provided a summary of the demographic data of the City.

Commissioner Kempner reported on the Community Center Committee and noted that a survey is going public to garner support for putting a community center initiative on the ballot.

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**STAFF/COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**
Commissioner Kepner wishes everyone to stay healthy.
Commissioner Richardson noted that he wanted a waterfall. Commissioner Smith requested a babbling brook.

Commissioner Trotto reported that school is closing the following day for a Snow Emergency.

Director Schlutow provided a status report on the DDA Overlay District and Design Guidelines. Schlutow noted that she has hosted informational meetings with business and property owners within the DDA to understand any reservations or issues with the guidelines and district ordinance, with the intent to bring the draft text to Planning Commission next month for review.

**With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:59pm.**