

**CITY OF BIG RAPIDS  
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES  
February 16, 2022**

Chair Jane called the February 16, 2022, regular meeting of the Planning Commission, to order at 6:32 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**PRESENT** Megan Eppley (Zoom), Sarah Montgomery, Jacob Buse, Chris Jane, and Rory Ruddick

**EXCUSED** None

**ABSENT** Kasey Thompson

**ALSO PRESENT** Paula Priebe, Community Development Director  
Emily Szymanski, Planning & Zoning Technician  
Jessie Black, Community Economic Development Specialist

There were 5 audience members.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion was made by Sarah Montgomery, seconded by Jacob Buse, to approve the minutes of the February 16, 2022 meeting of the Planning Commission as presented, with no changes.**

**Motion was passed with all in favor.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT NOT RELATED TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

None heard

**PUBLIC HEARINGS** None

## **GENERAL BUSINESS**

### **2022-2028 Capital Improvement Program**

#### **Staff Report**

Priebe summarized the Staff Report, stating that every year the City prepares and adopts a 6-year Capital Improvements Program (CIP) as required by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act. Departments make requests for funding of capital projects which are then reviewed and prioritized by City staff. Projects scheduled for 2022-2028 will make up the capital budget, and part of the annual budget. Projects scheduled for later years help the City plan ahead for future expenditures. Staff supports a recommendation to approve the 2022-2028 Capital Improvements Program from the Planning Commission to the City Commission.

Discussion ensued over the following topics:

- Montgomery asked for clarification on what the different priority rankings indicate. Priebe stated that every year, each department ranks projects for the year in priority order. Top priority projects usually receive funding but depends on different funding sources. The scoring process is based on five different criteria:
  1. Project will improve quality of life or quality of service of residents or users.
  2. If deferred, absence of project would negatively impact residents and users.
  3. Project is part of a multi-year funding commitment.
  4. Project is part of, or complements, other ongoing projects.
  5. Project is part of an approved City plan.

**Motion was made by Jacob Buse, seconded by Sarah Montgomery, to recommend that the City Commission approve the 2022-2028 Capital Improvements Program.**

**Motion was passed with all in favor.**

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### **Annual Report of Planning and Zoning 2021**

#### **Staff Report**

Priebe provided an overview of the Annual Report of Planning and Zoning. This Report is required by both the Michigan Planning Enabling Legislation and the MEDC's Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) program. Staff prepared this Report to share to the City Commission, ensuring that information is being shared between the different boards of the City on a regular basis. In 2021, the Planning Commission met ten times – nine regular meetings and one special meeting. The Planning Commission recommended, and the City Commission adopted, three different amendments to the Zoning Ordinance. Two site plan reviews were held in 2021. The Zoning Board of Appeals met for two different variance requests. When preparing the Annual Report of Planning and Zoning, staff references the ongoing goals and recommendations of the City's Master Plan. Other planning projects for 2021 include working toward becoming Redevelopment Ready certified as well as the 2022-2026 Park and Recreation 5-Year Plan.

## **Continued Discussion of Proposed Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance Regulations for Marihuana Businesses re: Curbside Sales and Service**

### Staff Report

Priebe summarized the discussion regarding marihuana curbside sales and service during the January 2022 Planning Commission meeting. During the last meeting, staff presented three options for changes to the Marihuana Ordinance. Planning Commissioners asked staff to research two items before making a recommendation to the City Commission: 1. How local marihuana businesses are impacted by curbside sales and service and 2. How comparable communities are regulating marihuana curbside sales and service. Szymanski reached out to the local marihuana businesses and asked a series of questions in order to understand how curbside impacts Big Rapids and its residents. Correspondence from representatives of the marihuana businesses is included in the Packet. Black researched marihuana curbside sales and service in comparable communities and discovered that out of the six comparable communities researched, four do not regulate marihuana curbside through zoning. Instead, many municipalities follow State guidelines.

Commissioners discussed the following:

- Jane stated that after the January meeting, he took some time to observe curbside sales occur in the downtown and didn't see anything out of the ordinary.
- Montgomery stated that although she was against curbside sales in the City during the previous discussion, she took some time to reflect on the matter. Montgomery stated that individuals with physical and mental disabilities use marihuana for medicinal purposes and offering curbside sales relieves stress and anxiety of having to go into the store.
- Ruddick stated that he is 'pro-business' and is in support of curbside sales.

Chair Jane invited representatives from the local marihuana businesses to make any comments.

John McLeod, Founder of Cloud Cannabis, introduced himself and thanked the Commission for having this in-depth conversation about curbside sales for marihuana businesses.

Staff will prepare for the formal Public Hearing at the March 2022 meeting for a recommendation to be made to the City Commission.

**UNSCHEDULED BUSINESS**      None

**There being no further business, Chair Jane adjourned the meeting at 7:19 PM with all in favor.**

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Szymanski  
Planning & Zoning Technician and Planning Commission Secretary