

City of Wyandotte
PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes of the Thursday, March 17, 2011, Meeting
MINUTES AS RECORDED

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Elizabeth Krimmel at 6:30 p.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Eberts, Hovis, Krimmel, Lupo, Rockershousen, Schultz, Tavernier

COMMISSIONERS EXCUSED: Duran and Parker

ALSO PRESENT: Charles Leman
Kelly Roberts, Recording Secretary

COMMUNICATIONS:

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER TAVERNIER, supported by Commissioner Eberts to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 17, 2011. MOTION PASSED.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. PUBLIC HEARING – PC #020111 - Request from the City of Wyandotte to rezone the property from the west side of Biddle Avenue to the east side of 1st Street from Poplar to Chestnut, Wyandotte, Michigan. It is proposed to rezone the property from General Business District (B-2); Vehicular Parking District (P-1); Multiple Family Residential District (RM-1) and Two Family Residential District (RT) to Plan Development District (PD).

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER ROCKERSHOUSEN, supported by Commissioner Eberts to recommend to the City Council that the property from east side of Biddle to the west side of 1st Street from Poplar to Chestnut, Wyandotte, Michigan, County of Wayne be rezoned from General Business District (B-2); Vehicular Parking District (P-1); Multiple Family Residential District (RM-1) and Two Family Residential District (RT) to Plan Development District (PD).

YEAS: Eberts, Hovis, Krimmel, Lupo, Rockershousen, Schultz, Tavernier
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Duran and Parker
MOTION PASSED

PERSONS IN THE AUDIENCE:

Mrs. Anna Crapanzano, owner of the property at 84 Perry Place, Wyandotte requesting the Commission review the location of the dumpster at the apartment building on Biddle Avenue adjacent to her property. Said dumpster is located adjacent to her building and causing her tenant problems.

The Commission will review this at it's next meeting.

SPECIAL ORDER:

BILLS AND ACCOUNT:

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER EBERTS, supported by Commissioner Lupo to:

1. Pay Beckett & Raeder for Planning Consultant fee for February 2011 in the amount of \$700.00
2. Hours for Secretarial Services: 02/11/11 – 2/27/11 7 Total Hours

YEAS: Eberts, Hovis, Krimmel, Lupo, Rockershousen, Schultz, Tavernier

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Duran and Parker

MOTION PASSED

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER SCHULTZ, supported by Commissioner Eberts to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING – PC #020111 - Request from the City of Wyandotte to rezone the property area between West side of Biddle Avenue to the east side of 1st Street from Poplar to Chestnut, Wyandotte, Michigan.

Chairperson Krimmel opened the public hearing for comments.

Commissioner Schultz read a letter from R. J. Nixon Funeral Home, 2544 Biddle Avenue, Wyandotte into the record. Letter is attached.

Mr. Richard Greaves, 2732 Biddle Avenue, Wyandotte. Mr. Greaves read the letter which is attached to these minutes.

Ms. Gina Conti, 2732 Biddle Avenue, Wyandotte. Ms. Conti stated that she has lived in her home for 27 years and does not want it rezoned to PD. Ms. Conti indicated that she does not see how rezoning the property would benefit her or any other homes in the proposed rezoning area.

Ms. Conti indicated that if someone who wants to rezone their property could submit an application for their property separately. Ms. Conti asked what is the emergency in changing the zoning who wants to redevelop the area and what is the plan for redevelopment? Ms. Conti added that just because it is part of the Master Plan you now want it rezoned.

Ms. Conti indicated that there are 13 homes in the area that the Planning Commission wants to rezone and some of these homes are historic with historic significance to Wyandotte.

Ms. Conti indicated that she is not happy with the area being rezoned and she feels she is being stripped of her property rights and she hopes that the Planning Commission consider the Burd's letter and added that she does not want it rezoned. It is her property being rezoned not the Commissions.

Dave Kostelnik, Wyandotte Historical Commission, present. Mr. Kostelnik read the letter which is attached to these minutes.

Mary Louise Behnemann, 2729 21st Street, Wyandotte, Michigan..

Ms. Behnemann asked why the Commission sees it necessary to rezone these properties.

Chairperson Krimmel indicated that the Commission received a request from the City Council to hold the public hearing.

Ms. Behnemann asked what is the City planning on putting in there that the area needs to be rezoned.

Chairperson Krimmel indicated that the Commission has no plans at this time, they have been asked by the City Council per a Resolution to hold the public hearing.

Mr. Yinger, 117 Chestnut, Wyandotte.

Mr. Yinger stated that he is adjacent to the area that is being considered for rezoning, there is a delicate balance in the tax structure of the City, and he is just cautions the Commission about blindly rezoning property.

Ms. Conti asked if the Commission is going to vote on this tonight and stated that the people in the area do not get a vote on this. Ms. Conti indicated further that there are 13 homes in this area that need to be considered.

Chairperson Krimmel indicated that the Commission holds the public hearing and then it is referred to the City Council.

Ms. Conti indicated that she objects to this rezoning, it will affect 13 homes and it will affect the sale of these properties. Ms. Conti indicated that the Commission should hold off on this rezoning. Ms. Conti indicated that it will be hard to get a mortgage on properties that are zoned PD.

Commissioner Schultz indicated that PD does not mean there is a plan development going in there, it gives the City more control as to what can go in. Commissioner Schultz indicated that under a B2 zoning district there is no control as to what can go in there.

Commissioner Schultz further indicated that the Historical Commission supports, and added that this rezoning can help protect the City.

Mr. Leman reviewed what would be allowed in a B-2 Zoning District; minor auto reconditioning, auto car wash, gas station, tattoo parlor, self-service laundry 24 hour drive thru. Mr. Leman indicated that Tim Horton's property was not zoned PD it was B-2 which allowed the use, if it was zoned PD, the Planning Commission would have had more control. Mr. Leman indicated that the area from Poplar to Ford Avenue is currently zoned PD on Biddle.

Mr. Leman indicated that the City does not have a Historic District at the present time. Mr. Leman indicated that the Commission spent 2 years reviewing the Master Plan. Mr. Leman indicated that PD works to give the City the right to review in depth the development. Mr. Leman indicated that PD is far more restrictive than B-2.

Commissioner Schultz stated that if someone wanted to purchase the old Firestone Building to build an auto store the City could not stop them, there would be no public hearing just a reviewed the site plan, which is not a public hearing.

Commissioner Tavernier indicated that the Commission is just collecting the information and will make a Resolution tonight, but the final rezoning will be up to the City Council.

Commissioner Rockershausen asked if there is a Historical District currently.

Commissioner Schultz indicated that there is single site only at 81 Chestnut. Commissioner Schultz stated that he is not sure if the State has approved that district yet. Commissioner Schultz indicated that they have talked about expanding it, but it is very restrictive and the Historical Commission tried to make the downtown into a Historical District Area, but it was not approved.

Mr. Leman stated that changing to a Historical District would require the home to follow the State Requirements and currently the City of Wyandotte has no historical designee currently in the zoning ordinance and it would be up to the residents to petition the City for a Historical District.

Chairperson Krimmel indicated that the Commission tries to preserve the area as much as possible, but if CVS came to the old Roberts Hall on Biddle and wanted to build a CVS there they could without the City approving it. Chairperson Krimmel indicated that making it PD would allow the City control over what could go there, because the City would have to approve the project.

Commissioner Rockershausen indicated that since RJ Nixon's requested to hold this issue in abeyance for 2 months and since they own the majority of the property maybe the Commission should hold this in abeyance and meet with RJ Nixon's.

Chairperson Krimmel indicated that she talked to Christine Burd of RJ Nixon and she explained the rezoning the best she could and how this would be the best thing for her property.

Chairperson Krimmel asked if there were any other persons who wished to speak on this issue. There being none, the public hearing was closed.

Three (3) communications were received regarding this rezoning.



R. J. Nixon Funeral Home

Tuesday, March 15th, 2011

Wyandotte Planning Commission
3131 Biddle Avenue
Wyandotte, Michigan 48192
Attn: Elizabeth Krimmel, Chairperson
Kelly Roberts, Secretary

Dear Mrs. Krimmel and Commission,

This letter is in response to the letter sent to us dated March 2, 2011 in regards to the rezoning of property on the west side of Biddle Avenue between Chestnut Street and Poplar Street east of First Street.

On the date that we received this letter we were completely unaware of any plans to rezone this area from General Business District (B-2) and Vehicular Parking District (P-1) to a Plan Development District (PD). Since then, we have been trying to figure out what exactly this change would mean and how it would affect the property that we hold in this above mentioned area.

We do know, that in this area, we hold the majority of the property that this rezoning would affect. Therefore, we would like to ask that any decision that the Planning Commission and the Mayor and Council would make would be; to hold any decisions for as least sixty days until we could discuss this matter with our representatives. It is hard for us, at this point, to make a determination whether we should support or oppose this request.

We submit this with due sincerity,



Linda Burd-Berman
Christine Burd

March 17, 2011

To the Wyandotte Planning Commission regarding Hearing #020111

My name is Richard Greaves. I am a former Landscape Architect with R. C. Greaves and Associates of Milwaukee, WI. I live with Gena Conti at 2732 Biddle Avenue, Wyandotte in the three block area you want to rezone today.

I don't understand the true purpose or reasons of this arbitrary zoning step to the aimless, hollow zoning mixture of "Planned Development - Office" in the Wyandotte the Master Plan .

The only evidence of the City's vision, are references to the Wyandotte Master Plan, which is nothing more than a changeable Zoning Map.

Many people mistakenly think there is zoning protection in a Wyandotte Historical District Area or there is value to the City for older homes as Wyandotte re-zones **all the properties** for a half mile, on the west side of Biddle Avenue (from Chestnut to Spruce), to **Planned Development - Office**. I am concerned about being forced to sell a residence to a developer or the city at reduced prices because nobody can buy it as a residence. Developers won't value existing houses, but see them as impediments to be razed

Are there currently any offices among the residences between Spruce and Chestnut? What's the real Master Plan for the 13 residences in the blocks you want to rezone tonight?

The insignificant language of the **Planned Development** intentions pose no real or true guidelines, just references to the Wyandotte Master Plan zoning map.

With wording like, "substantially in accord with the goals and objectives of the City of Wyandotte master plan in providing for a **balanced land use pattern** for homes, business, industry, community facilities and services." Where's the place for homes in your rezoning tonight?

Take the great claim "It is further the intent of this district to provide for development which will be carried out in such manner as to **preserve natural features** such as waterfront areas and their accessibility to the public and to promote energy efficient development."

Bold talk, until a property owner decides they don't like the natural features of a property and change them. Planned Development toothlessly intends to "preserve natural features", but in the past, most of the natural, live, beautiful, harmless, 25-50 year old trees on **our block** have already been cut down, while governed by the City's **current** Master Plan.

In the Planned Development area you expect to rezone today, harmless trees were cut down across the street from the only official historic building in Wyandotte at 81 Chestnut, even after Mayor Peterson expressly stated how much he liked those trees.

Natural features that could have been saved like the tall 18" shade tree on the west border of 73 Superior and the 30 year old harmless trees on the approved site plan of the north border of Gena Conti's property were cut down because the property developer didn't like them.

B2, Planned Development, any zone - every developer, already needs Planning Commission review and site plan approval if they seek a zoning change; so what's the point of this zoning initiative? All the control is still in the hands of the arbitrary city rulings.

When Gena Conti bought her 1901, three-story, single family Van Alstyne home, it was surrounded by business and zoned B2. Well, in 1985 she had trouble getting a **conventional mortgage** at banks, because the house was in a General Business, B2 zone.

What caused the city to require that the historic John Van Alstyne residence be zoned General Business B2 in the first place?

How is the public served by changing the zoning of the house at 79 Poplar from RA to PD in your plans tonight?

Business zoning status like Office, certainly doesn't benefit Gena Conti's Master Plan. Her single family property and all the other residences in this three block area don't have enough land for parking for a business and few businesses could use any property with little or no parking. Re-zoning the 13 residential properties to Planned Development means they are further distanced from their true residential status.

On March 8, 2010 when there were hearings about vacating the public alley between 73 Superior and the former Firestone store on Biddle, Rose Henry of The Grind presented a 210 signature petition opposing any site plan or zoning that allowed a fast food drive through, but the city unanimously agreed to vacate the north-south alley and convert it General Business in keeping with the master plan.

The City Council deemed it a necessary "**public improvement** for the **health, welfare, comfort and safety** of the People of the City of Wyandotte". At the time of the hearing there was no announced development plan for the alley, only discussion by the owner of the former Firestone property Mr. Joseph Daly who told Gena Conti about the plan to vacate the alley in February of 2010. There were no obstacles to development.

Magically on May 20, 2010 when the 73 Superior Multiple Family property was rezoned to General Business, Chairperson Krimmel made it clear the rezoning was in keeping with the Wyandotte Master Plan of Planned Development - Office zone, from Chestnut to Superior. A 97 signature petition to oppose a fast food, drive through establishment was presented, 4 individual letters opposed it, 9 people testified against the rezoning. Only one person spoke in support of the plan. These hearings seem to be nothing but a legal formality.

To the City of Wyandotte, a restaurant with a **24 hour drive through** qualifies for **Planned Development - Office** zoning status. This all seems like a quiet preamble to eventual take over of naive trusting home owners.

What assurances do we have that a single-family non-conforming residence surrounded by commercial properties isn't deemed unfit or unsalable as a residence, because it's non-conforming according to an "**unspecified, balanced land use pattern**" and now offends the Master Zoning Plan of 2015 or 2020.

What is the true purpose of planned development to office status rezoning for these residences? How does it benefit us?

Richard Greaves
2732 Biddle Avenue
Wyandotte, MI 48192



3-17-11

Concerning the proposal to re-zone Biddle and First st to Plan Development District (PD)

America's great historical moments have occurred when Realism and Idealism have combined..

What does this model proposal to re-zone this area ask?

1 it asks that the whole area, a very large area at that, Chestnut to Poplar between the West side of Biddle and the East side of 1st to be left in the hands of the Engineering office and the developers. That scares me.

Right now the area is spattered with some nice homes, the museums and a church as well as two funeral homes. I can see it now. Another strip mall just like the ones on Eureka and Fort Street. While a beautiful strip mall in it's place, it has no place on Biddle Ave in the area in question. The big question is what to do with the old Robert Hall building on north corner of Superior and Biddle.

I am against a form of development that will take away from the architectural culture of this section of Biddle.

50 years from now what will have been more important to have in the city? Protected historic structures, actually encouraged by the engineering and building dept or a Taco Bell.

We should be very wary of letting this go to the Plan Development and the hands that will guide it. I really don't have an idea what the PD has in mind, but somebody has a plan.

I am a proponent of capitalism and free enterprise, it is those kinds of ventures that have made this country great. Money is power, and power is influence. But this is our city, many who would want to re-shape the city do not live in this city.

Wyandotte is a unique city in this region and in America. We have our own power, water, cable and now the geo-thermal endeavor is gaining momentum.

Wyandotte also has the best examples of historical architecture in this downriver area. These buildings dating back to the 1860's and the turn of last century are anchors to our historical culture. The bone structure of our city if you will.

We should do all we can to preserve as an Ideal along with the Reality that our times are changing.

To begin with, the city should take the block of Biddle and First between Superior and Vinewood and register it as a historical block. If the Robert Hall property is up for grabs, it should be used as law or medical offices and built to "fit in" to the architecture. Period.

It should compliment it's neighbors and not simply be a feather in the cap of local developers. Look for another location to put up a fast food restaurant or strip mall in. Not on Biddle. That is what I am afraid of.

The Engineering Department, with all of it's good people that I love, has had by it's nature, an opposition to Historical Preservation.

The question is, "What is your Treasure?" Where does it lie. These are questions to think about before re-zoning an area already struggling to hold it's own and secure it's identity.