

CITY OF HOWELL
MEMORANDUM

TO: MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
FROM: TIMOTHY R. SCHMITT, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
DATE: MARCH 14, 2018
RE: 2017 PLANNING COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT

Once again, Staff is pleased to present the Planning Commission to the Annual Report covering the previous calendar year. Per the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, an annual report to the legislative body is required to be produced by the Planning Commission, outlining progress and challenges from the previous year. There are number of items to track, from zoning changes to site plans and potential ordinance changes. And as was the case in previous reports, if the Planning Commission has suggestions for other items they would like to see in this year-end wrap up, Staff would be happy to incorporate them.

The Planning Commission reviewed a variety of projects again in 2017 and provided direction to Staff on a number of other items. There were a total of 24 applications submitted to the City for review by the Planning Commission, one of which was eventually withdrawn over financial issues. The Board of Zoning Appeals reviewed another five applications, two of which had previously been reviewed by the PC. A total of 10 meetings were held, with the June and November meetings canceled for lack of business. The BZA held three meetings in 2017.

Zoning Ordinance Amendments

The Planning Commission reviewed one Ordinance amendment last year. It was a City initiated request to amend over 30 sections of the Zoning Code, correcting technical errors and addressing some minor, unrelated issues. Staff had been preparing the ordinance throughout 2017 and the Planning Commission reviewed it at two separate meetings, with a third and final review occurring in early 2018. The ordinance is set for review and adoption by the City Council in early 2018.

In 2018, Staff will be preparing several ordinance changes to address items that are large enough to warrant their own review and were removed from the 2017 Ordinance Update. These include regulations regarding first floor uses in the CBD district, regulations for donation bins, and potential further regulation on hotel/motel/extended stay hotels.

Development Reviews and Variances

As mentioned previously, there were a total of 29 applications made to the City of Howell in 2017. This included plans for the resumption of the remainder of the Gallery Park project, both to the rear and to the front of the existing units, another expansion to the Thai Summit complex, and a new medical office building at the Crossroads Town Center. Each of these applications needed either Planning Commission or Board of Zoning Appeals action to move forward. Staff has attached the overall project log for the year, showing both active and inactive projects that were reviewed by the Commission.

Comprehensive Plan Review

As the Planning Commission may recall, our Comprehensive Plan did not contain traditional goals and objectives. Rather, we split the City into smaller areas and focused on things to “Preserve, Create, or Change” in each area. This was combined for the whole City into an “Implementation Matrix,” which is attached. There are four time categories to indicate the scope of the action: ongoing, 1-2 years, 2-5 years, and 2-10 years. Staff can report progress in 2017 on the following:

Make lists of Permitted and Special Uses in Commercial Districts More General (1-2 years): Planning Commission recommended approvals of some ordinance language changes that would move this item forward. Staff will continue to evaluate areas where streamlining of ordinance language is warranted.

Establish an Area for Food Trucks in the City (1-2 years): The Downtown Development Authority has been very successful with the Food Truck Rally and Food Truck Tuesdays in the downtown. We will continue to support these events as they grow and potentially evolve.

Add Standards for Accessory Dwelling Units in the Zoning Ordinance (2-5 years): There are provisions for ADUs in either residential or non-residential situations and the standards have been slightly clarified.

Create ‘Pop Up’ Gathering Places with Temporary Furnishings (2-5 years): Lead by the DDA, the Peanut Row Alley received grant funding for a variety of temporary and slightly more permanent enhancements that are set to be installed early in 2018. We continue to look at other areas of the City for this concept, should additional funding become available.

Communicate with St. Joseph Mercy Health System (and other land owners in the medical corridor) Regularly on Development Plans (2-5 years): Staff has had conversations with many of the property owners along Byron Road in the last year regarding potential development and redevelopment of properties. We continue to support medical uses in the area, although it should be noted that the corridor is becoming increasingly popular for religious uses, which are permitted.

Requirements for Transition of Non-Conforming Uses into Uses that Integrate with the Neighborhood Character (2-5 years): Although amortizing non-conforming uses is not legal in Michigan, Staff will note that we have supported three projects in 2017 that converted multi-family structures back into single-family homes. These projects stabilize neighborhoods and Staff will continue to actively support future requests of this nature. This item will be ongoing throughout the City.

Provide Staff Assistance to those Wishing to Pursue Historic District Designation (ongoing): Staff had at least three conversations in 2017 regarding potential expansion of the City’s historic district. Although no action was taken, there is interest in the field and Staff will continue to support any effort that comes forward.

Remove Dangerous Buildings and Improve Site Conditions in the Mobile Home Park (ongoing): The new owner and operator of Howell Estates has made tremendous progress since 2015 and at this time, Staff believes that all the truly dangerous structures in the park, owned by the park, have been addressed or are scheduled to be addressed soon. The next steps are to address owner occupied structures. Staff is currently doing a more granular inventory of units that fall into this category and are working on a strategy for potential assistance to address them.

Current Membership

There were no changes to the membership of the Planning Commission in 2017. Councilmember Lobur was reappointed by the City Council to serve as the Councilmember on the Planning Commission. Maryanne Vukonich was reappointed to a new three year term, ending in April 2017. The current membership of the Planning Commission is:

FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	TERM/TYPE	EXPIRES
Erin	Britten	Appointed 3 yr	04/30/18
Robert	Spaulding	Appointed 3 yr	04/30/19
Jan	Lobur	City Council Member, Annual	04/30/18
Maryanne	Vukonich	Appointed 3 yr	04/30/20
Paul	Streng	Appointed 3 yr	04/30/19
Jeannette	Ambrose	Appointed 3 yr	04/30/18
Nick	Proctor	Mayor, serves per City Ordinance	

Table 19. Implementation Matrix

<i>Action</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>When</i>
Setback averaging provisions	All neighborhoods	Zoning	1-2 years
Make site plan process easier to resume construction on previously abandoned sites.	All neighborhoods	Zoning	1-2 years
Make lists of permitted and special uses in commercial districts more general	Centers, Corridors	Zoning	1-2 years
Establish an area for food trucks in the City.	Centers, Corridors	Partnerships	1-2 years
Create a foods truck ordinance.	Centers, Corridors	Zoning	1-2 years
Allow for more temporary uses in appropriate areas of the City	Centers, Corridors, some Districts	Zoning	1-2 years
Calibrate the lot sizes, widths, and setbacks	Core Neighborhoods	Zoning	1-2 years
Modify standards for lot area, width and to mimic the existing lots in Core Neighborhoods	Core Neighborhoods	Zoning	1-2 years
Setback and lot coverage requirements to reduce non-conformities	Core Neighborhoods	Zoning	1-2 years
Allow porches to be constructed within the front setbacks	Core Neighborhoods	Zoning	1-2 years
New ways to regulate low-impact entrepreneurial uses including performance-based zoning,	Everywhere	Zoning	1-2 years
Flexibility in parking requirements to allow for unique uses	Everywhere	Zoning	1-2 years
Modify zoning requirements to ensure that new development is consistent with the existing character	Suburban Neighborhoods	Zoning	1-2 years

<i>Action</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>When</i>
Add standards for accessory dwelling units to the zoning ordinance	All Neighborhoods	Zoning	2-5 years
For City-owned property near downtown consider requiring single-level condominiums	Centers		2-5 years
Create “pop up” gathering places with temporary furnishings	Centers, Corridors	Partnerships	2-5 years
Allow a mix of uses following the pattern of current use.	Core Neighborhoods	Zoning	2-5 years
Zoning standards allow for reasonable expansions while protecting neighborhood quality of life	Employment districts	Zoning	2-5 years
Provide design expertise for building owners looking at rehabilitating and/or reusing historic structures	Everywhere	Partnerships	2-5 years
Zoning strategies to allow redesign of aging strip centers and other commercial sites	General corridors	Zoning	2-5 years
Include a wider variety of uses in zoning districts within corridors.	General corridors	Zoning	2-5 years
Zoning standards for design so that new building scale, placement, and form more seamlessly integrates with adjacent neighborhoods	General corridors	Zoning	2-5 years
Plan for the Byron Road corridor with St Joseph Mercy Health System	Medical/office corridor	Partnerships	2-5 years
Communicate with St Joseph Mercy Health System (and other land owners in the medical corridor) regularly on development plans	Medical/office corridor	Partnerships	2-5 years
Requirements for transition of non-conforming uses into uses that integrate with the neighborhood character	Transition districts	Zoning	2-5 years

<i>Action</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>When</i>
Design assistance to historic building owners	Centers	Partnerships	2-10 years
Appropriately zoned, available property near downtown where single-level condominiums could be located	Centers, Core Neighborhoods	Zoning	2-10 years
Work with prospective developers to create single-level condominiums close to the downtown area	Centers, Core Neighborhoods	Partnerships	2-10 years
Investigate the feasibility of including larger, higher price-point homes on	Centers, districts		2-10 years
Ordinance changes to preserve the architecture	Centers	Zoning	5-10 years
Grant or low-interest loan program for home modifications to make them more senior-friendly	Core, Suburban Neighborhoods	Partnerships	5-10 years
Consult developers of larger single family homes on feasibility	Districts	Partnerships	5-10 years
New zoning regulations for the Byron Road corridor; integration of offices, medical uses, shared parking, and buildings scale	Medical/office corridor	Zoning	5-10 years
Rental rehabilitation funding for downtown	Centers	Partnerships	Ongoing
Third-party administrator for rental rehabilitation grants	Downtown	Administration	Ongoing
Rehabilitation knowledge and experience in City's building official	Everywhere	Administration	Ongoing
Provide staff assistance to those wishing to pursue historic district designation	Everywhere	Partnerships	Ongoing
Remove dangerous buildings and improve site conditions in the Mobile Home Park	MHP Neighborhood	Code enforcement	Ongoing
Monitor aging multi-family housing developments	Multi-family Neighborhoods	Code enforcement	Ongoing

2017 Annual Report

Log #	Applicant	Location	Project	PC Review	Admin. Review	Enforcement Action?	Status Update
#17-001	Robert Koch	1028 Bower	Lot Split	X			Request to split southern 70 feet of lot at 1028 Bower to create new lot PC approved February 2017
#17-02	Michael Jonna	1455 North Michigan	Site Plan	X			Request to reconfigure parking lot to add several parking spaces PC Approved March 2017 Completed
#17-03	City of Howell	1191 South Michigan	Site Plan	X			Request to add new utility building to house new sludge press PC Approved March 2017 Completed
17-04	Mannik & Smith Group	416 N National	Variance				Variances for number of accessory structures on the property and length of time for temporary structure BZA approved March 2017 Completed
17-05	The Pearl Building LLC	309 E Grand River	Site Plan	X			Rehabilitation of building at 309 E Grand River for restaurant and apartments. Construction new apartment to the rear. PC Approved May 2017
17-06	Masonic Temple Assc	422 W Grand River	SUP	X			New auto repair shop in former Bay Station building PC Approved May 2017 Occupied
17-07	Amico Holdings LLC	2140 Industrial	Site Plan	X			New warehouse building and reconstruction of paving throughout lot PC Approved May 2017 Under construction
17-08	Thai Summit	1480 McPherson Park Drive	Site Plan	X			Approximately 77,000 square foot building addition and new parking/maneuvering throughout site PC Approved May 2017 Completed
17-09	Vern Brockway	Vacant Lucy Road	Lot Split	X			Creation of new two acre parcel from remaining 40+ acres of vacant land PC Approved May 2017
17-11	Jason Piepho	618 Kimball	Variance Request				Variance to allow new pool to be built on vacant lot in Town Commons Subdivision BZA approved May 2017
17-12	The Pearl Building LLC	309 E Grand River	Variance Request				Variance requests to allow accessory structure on property BZA approved May 2017
17-13	Jason Schrock	123 Riddle	Variance Request				Variance request to allow garage expansion BZA approved May 2017
17-14		114 S Walnut	SUP	X			Use of existing buildings as religious facility Application withdrawn
17-15	V&R Building Company	Vacant Gallery Park Land	Site Plan	X			Modification of previously approved plans for vacant land in the Gallery Park project PC Review October 2017
17-16	Howell Area Fire Authority	1211 W Grand River	Site Plan	X			Expansion of existing fire station building PC Approved July 2017
17-17	Howell Soft Cloth Car Wash	117 Pulford	Rezoning	X			Rezone 117 Pulford from R-1 to SMD PC Recommended approval July 2017 CC Approved October 2017
17-18	Howell Soft Cloth Car Wash	117 Pulford 1009 South Michigan	Site Plan , SUP	X			Expansion of Howell Soft Cloth Car Wash PC Approved July 2017
17-19	Mike Bramlett	920 East Grand River	SLU	X			Reoccupancy of former Marcy's Building with Heating and Cooling contractor PC Approved August 2017 Under construction
17-21	TLS Construction	Vacant Lucy Road	Site Plan and SLU	X			Use of vacant property as construction storage yard Awaiting Revised plans
17-22	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints	1041 West Grand River	Lot Split	X			Split rear of property off and combine with Browning Street property PC approved September 2017
17-23	Keller Williams Realty	645 West Grand River	SLU	X			Approval of two signs that were installed without permits and are larger than permitted PC approved September 2017
17-24	Thai Summit	1480 McPherson Park Dr	Site Plan	X			Guard shack for westernmost entrance to the Thai Summit plant PC approved September 2017
17-25	Mary England	451 West Street	Lot Split	X			Split of approximately 1.2 acre of land to sell to neighbor PC approved October 2017
17-26	Evangelista Development	Vacant land in front of Gallery Park	Site Plan and SLU	X			New nursing home facility on vacant land in front of Gallery Park development Initial PC review February 2018 Public Hearing March 2018
17-27	Belton Sound Hearing	114 West Highland Suite 200	SLU	X			Rear sign for Belton Sound Hearing PC Approved December 2017
17-28	Nancy Milner	405 Aberdeen Way	Variance request				Setback variance request to allow addition on existing house BZA approval January 2018
17-29	Springborn Properties	1026 E Grand River	Site Plan and SLU	X			Expansion and renovation of Soapy Bucket Car Wash PC Approval February 2018
17-30	IHA Medical	202 W Highland	Site Plan and SLU	X			New Medical office building on outlot at Crossroads Town Center Preliminary PC Review January 2018 PC Approval February 2018