



Planning Commission Minutes

Tuesday, February 18, 2025 at 7:00 PM
27400 Southfield Road, Lathrup Village, Michigan 48076

1. **Call to Order** at 7:04pm

2. **Roll Call**

Present: Chair Stansbery, Commissioner Hillman, Commissioner Hammond, Commissioner Nordmoe, Commissioner Scussel

Absent: Commissioner Dizik and Co-Chair Fobbs

Others Present: DDA Director Colson, Planning Consultant Jill Bahm of Giffels & Webster, Attorney Kimberlin, City Clerk Emanuel

Motion by Commissioner Hammond, seconded by Commissioner Hillman, to excuse Commissioner Dizik.

Yes: Hillman, Stansbery, Nordmoe, Scussel, Hammond

No: N/A

Motion carried.

3. **Approval of Agenda**

Motion by Commissioner Scussel, seconded by Commissioner Hammond to approve the agenda.

Yes: Hillman, Stansbery, Nordmoe, Scussel, Hammond

No: N/A

Motion carried.

4. **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

A. January 2025 - Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Nordmoe, seconded by Commissioner Scussel to approve the minutes from the January 21, 2025 Planning Commission meeting.

Yes: Hillman, Stansbery, Nordmoe, Scussel, Hammond

No: N/A
Motion carried.

5. **Public Comment**

Diane Anderson, expressed concerns about development along Southfield Road, being inappropriate development and two tier citizenship based on whether you live near Southfield Road or farther in the neighborhoods in Lathrup Village, along with commenting that the heritage of the City has been trashed with more damage having been done during the last eight years than in decades.

Alicia Lundell, lives on San Jose, expressed concern about what will be along Southfield Road, if the zoning amendment is passed. She shared ideas of designs for the Annie Lathrup School Building renovation and said that she did not want the building to fall into decline, by doing nothing and mentioned compromise and working with the developer, and that first floor residential is more in line with a Bedroom Community and could help prevent more vacancies.

Leslie Valiant, who lives on Rackham, expressed confusion about how first floor residential units are keeping in line with the Village Center plan of having walkability downtown, and the MEDC report that CA Greene, referenced in the newsletter, compared Cities that she thought were not like Lathrup Village.

Don Eichsteadt, who lives on Redwood, thought the best use of the School Building should be as a School, and that there is no reason to subsidize Surnow with tax dollars, saying plans he had seen were not historic and had high priced materials.

Bruce Copus, looked over the changes considered for implementation of the zoning amendment, and thought none are really justified in this situation and stated his concerns including that there is no real need for housing in Lathrup Village, and that he doesn't think the apartment complex is consistent with the City's Master Plan.

6. **Old Business and Tabled Items**

A. Public Hearing - Zoning Ordinance Amendment First Floor Residential in Village Center

Jill Bahm partner with Giffels & Webster and one of the City's Planning Consultants, presented several Power Point slides and some videos, giving historic information and deep insight into the plans the City has had for both Lathrup Village and the Village Center/Southfield Road area of Lathrup Village from its origination through 2024. Ms. Bahm, referenced Master Plan reviews, and the 2012 Complete Streets Plan, as well as also sharing renderings from 2012, of the Annie Lathrup School building with four story units on both sides of it, and she explained parts of the Master Plan, the current Zoning Ordinance, and the proposed zoning amendment change to allow first floor residential units in the Village Center.

Commissioner Hillman and Commissioner Hammond, discussed the wording and crafting an ordinance specific to one project, and Planner Bahm, said the wording could be changed to say meeting all or some of the criteria that was listed, which would make it less specific.

Commissioner Nordmoe, expressed thoughts about the amendment change, including that he did not think we needed more commercial facilities, since we are not using ones that we have, and that he does not have a problem with first floor use, but wanted a green buffer by the units, he thought the amendment wording would be a guide to review proposed site plans, and if there is no investment in the Historic Structure it will dissolve, so we do need a plan to help preserve it.

Commissioner Hammond, expressed that focusing on ordinance language, in itself does not approve any project, and the Planning Commission has not seen any site plans, just renderings, but what was proposed, can't be approved, to rehabilitate a historic structure, but putting this amendment in place, makes it possible to consider it, and adding housing is consistent with the Master Plan, and Commissioner Scussel agreed that this would give the Planning Commission flexibility to approve projects, if the housing need can be proved.

Commission members discussed, how this tests the City's Master Plan, and that investments have not been made, that we do not want unused property, and we need better uses of frontage on Southfield Road.

Chair Stansbery, mentioned that there is thirty-one feet between the curb on Southfield Road and the sidewalk, and then the additional distance between the sidewalk and the building on the rendering that was shown, to emphasize that the building will not be right next to Southfield Road.

Diane Anderson, expressed that there was no mention of the two tier citizenship of residents who live farther from and closer to Southfield Road and how to accomplish getting rid of this, that there is no addressing Lathrup Village helicopter parenting, due to no spaces for children to play independently included in the plan, and asked where is the knowledge base, of the great demand for apartments?

Rick Wisz, expressed that he thought Giffels & Webster was supposed to be Lathrup Village's Engineering Firm, but it sounded like they were doing the presentation for Surnow, and he thought they were supposed to be on our side, not Surnow's. He asked how much time Giffels & Webster spent putting this together, and if we are spending our money to do Surnow's presentation?

Carold Greene, shared her thoughts about the demonstrated need for more housing in Lathrup Village, saying that it doesn't make sense to her, and the presented slides with the row homes and stacked flats, were much more attractive and reasonable to her, instead of this huge development, and that she would rather see something like that.

Jonathan Terra, spoke in support of the amendment change, stating he senses that the opposition is only for the purpose of obstruction to prevent development, he thought we should recognize that the 2012 plan for the Village Center, is obsolete and we are not going to slow down traffic on Southfield Road, as it was done in Birmingham, and that he did not find the Birmingham homes attractive. He thinks we need to come up with a new plan, for a City with a high speed road going through it, and he sees no reason against the first floor residential, but he recommended a Loft

style development that preserves more of the existing structure, saying there is a demographic that likes that kind of development with exposed conduit and underlying structure.

Lauren Beras, spoke in support of moving the development forward, after watching it decline over 25 years of living in Lathrup Village, and she thanked the Surnow Company for continued work on plans to develop the School. She thought this would be good for the City, and that we are not a bedroom community because Southfield Road goes through the City and she thanked Consultant Jill Bahm, for the great and informative presentation.

Autumn Sousanis, expressed her views on the zoning ordinance amendment, stating in part that she is not against first floor residential, as long as it is set back and allows green spaces to be preserved. She did not like the plans she has seen, but hopes for something good there and thinks the School building is a sense of place and it is irreplaceable, and disagrees with much of what the Planning Consultant presented, and thought the Surnow Company, is benefiting and not the residents who are stakeholders of Lathrup Village.

Chair Stansbery, closed the Public Hearing at 8:49pm

Commissioner Hillman, spoke in favor of first floor housing, but finds the wording overly specific and thinks it will be perceived as catering to the developer.

Commissioner Hammond and Commissioner Hillman, made suggestions on wording and making parts of the presented zoning ordinance amendment optional, mainly part A of A, B, C, and D.

Planning Consultant Jill Bahm, explained item A, as related to historic structures being challenging to rehabilitate, especially if they are going from one use to another.

Commissioner Hillman, expressed that approving this does not approve the Surnow plan, the Planning Commission, would need to take into consideration the other items and have to have proof of the housing need.

Motion by Commissioner Hillman, seconded by Commissioner Scussel to approve the zoning ordinance amendment for first floor residential in the Village Center, as written short of bullet point 3.1.8.i.1.a.

Yes: Hillman, Stansbery, Nordmoe, Scussel, Hammond

No: N/A

Motion carried.

7. **New Business**

A. 2024 PC Annual Report

DDA Director Colson, went over the 2024 PC Annual Report.

Motion by Commissioner Scussel, seconded by Commissioner Hillman, to send the 2024 Planning Commission Annual Report to City Council.

Yes: Hillman, Stansbery, Nordmoe, Scussel, Hammond
No: N/A
Motion carried.

8. Other Matters for Discussion

9. General Communication

A. Development Projects Update

DDA Director Colson, gave updates on the status of development projects.

Commissioner Hillman, commented on Co-Chair Fobbs absences at meetings and hopes that it is not due to a severe health condition, but thinks the Planning Commission needs to find out if he intends to still be on it, or should seek a replacement.

Commissioner Hillman, gave a personal apology, for the last-minute change in the agenda, at the last meeting, and the confusion that it caused, saying they will be more diligent about the agenda in the future. He said that he took notes, on public comments, to address each one of them, but many commenters have left. Commissioner Hillman, responded to Diane Anderson, complimenting her incredible knowledge of Lathrup Village, and that he thinks it is tremendously valuable and he appreciates it. He also commented on her opinions on Birmingham and Berkley versus his thoughts regarding these Cities.

10. Adjourn

Moved by Commissioner Scussel, seconded by Commissioner Hammond to adjourn the meeting.
Meeting adjourned at 9:08pm.