

## **WORKING SESSION - OCTOBER 14, 1991**

The working session of the Ann Arbor City Council was called to order at 7:35 p.m. in the Fire Station Conference Room by Mayor Elizabeth S. Brater.

### **ROLL CALL OF COUNCIL**

**PRESENT:** Councilmembers Larry Hunter, Ann Marie Coleman, Ingrid B. Sheldon, Kirk D. Dodge, Robert C. Grady, Nelson K. Meade, Mark Ouimet, Kurt Zimmer, Thais Anne Peterson, Robert Eckstein, Mayor Elizabeth S. Brater, 11.

**ABSENT :** 0.

**STAFF :** City Administrator Alfred A. Gatta, City Attorney Mel Laracey, Planning Department Director Martin Overhiser, Assistant Planning Director Charles Mancherian, City Planner Wendy Rampson

### **JOINT SESSION WITH THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION**

Planning Commission Chairman Samuel Offen explained that the goals of this meeting are to foster dialogue about planning matters and to inform City Council of the Commission's recent efforts and upcoming projects. Mr. Offen stated that another objective is to inform Council of the Commission's concerns with natural features preservation, increased density, traffic and parking congestion vs. affordable housing opportunities, and neighborhood concerns vs. community interests.

### **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN**

Commissioner Carol Simon presented an overview of the proposed 1992-1998 Capital Improvements Plan, and reported that ballot proposals for 1992 and 1993 have been recommended for transportation projects (signalization system, bridges and major intersection), parks operation/maintenance, and new voting machines.

Commissioner Simon briefly reviewed other major projects in the CIP, which include parking structure repair and replacement, airport runway repaving, a parking availability study, Stadium Boulevard reconstruction, utility service extensions, water treatment plant improvements, continuation of the environmental bond program, Fire Department ladder truck, police computer dispatch and radio systems, City Hall energy and lighting

modifications, DDA pedestrian and lighting improvements, and public housing units.

Councilmember Hunter suggested that an operational impact statement, explaining the costs of a project, be provided by the Administrator when a project is identified in the Plan.

Councilmember Peterson stated that Council is very reluctant to place new millages on the ballot and that the CIP should not rely on millages as a solution to funding problems. Ms. Peterson stated that a millage should be the last option after exploring other alternatives.

### NATURAL FEATURES ORDINANCE

Councilmember Eckstein, member of the Natural Features Ordinance Committee and Council representative to the Planning Commission, presented an update of the proposed natural features ordinance. Mr. Eckstein reported that key issues facing the Committee include concerns with township islands, development of an official natural features map, the need for additional staff, and protection of backyard landmark trees.

Councilmember Dodge, member of the Natural Features Ordinance Committee, also expressed concern with the issue of township islands, and suggested including this matter for discussion during township agreement negotiations.

Mayor Brater spoke in favor of a voluntary approach in dealing with backyard landmark trees.

### CENTRAL AREA PLAN

Commissioner David Copi presented an update on the proposed Central Area Plan, and explained that the purpose for a new plan is to create a workable planning document to guide policy decisions and direct future development. Mr. Copi reported that key issues involved in development of the plan concern housing and neighborhoods, development-redevelopment/transition areas, government, parks and open space, downtown, historic preservation, and traffic circulation and parking.

Councilmembers Hunter and Coleman expressed concern with the diminishing housing stock in transitional neighborhoods, and emphasized the importance of involving and educating the residents of such neighborhoods prior to zoning or planning changes.

Councilmember Dodge stated that diversity helps to make a neighborhood more interesting, and expressed concern with designating particular areas as either commercial or residential.

Mayor Brater requested a list of the people participating in the process and the neighborhoods they represent.

#### ORDINANCE REVISIONS

Commissioner Julie Creal reported on the ordinance revisions under review which would encourage site plan compliance, remove obstacles for downtown residential development, clarify the use approval process and standards (special exception uses), and clarify permitted uses and standards in each district. Ms. Creal stated that provisions for bed and breakfast establishments, residential permit parking, and park and ride lots are being studied.

Mayor Brater requested that the premium provisions of Chapter 55 be reviewed to address the problem of developers using rooftop gardens to fulfill the open space requirement. The Mayor also requested review of the parking exempt provisions of Chapter 59 which allow a parking exempt zone downtown.

Councilmember Hunter requested that the Planning Commission examine the issue of downtown parking requirements and the responsibility for providing parking spaces. Mr. Hunter stated that the City can no longer afford to provide parking and that options for parking could be developed as a partnership with developers.

Councilmember Hunter also requested that the Planning Commission consider the issue of increasing density to provide more affordable housing.

#### COORDINATION WITH UNIVERSITY AND SURROUNDING TOWNSHIPS

Commissioner Offen reported on the recent success of the Transportation Plan which was a coordinated effort with the University, the Ann Arbor Transportation Authority and the City. Mr. Offen stated that, currently, coordinated meetings are held at the administrative level with the University and the Schools.

Mr. Offen explained that the Commission's goal is to open channels of communication with other entities to address such concerns as annexations, township zoning changes near the City limits, and campus area group housing. Mr. Offen informed Council that there are proposals to hold joint meetings with township planning commissions and to allow more opportunity for groups to address the City Planning Commission.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before Council, it was moved by Councilmember Grady that the meeting be adjourned.

On a voice vote the Chair declared the motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 9:44 p.m.

Janet L. Chapin  
Acting Clerk of the Council  
Recording Secretary