

SYLVAN LAKE PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes of the October 4, 2016

Regular Meeting

REGULAR MEETING

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Cousens called the meeting to order at 7:04pm.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Jim Endres  
Graham Cousens, Chairperson  
Megan Zumbach  
Russ Meskin  
Pete Shelters  
Michael Menuck

ABSENT

David MacGillis  
William Brundage  
Ed Robbins

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOVED BY Meskin, second by Endres to approve the agenda.

YES: All

NO: None

Motion passed.

MEETING OPEN TO PUBLIC FOR BRIEF COMMENTS

Chairperson Cousens opened the meeting for public comment. There were no comments.

NEW BUSINESS

Parks and Recreation Plan

City Manager Martin introduced this new topic. The Parks and Recreation plan is similar to the Master Plan, except it is only for parks. We do have one but it is quite old. Martin feels it is a good idea to have a plan for future administration, City Council and Planning Commission. It doesn't mean the plan has to be followed exactly. It is not required, but is necessary if the City wants to apply for any grants. We have not applied for any grants other than to purchase the railroad property because all of our parks are private. Now that we own the trail property, we could apply for grant funding for some of the improvements. The Friends of the Clinton River Trail is very active and has come up with a lot of great ideas for the entire trail. This typically would not be an entire Planning

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Commission undertaking. It would involve the parks and recreation committee, maybe a couple Planning Commissioners and other residents. It is quite a little bit of work and we would need a professional for some of it, but it should be a fun process. Martin will do a little more investigation on all of the required steps if Planning Commission is on board doing it.

Chairperson Cousens asked if this focused more on infrastructure improvements like seawall and benches and trash receptacles on the trail as opposed to new uses for the public spaces. Martin responded that infrastructure plans and improvements are a big piece of the plan, but how we utilize the space we have and if we need more or less public space is also important. Would it be good to have a small pocket park in an area where there is nothing and a good distance to an existing park for example. What we have and who it draws is important. Making sure there is something for everyone, whether it is just walking, playing football or a play structure.

Meskin asked if the grants are mainly for trail improvements and will it cost more than the grants we receive. Martin said that is a very good question. He still feels it is an important document for planning purposes. There are a number of improvements we want to make to the trail including the crossings at Pontiac Drive and Inverness. Making those ASHTO compliant would be great. The Pontiac Drive crossing is within Bloomfield Township limits, but Sylvan Lake owns it. It is under the jurisdiction of the RCOC. Ownership and responsibility was discussed further. Martin said that is just an example of a plan for the trail. Martin reiterated that it is not just to obtain grant funding. It is a plan for future administration and board members. It's easy for us to know what is going on because we've been around for a long time. New people coming in won't know all of the history or plans for these parks.

Endres asked if the museum he is proposing would fall under this plan. Martin responded it would. Endres asked about the trail crossing near City Hall. Martin said that could use improvements too.

Chairperson Cousens likes the idea of not only planning for infrastructure, but the use of the space and programs. There are probably spaces that are underutilized and even some that may be over utilized. It would be nice to take a look at all of those things and a fun task to tackle.

Meskin questioned if the plan would include the private parks like Ferndale beach. Martin responded it would cover all of the park areas. It is our plan for our use. We just wouldn't be applying for grant funding.

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### Right-of-Way Policy

Martin shared there are few parts to this and just wants Planning Commission to think on them. This has come up a couple times at City Council. There are three parts Martin wants to discuss. What type of material is allowed? Currently the policy says it is to be grass to the edge of the pavement. If you want to have an approved parking space, it must be brick pavers with a limit of 8' from the edge of the street. The other issues are rocks, planters and trees and how close they can be to the street. Currently they must be at least 4' from the edge of the street. Martin explained the history of the ROW policy with PC and CC and how many times it has been revised. City Council grandfathered whatever is there could stay. It makes it very difficult to remember if something was there or did someone add gravel or asphalt? The other difficulty is telling someone they can't add a gravel area when neighbors all around them have them. Is the restriction on what type of material as important as it once was? Another issue is parking in the ROW in general. Should vehicles be allowed to park in the ROW just on the grass? OR should it they only be allowed to park on improved spaces so they don't ruin the grass in the ROW. There are a lot of cars parked just on grass that is becoming mud. The last one is not allowing vehicles to be parked facing the wrong way in the ROW. It is against the law to park left wheel to curb if you're on the road, but if you park off the pavement, it is not illegal. There have been complaints about vehicles being parked facing the wrong direction and it is dangerous. Endres stated this would all be a recommendation to City Council.

Meskin asked if it is the Policy that was adopted in 2007? Martin replied that is probably correct. It is quite lengthy but includes several things that we don't need to discuss.

Chairperson Cousens feels this is something Planning Commission could tackle at the next meeting.

Endres questioned if we are having a special meeting in November since we've had our four required meetings for the year. Cousens said he would be in favor of having a meeting in November. Martin said there is a meeting scheduled for November 1. Menuck said if it is a special meeting, it can be any day. It could be the 8<sup>th</sup>. Endres said that is election day and it will be too busy. Martin agreed that the Community Center will be used and Martin will be unavailable. Martin also said that there is a lot split on the agenda for the November 1 Planning Commission meeting so we need to hold it then.

MOVED BY Endres, seconded by Zumbach to hold a special Planning Commission meeting on November 1, 2016.

Yes: All  
No: None

MOTION CARRIED

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### Capital Improvement Plan

This is something that is a good idea and should be done. Similar to the Parks and Rec plan, we as City staff, Council and Planning Commission know what's going on and what direction we want to go. As we get new people, we need to have a formal Capital Improvement Plan. That includes everything we can see and what we cannot see. This will include parks, buildings, grounds, infrastructure, etc. This is a big project, but Martin thinks the Commissioners will enjoy learning about all of the infrastructure – water, sewer, storm, streets, storm water management, etc. that we have and how it all works. It is a very important thing to do. This too would be a recommendation to City Council.

Chairperson Cousens stated these are very good projects for Planning Commission to work on.

Martin stated all of these items will be on the agenda under old business, but there may or may not be new information to discuss. That will depend on how often the meetings are and how much time he has to dedicate to these tasks. Each of these topics are multiple months apiece.

Chairperson Cousens questioned if Martin could come up with a reasonable timeframe to work on and complete each of these to keep us on track. For example, getting something for the ROW policy next month and maybe the Parks and Recreation Plan by the end of the first quarter next year, just as a guideline. Menuck said each of these could take several meetings. Endres agreed, they sound like they should be easy but they aren't. Martin said the Parks and Rec plan will be six to nine months because of the surveys, public meetings and compilation of information. We can do a lot of the work, but will need professional assistance at some point. Unless someone on the Commission had the ability and time.

### OLD BUSINESS

Clear Vision Ordinance for Intersections.

The intersections from the list that was supplied by Planning Commission were inspected by the Ordinance Officer and most of those, and some additional, were given notices to correct the obstructions. Most were not severe. It interesting that as you drive around regularly you don't notice as things start to encroach into your vision, but if you are driving looking for them, they become obvious. Once the issues are corrected, Planning Commission can go back and see if what was done was adequate. If so, we don't need to do anything with the ordinance except enforce it more strictly.

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Meskin stated at least two of the properties have already corrected their problem. He added that all of the shrubbery and bushes are on the ROW. Do we need to make an ordinance or add this to the ROW policy? Martin said our current ordinance gives a height limit for bushes and minimum canopy height for trees. It doesn't only affect the ROW. It includes private property too. Items in the ROW are easier to deal with because if we chose to, we could cut or trim things as necessary.

### CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

Again, stated we must have a meeting in November for a proposed lot split on Ferndale. Martin has been working with the new property owner on this. It is three platted lots that are combined and they want to split them into two lots. They will each be 73-feet wide. There are no variances required. Because they turned in the application, we are required to hear and act on the request. Meskin questioned tree removal on the property. Do they have to get approval? No, we don't have a tree ordinance. Martin added they can be encouraged to keep as many trees as they can.

Summer programs went normally for the season. Never, smooth and never easy. The biggest issue lately was the yoga group that apparently was too noisy for a couple residents.

We hope to plant some trees this fall if time allows.

KFC has been purchased and Checkers will be moving in. They may require an Administrative Site Plan review at the most. No changes to the property. Only in the building so far. We will require a monument sign.

ITC has completed their planting of native plants along a portion of the trail near Orchard Lake Road. This is the second season of their work on the trail. They clear cut and sprayed and now have planted. It's not a garden or intended to be, but it looks really nice and will look beautiful next season.

### CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS

Meskin mentioned when he came on board to Planning Commission they met almost every month. Is there a start date for the paving in the City? Not yet. Is there a date to open City Hall? We are waiting for the handicap access. Martin is meeting with the engineer Monday to make sure what we are doing is correct. That should be done in a few weeks. Meskin reminded everybody to vote on November 8<sup>th</sup>. There are 5 people running for 4 spots on City Council. It sounds like the Parks and Rec Plan would be worth doing. The ROW policy that was done 9 years ago will be a very time consuming project. The Capital

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Improvement Plan is a good idea. We won't be able to accomplish everything, but will accomplish some things.

### PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENTS

Shelters is excited about the New Business items.

Chairperson Cousens is pleased to be the Chairperson. He's still feeling his way around Roberts Rules and how to help facilitate a good and lively discussion and appreciates everybody's patience. He is excited and hopeful about the new business items. He is hopeful we will be able to tackle these things. He is also interested in learning how to attract new businesses. Maybe get feedback from businesses on their experience working with the City. How do we attract a small grocery store? You see new business open in other areas and wonder how we could attract them here. He would be open to meeting monthly if there were agenda items.

Endres reminded everybody it is breast cancer awareness month and they should be wearing something pink. He was disappointed that we did not say the pledge of allegiance at the beginning of the meeting. When Endres was chairperson, he worked very hard getting everybody to be in order, wait to be recognized and not talk over each other. He would hate to see it go back to the way it was. Especially if there is a big crowd or public hearing or something.

Zumbach is excited about all we have to work on too. She would encourage the people that have missed several meetings to become involved. If people don't have time or don't want to be on the Commission, they should let us know. It's difficult when people miss meetings and are not up to speed, it causes problems. Cousens asked how to make that happen? Martin said it would be up to the Mayor to remove someone. He believes the policy is maximum two unexcused and three excused absences in a year and you can be removed. We've said it from the beginning, excused or unexcused, if you're absent you are not contributing and when you do come to a meeting you aren't up to speed on all of the conversation and debate that has taken place. So, the Chairperson can discuss it with the Mayor. The other thing could be as simple as a conversation with the person or people and discuss their involvement and commitment. If they don't have the time, let's get someone who does.

Endres said he would send an email or make a call to the commissioner and then talk to the Mayor. It is his responsibility. Chairperson Cousens agreed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.