

MINUTES  
**ANN ARBOR CITY PLANNING COMMISSION**  
BUSINESS MEETING

7:00 p.m. – February 7, 2006

Time: Chair Hall called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

Place: Council Chamber, Second Floor, 100 North Fifth Avenue, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

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ROLL CALL

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Members Present: Bona, Carlberg, D'Amour, Emaus, Hall, Lipson, Potts

Members Absent: None

Members Arriving: Kunselman, Pratt

Staff Present: Foondle, Vaughn

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INTRODUCTIONS

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None.

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MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

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a. Minutes of January 10, 2006.

**Moved by D'Amour, seconded by Emaus, to approve the minutes as presented.**

A vote on the motion showed:

YEAS: Bona, Carlberg, D'Amour, Emaus, Hall, Lipson, Potts  
NAYS: None  
ABSENT: Kunselman, Pratt

**Motion carried.**

Enter Kunselman.

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APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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**Moved by Lipson, seconded by Carlberg, to approve the agenda as presented.**

A vote on the motion showed:

YEAS: Bona, Carlberg, D'Amour, Emaus, Hall, Kunselman, Lipson, Potts  
NAYS: None  
ABSENT: Pratt

**Motion carried.**

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REPORTS FROM CITY ADMINISTRATION, CITY COUNCIL,  
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES, PLANNING COMMISSION  
OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES, WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS

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Potts announced that the Ordinance Revisions Committee would be meeting Tuesday, February 14 at 3:30 p.m.

Hall reminded Commission members that the February 14 working session was cancelled.

Hall stated that the Greenbelt Advisory Committee was interested in meeting with the Planning Commission to talk about transfer of development rights. She said this meeting would take place at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 14, with the Planning Commission working session then following.

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AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

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None.

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PUBLIC HEARINGS SCHEDULED FOR NEXT MEETING

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None.

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REGULAR BUSINESS

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a. Presentation, Discussion and Action on Ann Arbor Campus Housing (formerly North Quad by Melrose) Relief from the Architectural Standards in the Approved PUD Supplemental Regulations.

Vaughn explained the purpose of the proposed action this evening. He stated that minor amendments to the approved PUD could be made administratively, but that the supplemental regulations contained an option for the petitioner to come before the Planning Commission to seek relief from the approved design standards.

Jim Smith, managing principal of Kensington Realty Advisors, stated that since they acquired this property, they have worked diligently to enhance the design of the project. He introduced the development team and said it was their intent to move forward with this development as quickly as possible, as they would like to see it completed in time for the 2007 academic year.

Tom Trubiana, senior vice present of development for Allen & O'Hara Development Company, partner with Kensington Realty Advisors, stated that they have been involved in providing housing for 38,000 students in 59 communities across the country, indicating their extensive experience in this type of housing. He said they were very excited about this project, noting that Ann Arbor has not had any new student housing in a long time. He was available to answer questions.

Enter Pratt.

Scott Bonney, of Neumann/Smith and Associates, representing the owner, explained the site plan and the changes they were proposing. The building elevations were the reason they were before the Planning Commission tonight, he said. He showed the elevations of the originally approved PUD and of the proposed revisions. Instead of constructing the building of all brick, he said, they believed using a combination of brick and siding would make the building's appearance more interesting. He also showed the changes to the windows and balconies, indicating the stone detailing above and below each window on the masonry portion. He showed renderings of the buildings and explained that they would like to use three to four different colors of brick.

Hall clarified that Commission was not here this evening to review the proposed changes to the PUD site plan, but simply to determine whether the new building elevations were consistent with the supplemental regulations or if relief should be provided.

**Moved by Lipson, seconded by Pratt, that the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby finds the proposed elevations of Ann Arbor Campus Housing to be consistent with the architectural design standards in the approved PUD supplemental regulations.**

Potts stated that this project was new to almost every Planning Commission member and she was bothered that Commission was not dealing with the site plan, as she had opinions about the parking. She asked if the number of units and bedrooms had changed.

Bonney replied yes, stating that the original PUD allowed 360 or 375 units and 896 bedrooms. The new proposal, he said, was for 331 units and 849 bedrooms. He added that there would be four different types of units: one, two, three and four-bedroom units, to meet different market demands.

Potts said one of her concerns was that she did not know what aspects of the approved plan were agreed to with the neighborhood and community.

Hall stated that Planning Commission was not being asked to agree to all of the changes, but to interpret the design standards contained in the supplemental regulations, as follows: "The building exterior shall reflect traditional architectural forms built of modern materials. Brick or brick veneer will be located on all exterior wall surfaces. Each building shall be sheltered with pitched roofs accented by dormer windows over the living component of each apartment. "

Kunselman believed everything about the PUD site plan was on the table this evening. He noted that the supplemental regulations contained allowable accessory uses, of which a coffee shop, theater and post office were not a part, adding that the petitioner's representative stated that they proposed to add these types of uses.

Trubiana stated that it would not be a pay-per-view, commercial theater, but a small room with theater seating for the residents. He said they also were thinking about a cyber café with vending machines for students to use. There was no intent to put in any type of commercial endeavor here, he said.

Hall stated that this topic of discussion was not germane to the motion.

Pratt agreed, suggesting that a Commission member could propose an amendment to the motion if desired.

Carlberg said it was her interpretation of the supplemental regulations that the buildings would be constructed of all brick, which would be consistent with the other student quadrangle housing on campus. However, she said, she did not have a great objection to brick on just part of the buildings, noting that a variety of materials would provide more interesting for these three large buildings.

Vaughn stated that the supplemental regulations provided Commission with a choice of either saying that the proposed elevations met the design standards or granting relief from following the standards. If Commission thought the proposed elevations were an improvement, he said, relief could be granted.

Carlberg said it appeared that the balconies had been lost in the redesign. This was a concern because they seemed to have provided more depth, she said.

Bonney stated that balconies were not entirely fitting here because of safety reasons, adding that it was difficult to confirm that the previous floor plans actually had balconies.

Vaughn noted that balconies could be added or removed as part of an administrative amendment to the approved PUD. He did not recall balconies being part of the originally approved PUD, noting that they were not shown on the site plan.

Carlberg was glad to see the strong vertical elements of the design continued. She said it appeared that the windows had slightly more glass than the previous plan. She asked the petitioners why they wanted to remove all of the brick from the design, suspecting it was just as much for economic reasons as aesthetic, because of the cost of brick. She liked the hardy plank siding, stating that it was durable and came in nice, soft colors.

Bonney confirmed that brick was more expensive and that economics were important, but added that using the different siding and detailing allowed them to design a building that looked more residential. He stated that the balconies, if not authentic, at least would have doorwalls, which would provide more sight and light.

Pratt believed the supplemental regulations were clear in requiring all brick for the exterior walls of the buildings and said that, while hardy plank was durable, it was not as durable as brick and brick would be his first preference. However, he said, the proposed changes were commendable, adding that masonry was a nice element, making it look classier. His concern for neighbors was that when the development originally was proposed, the implication was that the design would be tied more to the campus than to the community, but he could see the need for flexibility, noting that there were a variety of colors of brick. He assumed that the statement in the supplemental regulations about the exterior of the buildings meant all sides of the buildings, including those facing the courtyard.

Lipson wondered if the areas where the hardy plank siding would be located could be touched by people, or if they would be higher. Although he liked that type of siding, he was concerned that it could be damaged, as it was not as durable as brick. He also believed that hardy plank was not as sound impermeable as brick.

Wally Wilcox, of Allen & O'Hara, stated that the hardy plank siding had a 50-53 STC sound rating, adding that windows had about a 30 STC rating.

Bonney stated that the material used at the base of building, where people could touch it, would be stone.

Bona said it appeared there were fewer window openings on the new elevations. She asked how this compared percentage-wise to the amount of openings on the previously approved PUD.

Bonney replied that they did not have percentage figures on the difference. He said they were proposing three-by-six-foot, single-hung windows in the bedrooms, which would provide a good amount of light, as well as about eight-by-seven-foot openings in the living rooms.

Wilcox added that the reduction of windows was commensurate to the reduction of units and bedrooms.

Bona said she interpreted all exterior surfaces to mean everything but the accent materials; however, she was not sure the new building design was significantly better or worse than what was previously presented. She thought the Planning Commission was experiencing a taste of what it was like to have aesthetic impact on buildings. The reality, she said, was that materials did not make good design and good design did not always require the most expensive materials. She pointed out that the supplemental regulations provided for brick or brick veneer and noted that brick veneer was a misleading term, stating that brick on buildings has been veneer for a long time. She said that term has also been used for thin brick, which was in the petitioners'

description of panelized brick. She thought the supplemental regulations could be interpreted as allowing that and she wanted everyone to know that real brick would not be used here. She was not certain that should make a difference in this particular project, stating that she was not finding enough negatives about the new proposal to think it did not meet the spirit of the supplemental regulations. Generally, she did not have a problem with the proposed design. She did not think the walls facing the interior courtyard necessarily fell within the exterior materials; she interpreted the requirement to be for the facades visible to the public.

Emaus was uncertain about what the intention was from looking at the previous drawings and from reading the supplemental regulations. He suspected the provisions in the supplemental regulations were based on the design presented at the time. He thought the previously approved brick looked very institutional, while the new design looked more like an apartment building with its lighter colors. He liked the residential feel of the new buildings and, not knowing what was originally intended, he would be amenable to either determining that this met the requirements or providing relief.

Hall stated that there were no standards to use for guidance in making these decisions and agreed that the language in the supplemental regulations was probably written based upon the site plan drawings. She interpreted the language regarding brick or brick veneer on all exterior surfaces as each wall needing to contain some brick, which is what was presented this evening. She thought these would be nice-looking buildings. She was inclined to either agree that the drawings were consistent with the architectural design standards in the supplemental regulations or, if that was not agreeable to Commission, she would support relief to allow what was proposed.

D'Amour was not comfortable with limiting the discussion this evening to the architectural design standards. Only one current Commission member was on the Planning Commission when this project originally was approved. In considering a recommendation to waive the architectural standards, he said, it was being done in isolation, noting that Commission members did not have the original plans before them. He stated that this site was located at a gateway to North Campus, so he thought what was allowed in terms of architecture was germane to the entire site plan. He did not think it was appropriate to vote up or down on one facet of the supplemental regulations without having a full record of what the previous Planning Commission did.

Kunselman thought it was a big stretch saying that brick and hardy plank met the interpretation of the supplemental regulations, stating that he could not second guess his predecessors. He said the petitioners admitted that there were some economic issues involved here and said the reduction of this proposal would reduce the property's tax assessment and taxes paid to the City, with which he was uncomfortable. He voiced his disagreement with a statement made by the petitioners about there being a demand for this type of housing, noting the high vacancy level in off-campus housing. It was clear to him that the supplemental regulations provided for all brick buildings and said he would be appalled with the colors proposed this evening in terms of architecture of other campus buildings.

Potts was troubled with the proposed changes. While she was not certain that she would have voted for all brick on the previous PUD, she noted that this was a controversial project and was important to the neighborhood, and she could not know the concerns without seeing the record of the previous deliberations. She was not sure why brick was specified in the supplemental regulations, but said she had to respect that since she had not seen the minutes of the previous meetings. She expressed concern about the number of materials that was proposed. While

variety was fine, she said, there was a fine line between variety and chaos. This proposal looked too chaotic, she said, and did not seem to relate to the architecture.

Carlberg said it was very clear to her that this was to be an all-brick building and said this was part of how it was sold to the Planning Commission and Council, adding that there was no other discussion of materials to be used. She said the look of a traditional campus building had been part of the selling point. However, she said, Section 3 did allow for some relief and it was in the hands of the Planning Commission to determine whether relief should be granted.

Pratt asked if this would go on to City Council for a final determination.

Vaughn replied no, that Commission took the final action on this. However, he said, the Planning and Development Services Manager would need to make sure that what was approved by Commission is what the final plans contained.

Pratt suggested two amendments to the motion, by adding the following language: “1) to allow masonry as proposed, provided final dimensions were provided, and 2) to allow a minimum of 80 percent brick on all exterior walls that were not covered by masonry.” He said this was with the assumption that features around windows, etc. were what was intended all along. He also said it was his understanding that exterior walls were all walls exposed to the elements, but said there may be some flexibility to that because the issue has been how the buildings look on the outside, not how it looked to those using the courtyard.

Hall proposed alternative language for the entire motion: “Resolved that the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby provides relief to Ann Arbor Campus Housing from the architectural design standards in the approved PUD supplemental regulations with the following conditions: 1) to allow masonry as proposed at the February 7, 2006 City Planning Commission meeting, provided the final submittal to the Planning and Development Services Manager contains the dimensions, and 2) to require 80 percent minimum of brick or brick veneer on the remaining exterior surfaces.” She believed everything else proposed for the exterior was acceptable.

**Moved by Pratt, seconded by Carlberg, that the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby provides relief to Ann Arbor Campus Housing from the architectural design standards in the approved PUD supplemental regulations with the following conditions: 1) to allow masonry as proposed at the February 7, 2006 City Planning Commission meeting, provided the final submittal to the Planning and Development Services Manager contains the dimensions, and 2) to require 80 percent minimum of brick or brick veneer on the remaining exterior surfaces.**

Bona appreciated the intent to find a compromise, but she was uncomfortable asking for more brick than shown on the elevations. She asked the petitioners to comment on this.

Gene Carroll, of Neumann/Smith & Associates, stated that this project was not about reductions; rather, they were proposing improvements and increasing the value of the project. It was their belief, he said, that they had the right mix of materials and that the things they have added have boosted the project cost. He feared that trying to select an arbitrary percentage for the brick façade would result in them having to straighten out the building features to allow for that much

brick, and they did not view this as an improvement. He stated that hardy plank was a very durable material, it came with a long warranty and would be suitable for this development. He pointed out that no material was vandal-proof. He encouraged the Planning Commission to review the content and expression of architecture they had presented and something that would be a benefit to the community, rather than arbitrarily choose a number.

Bona was not comfortable with Planning Commission determining the materials and arbitrarily deciding how much, stating that this was integral to the design. If Commission did not care for this design, she said, she would prefer asking the petitioners to come back with a different design.

Potts agreed, stating that she would rather not negotiate a design. She noted that the PUD standards charged the Planning Commission with considering the physical character and aesthetics of a proposed development.

Carlberg stated that in clarifying what “exterior” meant, it was her understanding that it meant any walls exposed to the elements.

Pratt said he agreed, although it was not totally clear what the intent was when that language was included in the supplemental regulations, so he was flexible in considering relief. He said he was not expecting to see the exact design with brick in a lot of different places, but he was expecting the base of the building to be the same with other changes.

Carlberg expressed concern that 80 percent seemed to be an arbitrary number. She did not want the petitioners to be put in the position of coming back with more drawings, noting that they had deadlines to meet.

Kunselman did not like the reduction of windows on this project. It appeared to him that the previous project had more light, which was very important to livability. He believed the original intent for this project was that it be in keeping with the architecture of campus buildings, pointing out that this location was the northern boundary of the north campus and that impression was important.

Emaus stated that the original PUD drawings did not provide an elevation, so he had no idea what was intended. Nor most likely did the petitioner, he said, which was why the supplemental regulations provided a mechanism for relief. He said elevations were provided this evening and Commission should either vote them up or down. Arbitrarily selecting 80 percent for the amount of brick was not acceptable to him.

Hall agreed with Commissioner Emaus, that Commission should either decide that this proposal was consistent with the supplemental regulations or else provide relief. She thought Commission was doing a good job of demonstrating why it should not be given decision-making jurisdiction of design standards. She noted that if there were something Commission did not like about this, then it should consider a future ordinance amendment. She pointed out that Commission has discussed the design of other PUDs based on what was presented by the petitioner. She thought it would be unfortunate if Commission voted this down, tying the petitioners to the earlier wording of the regulations because the elevations at that time were not nearly as detailed as this proposal.

Pratt and Carlberg withdrew their motions.

Lipson agreed that Commission should either decide whether this was consistent with the language in the supplemental regulations or grant relief.

Bona agreed. She noted another component in the architectural design standards of the supplemental regulations in terms of traditional architectural forms. She said that traditional architectural forms may have meant something more like university buildings, which were all brick, but the proposed buildings had a residential flavor, which was another deviation in her interpretation of what was previously intended. However, she was not completely opposed to these buildings having a more residential flavor because they were not university buildings, but said this was all part of the struggle with this overall issue.

A vote on the main motion showed:

YEAS: None  
NAYS: Bona, Carlberg, D'Amour, Emaus, Hall, Kunselman, Lipson,  
Potts, Pratt

**Motion failed.**

**Moved by Lipson, seconded by Bona, that the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby finds the proposed elevations of Ann Arbor Campus Housing to be satisfactory and hereby provides relief from the originally approved architectural design standards.**

A vote on the motion showed:

YEAS: Bona, Carlberg, Emaus, Hall, Lipson  
NAYS: D'Amour, Kunselman, Potts, Pratt

**Motion carried.**

b. Commission Discussion and Action on Resolution to Send Comments to Council on the Implementation of the Downtown Development Strategies Report.

Hall explained the proposed document.

**Moved by Emaus, seconded by Bona, that the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby forwards to City Council the attached comments regarding implementation of the Downtown Development Strategies Final Report.**

**Moved by Emaus, seconded by Potts, to add the word "transportation" after "Creating a comprehensive" in #4 under the Lead section.**

Carlberg suggested that this item be moved to the Support portion of the document, as the Planning Commission was not the appropriate body to take the lead on this.

Emaus agreed that it should be moved from the Lead section to the Support section of the document.

Commission agreed that this item should be moved to #5 of the Support section and that the words “that is coordinated with Citywide transportation” should be added to the end.

A vote on the amendment showed:

YEAS: Bona, Carlberg, D’Amour, Emaus, Hall, Kunselman, Lipson  
Potts, Pratt  
NAYS: None

**Motion carried unanimously, reads as follows:**

**Moved by Emaus, seconded by Potts, to add the word “transportation” after “Creating a comprehensive,” and to add the words “that is coordinated with Citywide transportation” to the end of #4 under the Lead section, and that this be moved to #5 of the Support section.**

**Moved by D’Amour, seconded by Potts, to add “and Central Area” after “Updating of the Downtown” in #2 of the Lead section.**

A vote on the amendment showed:

YEAS: Bona, Carlberg, D’Amour, Emaus, Hall, Kunselman, Lipson  
Potts, Pratt  
NAYS: None

**Motion carried unanimously.**

**Moved by D’Amour, seconded by Bona, to delete the words “oversee the management of” and replace them with “coordinate the” in the first sentence of the third paragraph.**

A vote on the amendment showed:

YEAS: Bona, Carlberg, D’Amour, Emaus, Hall, Kunselman, Lipson  
Potts, Pratt  
NAYS: None

**Motion carried unanimously.**

**Moved by Lipson, seconded by D’Amour, to add a #6 to the Support section to read as follows: “Evaluating the feasibility, location and extent of a downtown greenway.”**

A vote on the amendment showed:

YEAS: Bona, Carlberg, D'Amour, Emaus, Hall, Kunselman, Lipson  
Potts, Pratt  
NAYS: None

**Motion carried unanimously.**

A vote on the main motion, with the amendments to the document, showed:

YEAS: Bona, Carlberg, D'Amour, Emaus, Hall, Kunselman, Lipson  
Potts, Pratt  
NAYS: None

**Motion carried unanimously.**

c. Commission Discussion and Action on Resolution to Send Comments to the Downtown Development Authority on Downtown Parking Issues.

**Moved by D'Amour, seconded by Potts, that the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby forwards to the Downtown Development Authority the attached comments regarding downtown parking.**

**Moved by Lipson, seconded by Pratt, to amend the last bulleted item under the first set of bulleted items to insert the language "(including current and projected capacity and utilization)" after "We request additional parking system information be provided."**

A vote on the amendment showed:

YEAS: Bona, Carlberg, D'Amour, Emaus, Hall, Kunselman, Lipson  
Potts, Pratt  
NAYS: None

**Motion carried unanimously.**

A vote on the main motion, with the amendment to the document, showed:

YEAS: Bona, Carlberg, D'Amour, Emaus, Hall, Kunselman, Lipson  
Potts, Pratt  
NAYS: None

**Motion carried unanimously.**

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AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

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None.

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COMMISSION PROPOSED BUSINESS

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D'Amour stated that the Greenway Task Force continued to work on three major City sites to identify greenway-related issues.

Bona stated that because she was a member of the Planning Commission, she was invited to participate on an architecture jury at Lawrence Tech related to designing a city hall on the library site.

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ADJOURNMENT

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Hall declared the meeting adjourned at 9:24 p.m.

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Mark Lloyd, Manager  
Planning and Development Services

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Bonnie Bona, Secretary

Prepared by Laurie Foondle  
Management Assistant  
Planning and Development Services