

The regular meeting of the Clare City Planning Commission was called to order in the city commission chamber of Clare City Hall, 202 W. Fifth St., Clare, MI, at 6:30 p.m. by Vice Chair Darren Acton who led the Pledge of Allegiance. Present were: Commissioners Glenda Carmoney, Elaine Demasi Brett Moser, Jan Winter and Nick Wyman. Absent: Steve Barnes and Josh Clark. Also present were Ken Hibl, City Manager; and Diane Lyon, City Clerk.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Moved by Commissioner Demasi second by Commissioner Winter to approve the agenda. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: Steve Barnes and Josh Clark. *Motion approved.*

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Moved by Commissioner Carmoney second by Commissioner Wyman to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: Steve Barnes and Josh Clark. *Motion approved.*

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. CONTINUATION OF MASTER PLAN UPDATE-MCKENNA ASSOCIATES**

Mr. Greg Hamilton is our new lead representative from McKenna Associates, and Mr. Art Mullen, is a contracted consultant of McKenna Associates. Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Mullen met with us tonight to continue the process of assisting the Planning Commission update the City Master Plan. Three primary topics of discussion were reviewed; our objectives and policies; a review of the survey results; and a general discussion and review of the Future Land Use Map.

Recommendations for additions and changes to the objectives and policies came as a result of our recent survey and community focus groups held in December 2015.

General Planning and Development Goals

Clarification was provided on #3 of the policy section. The creation of additional zoning districts is needed in order to recognize and accommodate classifications that are not currently within our zoning codes (high density housing, agricultural, rural residential, etc.). For instance if property were brought in under the UCA and none of the current districts apply to the use, we would need to have the additional zoning districts in our zoning codes to accommodate those uses.

Clarification was requested on #4 of the policy section (protect important natural features in and adjacent to the community). The intent of the policy (zoning) is to move toward conformity rather than having nonconforming and incompatible structures and uses.

A new #6 line item would be added to that section to incorporate the Urban Cooperation Agreement into the City's Master Plan.

Single Family Residential Development Goals

Under the Single Family Residential Development Goals, policies #2 (promote small town character by preserving historic homes) and #4 (encourage new residential development providing diverse housing options while maintaining current single family densities. were discussed.

The Master Plan is a tool used to guide the development of Ordinances rather than being used as an enforcement tool. For instance, Single Family Residential Development Goals, of the Master Plan objective #3 states "Maintain and improve the economic value of all residential areas by monitoring and encouraging reinvestment in single family housing areas, especially in blighted and low owner-occupied areas"; Single Family Residential Development Goals, policies #2 (ordinances) states "enforce existing codes to address neighborhood blight, such as parking on lawns, litter control, and run-down houses.

A rental housing inspection policy was recommended for addition to the Single Family Residential Development Goals section (add #9) to encourage up-keep of rental housing and provide for the health, welfare, and safety of residents. Most communities have a rental housing inspection policy.

A rental housing inspection code would not require landlords to bring a property up to today's building code standards (such as it would be in a change of use property) but would require certain minimum standards for rental property maintenance such as having a certain number of outlets in a room, fire extinguisher on site, sealed fire alarms installed, etc.

#### Multiple Family Residential Development Goals

Add #5 under objectives to support senior housing development or harmonize objective #1 and new #5. An additional recommendation is to insure that there is additional housing available that is not income restricted.

#### General and Downtown Commercial Development Goals

In objective number 3, the goal is to encourage growth within a limited area, compact area to help control sprawl and deter vacant land between developments; to encourage regional types of development (such as Kohls) to develop within the larger commercial areas of the city and encourage niche type stores within the downtown district.

Downtown Clare is identified as Seventh Street south to Dunlop Road and one block east and west of McEwan on the Master Plan Future Land Use map.

While both the objectives and policies address signage in the Master Plan, ordinance enforcement is key to controlling size and placement of signs. The Master Plan has no regulatory force.

A proposed amendment to Policy #10 is to encourage and facilitate the use of federal historic tax credits within historic preservation districts.

#### Research and Industrial Development Goals

No noted amendments, additions or deletions.

#### Transportation and Circulation Goals

Under objective #4 there would be an addition to include discouraging truck traffic within the Downtown area.

Proposed additions to Polices:

#5 Support new regional pathways encouraging Clare to become a hub for that non-motorized traffic.

#6 To evaluate a change to diagonal parking, and a roadway "diet" from 4 lanes to two lanes and adding a turn lane within the Downtown District and a suggestion to implement reverse diagonal parking. The idea is to slow down traffic.

#### Community and Recreation Facilities Goals

Add #9 to Objectives: Create a year round recreational facility.

Reword Policy # 5 to ensure future updates of the City's Recreation Master Plan as required by the Michigan DNR in order to remain eligible for grant funding.

#### Lake and Environment Goals

Objective #1 refers to new terminology "urban canopy".

#### Survey Results

Mr. Art Mullen provided results from the recent Master Plan Survey that closed on March 4<sup>th</sup>. Highlights from the survey were as follows:

- There were 270 respondents; 88 of those respondents were under the age of 18.
- 50% male and 50% female respondents.

- 1/3 live in 2 person households.
- 50% live within the city.
- Nearly 60% have resided here for more than 11 years.
- 10% have lived here less than one year.
- 35% desire to move from the area; 50% of those are students who will be going off to college or employment elsewhere.
- 25% do not own property or a business within the city.
- 94% of the respondents are single family dwellers however according the city's most recent census nearly 50% of residents in Clare are renters.
- 75% like the small town feel (another reason to control sprawl at the north end).
- 50% said the schools and education system are of good quality.
- 50% wanted a less congested/busy town.
- Lack of recreational activities.
- Lack of dining and shopping options.
- Lack of convenient downtown parking (this is more of a conceptual perception problem than a realistic problem). Wayfinding and signage will help with this issue but it will never alleviate the problem because everyone wants to park out front.
- High taxes. People want lower taxes but yet they continue to live here because they want the services their taxes provide.
- Blighted homes are a concern.
- Lack of entertainment options.
- People feel strongly about the appearance of the downtown and commercial corridor.
- The downtown is rated very highly.
- Strong support for all current projects that City administration is currently acting on, e.g. Downtown Historic Designation, sports complex, depot rehabilitation, and completing the Pere Marquette Rail Trail.
- Single family ranch homes, large lot single family ranch homes, downtown apartments and lofts, and additional senior housing was supported. Micro-housing (500 sq ft & less), income limited housing, and accessory dwellings were not supported.
- Policing and code enforcement scored high.
- Sidewalk and bike path connectivity were rated high.
- Strong support for commercial and industrial development.
- Improving downtown traffic flow was a concern.
- Road maintenance is a concern.
- Preserving natural features is a concern.

40 of the respondents did not respond to questions regarding signage, housing demands, etc., and some respondents answered with "no opinion". Those were likely the answers (or lack thereof) of the younger respondents for which these item topics have little impact.

Mr. Mullen suggested placement of the skate park in City Park due to the centralized location and regular monitoring of that property.

### **INTRACOMMUNICATIONS**

None.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by Commissioner Winter and seconded by Commissioner Moser to adjourn. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: Steve Barnes and Josh Clark. *Motion approved.* Meeting adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

---

Diane Lyon, City Clerk