

APPROVED MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE KENTWOOD PLANNING COMMISSION
OCTOBER 9, 2018, 7:30 P.M.
COMMISSION CHAMBERS

- A. Chair Jones called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.
- B. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Little.
- C. Roll Call:
Members Present: Bill Benoit, Garrett Fox, Dan Holtrop, Sandra Jones, Ed Kape, Timothy Little, Mike Pemberton, Monica Sparks, Chad VanSoelen
Members Absent: None
Others Present: Community Development Director Terry Schweitzer, Economic Development Planner Lisa Golder, Senior Planner Joe Pung, Planning Assistant Monique Collier, and 3 citizens
- D. Approval of the Minutes and Findings of Fact

Motion by Commissioner Holtrop, supported by Commissioner Sparks, to approve the Minutes of September 25, 2018 and the Findings of Fact for: Case#27-18 – High Five Co-Op Brewery – Commercial Enterprise Producing Merchandise on the Premises Located at 3846 52nd Street SE; Case #28-18 – Thomsons Auto Repair – Rezoning of 1.72 acres land from R-2 Two Family Residential to C-2 Community Commercial Located at 5905 Kalamazoo Ave SE

- Motion Carried (9-0) –

- E. Approval of the Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Holtrop, supported by Commissioner Pemberton, to approve the agenda for the October 9, 2018 meeting.

- Motion Carried (9-0) –

- F. Acknowledge visitors wishing to speak to non-agenda items.

There was no public comment.

- G. Old Business

There is no Old Business

- H. Public Hearing

There were no public hearings.

Case# 30-18 - Zoning Ordinance Text Amendments - Accessory Buildings

Pung stated in March of this year the Planning Commission reviewed and recommended to the Kentwood City Commission amendments to Sections 3.15 and 3.16 of the City of Kentwood Zoning Ordinance relating to accessory building and uses. He stated upon further review by staff of the proposed amendments, several inconsistencies and conflicts with the existing ordinance language were identified. The City Commission, upon recommendation by staff, did not adopt the proposed amendments relating to accessory buildings in order to allow for staff and the Planning Commission to address any inconsistencies and/or conflicts with existing ordinance language. He stated after additional review and discussion, staff has developed revised amendments for Sections 3.15 and 3.16 of the Kentwood Zoning Ordinance.

Summary of Proposed Amendments

The proposed amendments are as follows:

- In order to avoid any potential confusion, a couple references to “garages” were deleted since a garage, whether it is attached or detached, is classified as an accessory building.
- Currently the area allowances for accessory buildings in single and two family residential districts are located in several different sections of the zoning ordinance; the proposed amendments unify the regulations under one table (Section 3.15.D.2.a).
- Currently the zoning ordinance makes allowance for residential unplatted lots of an acre or more to have a larger (up to 960 square feet) detached accessory building; the proposed amendments remove the reference to unplatted lots and applies the allowance for a larger accessory building to any residential lot of an acre or more in a single family or two-family residential district.
- A table for maintenance/storage facilities in multiple family developments has been added. The amendment makes specific allowance for a multiple family development to have a maintenance/storage facility and specifies the size allowance for such structures. A survey of several multiple family development in Kentwood have found maintenance facilities ranging from 266 square feet to over 2,000 square feet in area.
- A table for accessory buildings in commercial and industrial districts has been added. Under the current ordinance the standards for residential accessory buildings would be applied to commercial and industrial properties generally restricting a detached accessory building to 250 square feet in area.
- The allowance for residential lots of five (5) acres or more in single and two-family residential districts to have a detached accessory building of up to 1,100 square feet in area is proposed; currently unplatted lot of one (1) acre or more can have a detached accessory building of up to 960 square feet, the change allows for significantly larger lots to have larger detached accessory buildings.
- Proposed amendments include new setback requirements for accessory buildings in excess of 960 square feet in area (Section 3.15.C.2.b).

- Amend Section 3.15.D.1 to exempt multifamily developments from the limitation of two accessory buildings. This would allow for parking provided within garages and/or carports to be located in more than just one or two structures and also permit a storage/maintenance building.

Chapter 12 Planned Unit Development

- Amend sections of Chapter 12 to permit the City Commission, upon recommendation from the Planning Commission, to grant exceptions to Sections 3.15 and 3.16 of the Zoning Ordinance. This would permit the City to be flexible with respect to the number, location, size etc. of accessory buildings within a planned unit development.

Benoit stated the house should be the largest building on the property. He questioned if we should keep the word “garage” out of subsection 3.15.D.2.b. A garage accessory to a multiple family dwelling unit shall be designed for not more than two (2) vehicles per dwelling unit. Pung stated in the multi-family dwelling unit it is setting the limit we also have the other table to allow for maintenance/storage facility. The garage is by definition where you can put a vehicle. It can’t be designed for more than two vehicles per dwelling unit. Benoit stated 1,100 square feet is not that big, he questioned whether it is enough or will we be sending people back for variances. Schweitzer stated we can take a look at this between the work session and public hearing.

Fox had concerns about having a child’s treehouse and questioned if we should add additional language. Schweitzer stated the ordinance states there is allowance for a treehouse or playhouse for up to 100 square feet. Schweitzer stated if they want to go larger they can go to the zoning board of appeals.

Little, VanSoelen, Kape, Sparks and Jones stated they like the tables it makes it much easier to understand and explain.

Holtrop questioned where staff came up with 1,100 square feet for an accessory building. Pung stated staff reviewed variance requests from the past years to see what was asked for and granted.

Pung stated the City Attorney had a few comments and questioned if the commissioners would like to keep fallout shelters. The commissioners thought that should be kept and thought it may be necessary at some point.

J. New Business

There was no new business

K. Other Business

1. Master Plan Discussion

70/30

Housing

Division Avenue and BRT

Development and redevelopment of 28th Street and 29th Street

Green Infrastructure

Economic Development

Sustainability

TODs

Complete Streets

70/30

Key Issues:

- The 70-30 policy was enacted after the adoption of a Land Use and Housing Plan for the city over 30 years ago. The Land Use and Housing Plan indicated a need to establish a housing policy, as many felt that there was enough rental housing in the community. There was a desire to maintain a primarily single family, owner-occupied character to the city, while allowing a variety of housing choices. Resolution 116-80 was passed on September 2, 1980, setting the housing mix at 70% single family, owner occupied housing, and 30% multifamily housing. The resolution further defined "single family housing" as condominiums, single family detached, mobile homes and duplex dwellings.
- A recent update of the 70-30 housing mix suggests that there is currently approximately 69.76% single family housing (as defined above) and 30.24% apartments (or multifamily), indicating that we have come very close to meeting that goal. Assisted living units and group homes do not seem to fit into either broad category—and are therefore excluded from the calculation. Facilities such as Holland Home Breton Terrace and Breton Woods are counted as single family housing.
- The housing mix in 2018 (as calculated by the Kentwood Assessor) is as follows:

Single family:	11,006	49.11%
Condominiums:	2,074	9.25%
Mobile Homes	984	4.39%
Duplexes	1,036	4.62%
Life Lease	533	2.38%
Apartments	6,777	30.24%
Total	22,410	

Does not include 481 assisted living units and 49 group homes

Percent Single Family, Condo, Mobile Home, Duplex, Life Lease:	69.76%
Percent Apartment:	30.24%

- The Kentwood Inspections/Engineering Department registers and inspects all rental properties. From this data, staff has calculated the number and type of all units that are rented. When compared to the total number of housing units, approximately 90% of duplexes, 16% of mobile homes, and 4% of single family homes were rentals. Total number of rental units (as identified through the rental inspection program is 36.9%.

Action Items:

- Retain the 70-30 housing policy, but count duplexes and apartment units toward the rental side of the equation. The policy should also clearly state that rental units within the Form Based Code area on Division Avenue should not count toward the 70-30 policy. If the 1,036 existing duplex units were added into the "apartment" category, the 70-30 mix would be 65.14% "ownership" and 34.86% renter. With this new calculation, the city no longer meets the 70-30 ratio; it is expected that when the city is fully developed the percent of housing that represents the "ownership" side will exceed 70%.
- The City Commission should adopt a new resolution related to the new 70-30 policy. The policy should indicate that duplexes are included as part of the rental property calculation and that the Form Based Code area of Division Avenue is exempt from the 70-30 policy.
- The city should continue its oversight of rental properties in the community to ensure that they remain in good repair and property maintenance issues are resolved.

Housing:

- The City of Kentwood is committed to ensuring a wide and diverse range of housing options as well as maintaining the quality of the existing housing stock.
- Realtor.com has announced that Kentwood (the 49508 zip code) is the number one zip code in the nation in terms of fast sales, affordability, high employment rates, number of millennials, and high credit scores. The publication indicates that the median list price in Kentwood's 49508 zip code is \$193,168 up 9.5% over the previous year, and that the housing list prices are 33% lower than the surrounding county.
- Nationwide trends suggest family size is declining and the future population may have a diminished demand for large homes on large lots.
- Kentwood has a variety of housing at a number of price points, ranging from \$41,000 to over a million dollars for single family houses or condominiums. Roughly 36% of the housing is valued between \$100,000 and \$150,000 and 32% is valued between \$150,000 to \$200,000. About 15% of the city's housing stock is valued less than \$100,000. Apartment rents range in monthly rent from \$555 in one of the smallest units to \$1,412 for one of the largest apartments. The smallest units in each apartment complex range in size from 416 square feet to 890 square feet and rents from \$550 to \$970 per month. The largest units in each apartment complex range in size from 679 square feet to 1,735 square feet with rents ranging from \$640 to \$1,415.
- Ongoing efforts to maintain the quality of the existing housing stock include the periodic inspection of rental housing. In 2008, many homes on the market were purchased for rental properties; however, this trend seems to be in decline as the investors are now selling some of the rental property. In 2018, 3.6% of the city's total single family homes were rented.
- Many of the large apartment communities in the city were built in the 1970s and 1980s. Assessor's records indicate that there have been only 4 apartment complexes built since 1990. Absent major renovations, the older apartment housing may require considerable reinvestment to extend the useful life of this very sizable portion of the existing housing stock.

- There are five manufactured housing communities within Kentwood, only one of which was developed in the past 20 years. The infrastructure and the housing units within these communities are aging. While the owners have instituted policies to replace outdated housing units with newer, more energy efficient units, major investment may be required to extend the useful life of this important affordable housing option.
- There is limited funding through the city of Kentwood for residential rehabilitation, repairs, and weatherization, particularly for low and moderate income homeowners. However, Kent County Community Action has a similar program that could also be utilized for residential rehabilitation.

Action Items:

- The city should consider strengthening housing quality policies and city codes to: continue to stress the importance of the maintenance of the existing housing; monitor vacant property; maintain housing code enforcement on all rental properties; build awareness and information among neighbors of the housing codes and its impact on property values.
- Promote awareness of property maintenance instruction available in the area, including organizations such as Home Repair Services and other similar resources for home repair and maintenance.
- Review the area-wide housing study (through Kent County Community Action) to inventory existing housing stock, examine the range of housing options, and identifying the amount and location of affordable housing. The review of the data should indicate the city had adequate housing at various price points the serve the needs of residents.
- Determine the barriers to the development of housing along the Division Avenue corridor.
- Adopt guidelines for Transit Oriented Developments that encourage mixed-use development with a higher proportion of residential units along or in close proximity to major transit routes.
- Explore additional opportunities to implement mixed use developments in redeveloping areas. One consideration may be the replacement of aging mobile home parks with housing for varying income levels within a single development.
- Work with neighborhood associations and the Kent County Innovalab to assist in the identification of foreclosed properties or potentially foreclosed properties.
- Work with the Kent County Community Action to promote the Housing Rehabilitation Program.

Fox stated regarding the 70/30 policy he is more interested in increasing single family homes in Kentwood but questioned whether that meant the affordable housing conversation is off the table if they are not in a development area on

Division. Golder stated if we are still looking at affordable home ownership we have options. She stated years ago people wanted higher end homes R1-C and bigger. But we could also make use of all the other zoning districts that we have that allow smaller lots. Discussion ensued.

Fox suggested we look at ways to incentivize improvement in rental properties by having the rental inspectors grade apartment complexes. Golder suggested assigning an "A" grade to the apartment complexes that are good and assigning no grade to those that are bad. Discussion ensued.

Jones stated Kent County Community Development department doesn't exist anymore. It is now Kent County Community Action.

Division Avenue Redevelopment and Bus Rapid Transit

Key Issues:

- The Bus Rapid Transit or "BRT" has been operating since 2014. It is still anticipated that the BRT will have a major impact on the future land use and redevelopment of the Division Avenue corridor. The development that is envisioned as a result of the BRT could invigorate the entire southwest portion of the city of Kentwood. However, at this time there is still a lack of investment in the area.
- Division Avenue is a key gateway corridor to both the city of Kentwood and the city of Wyoming, requiring cooperation between the two communities.
- There is a lack of quality public amenities along Division Avenue, and no unified form of branding or marketing of the area.
- The current Division Avenue businesses seem to market to automobile users rather than to pedestrian and transit traffic.
- The city has not taken an active role in marketing the area.
- Division Avenue conveys traffic to commercial areas and neighborhood communities from M-6 to the south and from the city of Grand Rapids to the north. In addition, it is bisected by numerous east/west cross streets, such as 44th, 52nd / 54th, and 60th Streets. The amount and speed of traffic along the corridor may be a detriment to some residential and neighborhood commercial uses.
- The individual lots in this area of Kentwood are typically small, which can be a significant challenge in any moderate- to large-scale redevelopment along the east side of Division Avenue. As such, a series of separate parcels would need to be assembled for any type of large scale development.

- The new Form Based Code ordinance allows for urban type of residential development and mixed use, but the city does not have experience in dealing with these types of developments and whether they are feasible for the area.
- Projected demographic changes in this area of Kentwood anticipate further ethnic diversification, yet members of these diverse populations do not participate in the planning process, city government or the Division Avenue Business Association.
- There is still a negative perception regarding the corridor.

Action items:

- City shall meet with MEDC, Community Assistance Team, MSHDA and other state agencies to determine what incentives are available to offer developers should they choose to develop along the Division Avenue Corridor.
- City shall host informational meetings for realtors and developers on developing properties within the Form Based Code area.
- City shall develop property information packages to identify priority properties available for development on the Division Avenue Corridor. The property information packages shall list the amenities associated with the property, relevant demographic data, provide a market analysis, list incentives available and provide other information to communicate the city's desired outcome for the area. The city will work with the residents in the area to ensure community support and vision for a development project. This approach is consistent with the requirements of the Redevelopment Ready Communities program that the city is participating in.
- City shall promote its commercial loan program for new investment along the Division Avenue corridor.
- The city must also invest in the area. The city should consider the establishment of a Corridor Improvement Authority, Downtown Development Authority (DDA), or other authority to assist in providing a means to pay for public improvements along the corridor. Improvements could include burial of overhead wires, the establishment of new landscape medians, lighting and landscaping.
- The city should consider help to promote incentive programs for first-time home buyers and small-scale development investment. For example, municipal incentives could include expedited review of development and redevelopment proposals by investors.
- Future planning work should be conducted jointly with the cities of Wyoming and Grand Rapids. This work may include the location of medians and pedestrians crossings along the corridor.

- The city shall reach out to the existing and emerging diverse populations along the Division Avenue corridor for input, participation and leadership in the planning process.
- City shall work with the city of Wyoming to explore traffic calming measures to make the corridor friendlier to residential and neighborhood development.
- City shall promote more events that bring people to the Division Avenue corridor for shopping, eating, and recreation.
- The city shall improve and enhance the perception of safety of the area through improved lighting, incorporate the concept of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) into review of new and redeveloping commercial uses within the Division Avenue corridor to reduce crime.

Redevelopment of 28th and 29th Street Corridor

Key Issues:

- The 28th and 29th Street commercial corridor caters to a regional consumer market, not just Kentwood and Grand Rapids.
- The 28th and 29th Street corridor is a regional amenity that should be addressed across corporate boundaries, although coordinated planning between communities on 28th and 29th Street has not generally been undertaken.
- Given the size and scale of the commercial shopping area and infrastructure that does not promote free movement between properties, access between most stores requires the consumer to use public roads between adjacent properties. This pattern only serves to add additional traffic congestion to 28th Street which can hasten the perception of being an undesirable place to shop. Although there are portions of the corridor that allow cross access between uses, some property owners resist the establishment of the connections due to concerns about liability, traffic, and the effect that the cross access has on maintenance.
- As the 28th Street corridor ages, concern has been raised regarding the health of the corridor as a retail venue. Competition from newer developments such as at Breton and Burton Streets and the East Beltline North, as well as online retail sales may cause an erosion of the retail strength of 28th Street. There is also concern regarding the future of big box retailers. Closures of big boxes and lack of viable businesses to replace them given non-competition clauses in the leasing language may create vacant space along the city's most significant retail corridor.
- If the 28th and 29th Street business corridor is to remain healthy and viable over the long-term, a key issue will be to develop ways to maintain the area's regional draw for consumers.
- Attempts to incorporate medians into 28th Street and 29th Street rights of way have failed. However, strategically introducing median landscaping would make traffic

movement safer and improve the aesthetic character of the corridor. Such improvements would project a fresh image of quality for the corridor and will enhance the perceived quality of the local retail located on 28th and 29th Streets.

- Incorporate the concept of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) into review of new and redeveloping commercial uses within the corridor to reduce crime and to continue the perception that the 28th Street and 29th Street Corridor are safe places to shop.

Action Items:

- Promote some form of outdoor public amenities in key areas. For example, Woodland Mall has established a plaza between the Red Robin and On the Border Restaurants and serves as a gathering place for shoppers. The construction of the plaza and the new stores such as Barnes and Noble and The North Face store have also increased the exterior access to Woodland and allowed for the exterior renovation of the mall.
- Explore the feasibility of creating a 28th and 29th Street DDA or merchants association to encourage a unified pro-active approach for keeping the corridor a healthy and viable shopping destination. This will also help to coordinate quality aesthetic treatment for businesses.
- Explore the feasibility of establishing a Special Assessment District (SAD), Corridor Improvement Authority, or Downtown Development Authority for corridor improvements. The SAD should be established after several short term goals and projects have been accomplished to demonstrate success and changing trends within the area.
- At present, there is limited mid-block vehicular – and pedestrian – circulation between 28th and 29th Streets. The circulation that does take place occurs through existing parking lots. When the opportunity presents itself, the city should require that new and redevelopment projects accommodate interblock connections with appropriate green space. This will work to lessen the burden on the primary corridors while creating new pedestrian scale areas.
- Explore the possibility of creating a multi-jurisdictional 28th Street task force to assure continuity of design standards for the entire corridor.
- Establish contact with the Michigan Department of Transportation to explore the prospect of introducing median landscaping to improve public safety and aesthetics in the 28th Street corridor.

Economic Development

Key Issues:

- Kentwood has traditionally had a large number of manufacturers that it has relied on to supply jobs and tax base. Currently manufacturing is doing well; however, a turn of the

economy may change this situation, as in 2008. Every effort should be made to retain the manufacturing jobs in the city, and encourage the diversification of manufacturers.

- While all manufacturing jobs are important to the local economy of the city, certain manufacturers may be seen as being more sustainable in the future. Alternative energy, advanced manufacturing, medical devices, and agribusinesses are some of the fields the city should promote for long term sustainability and job growth.
- One of the biggest issues for all employers in the metropolitan area is access to labor. In many cases, transportation to the workplace is a barrier to employment.
- Job growth in the future may come from start-ups that are based on new ideas and innovations. The city should must find ways to encourage and promote entrepreneurial development.
- Green is good business for the city. Businesses that promote green practices will save money, keep employees healthier, and be more successful. In addition, people increasingly want to live in a community that is sustainable and makes environmentally conscious choices.
- Commercial development is still an important part of the city's economy. The city has not actively pursued retention and expansion of this sector of the local economy that also provides jobs and income for the city.
- There have been large retail centers that have closed due to on-line sales and delivery services such as Amazon. So far, most of the closed retail buildings have been re-used or re-purposed. However, in a downturn of the overall economy, re-use of buildings may not be as certain. The city may be able to offer incentives for the re-use of existing buildings before allowing for new construction.
- It is increasingly important for business and industry to have access to multiple modes of transportation including rail service. However, there has been movement to remove rail access from industrial areas due to lack of use and deterioration.
- The city is part of a regional economy. It should recognize and build on its unique contribution to the overall well-being of the region.

Action Items:

- o In conjunction with the Right Place, Inc. and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), Kentwood will maintain its retention and expansion program, a program designed to retain and grow businesses within the city.
- o The city will encourage technology businesses to locate in the industrial sector of the city. These businesses may wish to locate in this area due to the existence of Switch in Gaines Township. Every effort will be made to improve broadband access within the region, including allowing for additional capacity for broadband when road projects are undertaken in the area, as well as providing additional non-motorized access to the industrial zone.

- The EDC will review use of the Entrepreneurial Center that the Richard L Root library to ensure that information provided within is relevant and useful to people wishing to start their own business.
- City will update its website to include additional information regarding economic development programs and resources for all businesses, including start-ups and home based businesses.
- The city will encourage the redevelopment of brownfield sites to bring these underutilized properties back to full use and to ensure the safety of workers at these locations.
- The city will encourage the reuse of existing buildings and will encourage the businesses that are mostly likely to be successful in the new economy.
- The city will encourage and support commercial development through its loan programs and will support business associations in the community.
- City shall develop property information packages through the Redevelopment Ready Community program in order to identify priority properties available for development within the city. The property information packages shall list the amenities associated with the property, relevant demographic data, provide a market analysis, list incentives available and provide other information to communicate the city's desired outcome for the area. The city will work with the residents in the area to ensure community support and vision for a development project.
- The city will monitor the retail vacancies over time to determine whether a change in land use is necessary in traditionally commercial areas.
- City will support efforts of Woodland Mall to attract and retain tenants, and to remain a relevant shopping facility.
- The city will continue to improve pedestrian access through sidewalk construction and non-motorized facility interconnections along major arterial streets and areas that include large employers.
- The city will consider its development review policy and procedures to ensure that the process is streamlined, well-documented and transparent.
- City will encourage the establishment of business associations for commercial districts.
- City will support the improvement and expansion of air service in and out of the Gerald Ford International airport.

- o The city will encourage and support the maintenance of rail service to the industrial sector of the community.

Green Infrastructure - Open Space and Greenway Network

Key Issues:

- Plaster Creek and its tributaries are important natural and cultural resources for the city of Kentwood. The Plaster Creek floodplain and associated wetlands are important for the long-term health of the Plaster Creek system as well as providing a protected habitat for the natural movement and migration of wildlife.
- Existing parks in the Kentwood park system are generally not connected by non-motorized trails or green corridors. However, in recent years there has been some progress establishing a connection between the East-West Trail and Veteran's Park as well as improving the connectivity across and along 44th Street from the Walma Trail to the Walnut Hills Trail leading to Stanaback Park. The Kentwood park system is also somewhat isolated from the parks and open space networks of surrounding communities.
- The city has developed the Paul Henry Trail and the East-West Trail which are outstanding recreational and cultural amenities. The Paul Henry Trail now extends south of 60th Street along East Paris Avenue into Gaines Township. Likewise, in 2016 the City of Wyoming installed a refuge island in the 5000 block of Division Avenue to afford safe passage from the East-West Trail into Wyoming. The 2014 Grand Valley Metro Council Non-Motorized Transportation Plan and the Kentwood Non-Motorized Facilities Plan adopted in 2017 provide a guide to integrate these and other trails as part of a larger regional non-motorized network.
- The city of Kentwood has established a virtually complete network of sidewalks along arterial frontages within the community. The 2013 Community Development Block Grant project and 2014 joint Congestion Mitigation Air Quality project with the City of Grand Rapids and the Michigan Department of Transportation to install sidewalks in the highly visible commercial area of 28th Street from Patterson Avenue to the west city limits accommodates pedestrian movement and supports transit services along this major State trunkline.
- In 2014 the Grand Valley Metro Council adopted a Non-Motorized Transportation Plan for Kent and portions of Ottawa counties. In 2017 MDOT began promoting a statewide non-motorized transportation plan that would weave together plans for the various metropolitan areas across the state.
- Public Act 135 of 2010 requires the development of a complete streets policy that provides for the planning, design, and construction of roadways or an interconnected network of transportation facilities. The policy is intended to be applied any time a transportation facility is constructed or reconstructed.
 - In the past, the city has had difficulty in accepting open space donations due to the issues regarding the costs for ongoing maintenance of city properties.
 - Kentwood has had difficulty funding property maintenance for its existing open space properties. The city's millage that is dedicated to parks currently cannot be used for park maintenance, making it more difficult to justify the acceptance of open space and park properties. The current Business Plan continues to recommend funding for both development and maintenance of public parks.

- Surveys conducted by the Park and Recreation Department and focus groups indicate a desire for more trails, walking paths, splash parks, and benches, and to make a more bike friendly community. The survey also revealed that there is some support to fund these initiatives with additional tax dollars.

Action Items:

- A Complete Streets policy consistent with PA 135 of 2010 should be developed.
- Supplement the annual Schedule of Capital Improvements to incorporate the improvements and funding strategies identified in the Non-Motorized Facilities Plan.
- Work with the Christian Reformed Recreation Center to create a regional trailhead. Recent discussions with the operators of the Recreation Center as well as a major property owner to the south would suggest there is some prospect of a nature trail in this area of the Plaster Creek.
- Adopt the MC Smith design for the City Campus Plan for the area around City Hall and the Library. The draft plan provides amenities such as a stage, restrooms, permanent farmers market structures, ice rink, splash pad and playground. This area will become the gathering place and focal point for city activities.
- Develop new landscaping standards to use native Michigan plants to cut down on maintenance costs for public parks and open space. Ash trees that have died should be replaced to maintain and improve the city's green canopy. The City has begun to replace some of the ash trees that have died along arterial and local streets through the annual DTE and Consumers Energy Street Tree Grant programs. The funding strategy should include consideration of establishing a city tree nursery. An annual goal for tree replacement should be identified to benchmark progress.
- When the park millage is renewed, make provisions to allow the use of the funds for maintenance as well as new purchases.

Sustainability

Sustainability means different things to different people and communities. In general, sustainable communities are communities that are planned, built or modified in order to promote sustainable living and tend to focus on environmental and economic sustainability, sustainable urban infrastructure, social equity, and municipal government.

Key Issues:

- Sustainability has become an important aspect of communities that are successful and vibrant. People want their communities to be economically and environmentally sustainable. Sustainability will pay off in the future by reducing waste, saving money, and attracting new residents to the community.

- The city currently has no specific policies in place that address the future sustainability of the city.
- The city must address issues that will affect its sustainability in the future. Some of the issues are environmental, such as the ability to maintain green space, the issues relating to the loss of ash trees within the community, and the benefit of connecting open space. Other sustainability issues include job growth and retention, maintenance of city facilities, availability of public transportation, etc. The city through its land use policy can also address the efficient use of renewable resources, and promote healthier living for Kentwood residents.
- Addressing sustainability issues in areas such as green infrastructure and economic development is a requirement to qualifying as a “Redevelopment Ready Community” under the state-wide certification program through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation.

Action Items:

- The city shall create a create a written policy that details how the city will become more sustainable with respect to energy consumption and recycling and use decisions and the environment. The policy shall address the following:
 - Energy use for city facilities and street lights and steps being taken to reduce cost/energy consumption
 - Alternate energy options;
 - Recycling efforts being made and plans for future programs offered;
 - Water use and reduction of waste and use; programs to assist residents and businesses to reduce water consumption;
 - Proposed/approved storm water management regulations
 - Recommendations on zoning changes that will discourage waste and encourage a more sustainable use of resources. An example would include landscaping standards that would allow for sustainable, native plantings.
 - Participate in the “Michigan Green Communities Challenge”, a benchmarking tool to measure progress in sustainability.
- In addition, the city's policy will include ways that the city can become more environmentally and economically sustainable through its land use decisions and zoning policies, including designation of Transit Oriented Development areas within the Master Plan, expanded bus service, more non-motorized trails, or the retrofit of struggling shopping centers to include residential uses or improved walkability.

Transit Oriented Development - TODs

Key Issues:

- Transit Oriented Development or “TODs” are areas that allow development that is conducive to transit. These TOD areas should be identified and regulations adopted to encourage their development. The TOD areas should include mixed use and provide adequate density to support the transit system. Areas planned for TODs include Woodland Mall, Division Avenue, and the 44th and Breton Avenue area.

- A Form Based Code was adopted for the Division Avenue corridor in 2017 and the City Commission decided not to apply the 70-30 policy to this corridor in order to allow for the option of new rental housing.
- TODs improve the economic sustainability for residents. If a resident does not need to finance an automobile, he or she will have more discretionary funds to spend or save.
- The success of TODs will rely on the density of residential development. In a suburban setting like Kentwood, ownership options may not be feasible for higher density developments. This in turn may create a concern regarding the future of the 70-30 policy.
- Transit options will become increasingly necessary and economical given the increasing price of owning and operating a vehicle.

Action Items:

- **The city shall note the location of TODs on the future land use plan.** The first TOD area identified is the Division Avenue corridor. After a higher density residential project is undertaken in the Division Avenue corridor, zoning standards for the other designated TODS can be considered.
- Although the city desires a balance between home ownership and rental units, TODs should allow higher densities and higher a number of rental units to support bus service and commerce. In order to combat the perception that higher density or rental housing is improperly maintained, the city should set more strict standards for the maintenance of higher density facilities through ordinances and development agreements.
- The city should consider form based codes for the TOD areas as needed to emphasize walkability and accessibility along its corridors.
- City should reconfigure its mixed use district in the zoning ordinance to make it more usable.

Complete Streets

Key Issues:

- State of Michigan Public Act 135 of 2010 required the development of a complete streets policy to promote safe and efficient travel for all legal users of the transportation network under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). Public Act 135 defines complete streets as "...roadways planned, designed, and constructed to provide appropriate access to all legal users in a manner that promotes safe and efficient movement of people and goods whether by car, truck, transit, assistive device, foot, or bicycle."
- On July 26, 2012 the State Transportation Commission adopted a Complete Streets Policy to promote safe and efficient travel for all legal users of the transportation network under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). In addition, MDOT, in its role of administering the local federal-aid program in Michigan, pledged to help local jurisdictions

understand the provisions of this policy and work with them to further the development of complete streets.

- While there are no specific complete streets requirements on transportation funding, all levels of transportation agencies are encouraged to take the opportunity to design and construct facilities that contribute to complete streets.
- There are benefits to the city to provide Complete Streets for its residents—it allows people to walk, use transit, or bicycle instead of using cars for local transportation and it takes into account the safe and efficient movement of goods. In turn, fewer cars on the road reduces congestion, improves air quality, reduces commuting costs, and improves the health of the residents.
- The analysis going into complete street design should consider:
 - Local context and recognize that needs vary according to regional urban, suburban, and rural settings;
 - The functional classification of the roadway, as defined by the Federal Highway Administration and agreed to by MDOT and local transportation agencies;
 - The safety and varying mobility needs of all legal users of the roadway, of all ages and abilities, as well as public safety;
 - The cost of incorporating complete streets facilities into the project and whether that cost is proportional to the overall project cost, as well as proportional to the current or future need or probable use of the complete streets facility;
 - Whether adequate complete streets facilities already exist or are being developed in an adjacent corridor or in the area surrounding the project;
 - Whether additional funding needed to incorporate the complete streets facility into the project is available or as a contribution from other transportation or government agencies from federal, state, local or private sources.
- In recent years the City of Kentwood Engineering Department, with approval from the City Commission, has incorporated a complete street philosophy into the design and re-construction of local streets that includes the installation of storm sewer, concrete curbing and sidewalk along roadway sections that were previously lacking these features.
- In early 2017 the Kentwood City Commission passed a resolution relieving the previous responsibility for homeowners to cover the cost of retrofitting streets to include sidewalk.
- On April 10, 2017 the Kentwood City Commission adopted the Non-Motorized Facilities Plan. The plan identifies future non-motorized facility development throughout the city both inside and outside the public street rights-of-way. Furthermore several existing streets are recommended to be considered for a road diet to reduce the number of vehicle travel lanes and incorporate on-street non-motorized.
- The City's Engineering Department inspects portions of the sidewalk network on an annual basis with the goal of seeing every section of sidewalk every five (5) years. By completing the annual inspection in the fall they prepare bid specifications for all the areas in need of

repair/replacement generally during the winter. This information is forwarded to the Finance office to secure competitive bids and award the comprehensive package to the firm with lowest and best bid generally in late winter. The cost of the sidewalk repairs is assessed to the owners of the properties on which the sidewalk fronts.

- The Four Corners Study group began evaluation of the road system within the Four Corners area, which encompasses parts of the City of Kentwood, Cascade Township, Gaines Township and Caledonia Township. A transportation study is being undertaken to determine where changes may be needed to the road system to allow safe and efficient travel in this growing area.

Action Items:

- The city should continue to use the Complete Streets philosophy to retrofit streets during their design and reconstruction.
- The City shall formalize and adopt a Complete Street policy or ordinance.
- The City should draw upon the list of streets identified in the 2017 Non-Motorized Facilities Plan and evaluate them for future road diet conversion. The streets to consider should include Shaffer Avenue, Stauffer Avenue, Eastern Avenue, and Burton Streets. City shall evaluate whether to undertake a road diet for 52nd Street from Breton to East Paris and how to integrate a non-motorized path along this corridor.
- The City shall review locations around schools to ensure that streets provide access for all modes of transportation, particularly for pedestrian movement.
- The City should review and prioritize recommendations from the Four Corners transportation study, and incorporate recommendations into the the Non motorized plan, and ultimately, the SCI.
- City shall consider an ordinance to require motorists to yield right of way to pedestrians in the crosswalk. Crosswalk marking shall be improved to make them more visible for benefit of pedestrians and motorists alike.

Golder stated the highlighted areas are things that we could do pretty quickly. They would be one of the first things that are action oriented. They might end up as part of the implementation schedule for the first years.

Golder stated if the commissioners have anything they would like to add, they can email her.

Golder stated our next discussion we will start the subareas starting with Kalamazoo Ave.

2. Commissioners' Comments

Holtrop stated the LUZ Committee met regarding a parcel of land on 52nd Street between Kalamazoo and Breton. He stated there is a pond and two duplexes on the frontage of 52nd and 5 acres to the north that by right they can construct about 12 homes. He stated the owner of the land is going to live there with high quality homes. They want about 7 homes with no individual accessory buildings but instead one 3,800 square foot accessory building for all the homes. 800 square feet would be devoted to the clubhouse and 3,000 square feet for storage. Holtrop stated the commissioners expressed a desire for more detail

Holtrop questioned what land the City purchased. Schweitzer stated about 13.7 acres behind the Fire Department

3. Staff's Comments

Staff offered no additional comments.

L. Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Benoit, supported by Commissioner Fox, to adjourn the meeting.

- Motion Carried (9-0) -

Meeting adjourned at 8:30p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ed Kape, Secretary