



**CITY OF WALLED LAKE
PLANNING COMMISSION
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2019**

The Meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Hecht, Novak, O'Rourke, Owsinek, Palmer, Whitt

ABSENT: Wolfson

OTHERS PRESENT: Recording Secretary Pesta, City Attorney Vanerian, Planning Consultant Ortega

PC 10-01-19 MOTION TO EXCUSE COMMISSIONER WOLFSON FROM TONIGHTS MEETING

Motion by O'Rourke, seconded by Palmer, CARRIED: To excuse Commissioner Wolfson from tonight's meeting.

REQUESTS FOR AGENDA CHANGES: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

PC 10-02-19 APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 10, 2019 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Motion by Owsinek, seconded by O'Rourke, CARRIED: To approve the September 10, 2019 Planning Commission minutes.

COMMUNICATION: None

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: None

ATTORNEY'S REPORT: None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Report on Public Safety/Farmer's Market Property Expansion

Bradd Maki from Boss Engineering began his presentation by providing history and background information on the property. Mr. Maki described the existing site in 2015 by noting a few issues. Some problems Mr. Maki said was that the City did not have access to the site, there was contaminated property that was fenced in, and an open ditch on the west side. The first phase of this project was to create access to the property. Mr. Maki stated that the ditch was enclosed, a gravel drive was put in, and the fence line was removed by capping the contamination. Mr. Maki said there is a committee that has discussed utilizing the space for multiuse. Mr. Maki described possibilities such as a fire-training facility, new paving to keep the contamination capped, a training observation shelter which can be dual-utilized for the Farmer's Market, and a bike trail access. Mr. Maki additionally described improving the aesthetic features of the property by opening up the creek, including picnic tables, and enhancing the landscaping. Mr. Maki said there will be an entrance from the Airline Trail to the property. Mr. Maki said the plan is to get the work done this fall so the bids can go out in winter for spring construction.

Commissioner Whitt said Mr. Wolfson is the chair on the committee. Mr. Whitt is looking for input from the planning commission on how to develop the property. Mr. Whitt stated that the initial purchase of the property was always for City use. Early plans included moving the depot to the site, but that is no longer the case as plans have changed. Mr. Whitt explained that the property will now be multiuse. Mr. Whitt stated that we now have an invitation to the riders of the trail to come to the police and fire memorial. Mr. Whitt stated the project will be funded with police funds. Mr. Whitt said the property can be designed to invite the trail users to visit the campus and can be utilized as a trailhead with a space for parking. Mr. Whitt continued to explain that the current phased approach is consistent with the original plan in that the property will be for City use. Mr. Whitt said that by using police funding, a police and fire memorial will be put in to invite people into the city. Mr. Whitt stated that the property has always been a part of the campus and will be used for its original intent which was why it was bought for \$1.1 million.

Chairman Hecht asked about the cost to clean the contaminated property.

Mr. Maki said the property has been assessed and that the contamination goes down many feet; clean up would require a lot of material and would be very costly. Mr. Maki said for the commissioners to look at existing studies.

Commissioner Whitt stated that it makes sense to follow the original plan, which was to expand the campus, and put the space to use. Commissioner Whitt said there has been no plan to get rid of it and the return upon sale would be minimal. Mr. Whitt said the city bought the property to put it to use for the residents. Mr. Whitt said there is a way to pay for development with forfeiture funds. Commissioner Whitt said the property will serve as a multiuse space which includes a fire/police-training facility.

Commissioner O'Rourke said he is concerned about the maintenance of the property. He said the parks need a lot of attention and does not know if the multiuse property is a good idea. Mr. O'Rourke questioned how the property will be maintained.

Commissioner Whitt responded that the property will be continually maintained with forfeiture funds. Mr. Whitt said by using forfeiture funds, the police facility will be maintained. Mr. Whitt stated that the property is currently maintained now for the farmers market.

Commissioner O'Rourke questioned who would be in charge of maintenance. Mr. O'Rourke stated that he is not opposed to the development, his concern is regarding maintenance and funding.

Commissioner Whitt responded that we are maintaining it now. Mr. Whitt stated there will not be an increase in maintenance cost. Mr. Whitt stated that we have a maintenance requirement on the property now.

Commissioner O'Rourke brought up his concern regarding asphalt parking maintenance; and funding for it long term.

Commissioner Whitt responded that the funding will come from forfeiture funds. Mr. Whitt said when initially brought up at Council, it was agreed that the site is underutilized. Mr. Whitt explained that the idea to sell it and recover any cost is not necessarily so. Mr. Whitt continued to explain that it would have initially been a good idea to find out what was on property before purchasing. Mr. Whitt stated that because the property is a contaminated site, clean up would be costly and not very attractive for any potential buyers. Mr. Whitt said that he does not believe that future maintenance should stop the project.

Chairman Hecht also brought up his concern with maintenance in the city parks.

Commissioner Whitt responded that police funding can not be used for park maintenance. Mr. Whitt explained it is restricted funding. Mr. Whitt stated that by using police funding the campus expansion can be a multi-purpose space for the residents and City, which is what it was initially planned for.

Commissioner O'Rourke questioned how forfeiture funds are spent now.

Commissioner Whitt explained that we work with the federal officials to recover a substantial amount of money that can be earmarked for spending outside of the general fund.

Commissioner O'Rourke returned to his question about who will maintain the property.

Commissioner Whitt responded that it will still be DPW who handles maintenance.

Mr. Maki commented that it will be built as a low-maintenance facility.

Commissioner Owsinek said if you put in a fire training facility, it benefits the taxpayers by reducing the amount on their insurance rate. Mr. Owsinek commented that Walled Lake's fire safety rating will go to a level 2. Mr. Owsinek continued to explain that the facility can be used as a joint-training facility for all communities. Commissioner Owsinek said this is beneficial for all residents. Mr. Owsinek said grant money can be potentially available in that Walled Lake is

co-operating with its neighboring communities. Mr. Owsinek comments that the room they are currently in, was built from forfeiture funds.

Commissioner Whitt expanded on the police training facility room by explaining that the project was funded through forfeiture funds. Mr. Whitt commented that the room is now a multi-purpose space. Commissioner Whitt said this is one example of how forfeiture funds can be used. Mr. Whitt draws the connection to how the public safety expansion can be multiuse and can be funded through forfeiture funds. Mr. Whitt said that the purpose for tonight’s meeting was for input on the public safety expansion from the planning commission. Mr. Whitt acknowledged the concerns brought up regarding park maintenance, DPW personnel, and forfeiture funding.

Commissioner Whitt said that there will be a respective increase in DPW personnel in the future to maintain the City’s parks and development. Mr. Whitt commented on the union personnel and lack of work being done previously. Mr. Whitt appreciates the comments brought forth.

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS:

Commissioner Palmer thanked the City Manager for the information.

PC 10-03-19 ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Novak, seconded by O’Rourke, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

Chelsea Pesta
Deputy City Clerk

Kyle Hecht
Chairman