

WHITE CLOUD PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes

White Cloud City Office, 12 N. Charles, White Cloud MI 49349

September 26, 2023

6:00 p.m.

A. Call to Order

Chairperson Lori Shears called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

B. Roll Call (confirmation of a quorum)

John Wallace took a roll call for attendance.

Members present: Anthony Johnson (Left meeting at 6:42), Chad Fetterley, Lori Shears, Jamie Steffes, and Christine Tiernan

Members absent: None

Staff present: John Wallace (zoning administrator), April Storms (city manager), Andrew Stafford (CEDAM Fellow), and Milan Nerad (zoning administrator)

Others present: Dan Abid (public), Chuck Christensen (Public), Brian Miller (Public), Tanya DeOliveira (Williams & Works)

C. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairperson Shears gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

D. Set/Amend Agenda

A motion was made by Johnson, supported by Steffes, to set the agenda as presented.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Motion approved unanimously.

E. Public Comment (Comments limited to 2 minutes)

Brian Miller:

- Wants Planning Commission to remember that there are rural parts of White Cloud and policy can affect rural areas differently compared to other parts of the city.
- Miller indicated that several years ago the floodplain for the White River was changed, resulting in some homeowners moving out of a flood plain and others moving into a flood plain. Homeowners that moved into the floodplain are required to get flood insurance.
- Miller's property was one which moved into the floodplain, requiring him to get flood insurance, but he claims that his home is not actually in a real floodplain. He would like to see the city work with the county and the county with the state, to make sure floodplains are accurately mapped.

F. Approval of Minutes

1. Regular Meeting Minutes of July 25th, 2023

A motion was made by Johnson, supported by Steffes to approve the regular meeting minutes of July 25th, 2023.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Motion was approved unanimously.

G. New Business

1. Review of 2024 Master Plan Community Engagement Report

DeOliveira starts by laying out her plan for the meeting. She indicates that she will address three items:

- 1.) The Community Engagement Report
- 2.) The new drafted Chapter 5 of the Master Plan
- 3.) An Overview of what is next in the process of the Master Plan

DeOliveira explains that the Community Engagement report is an overview of several activities that Williams & Works has done at the Saturday Sesquicentennial celebration and the August SBEI kickoff event in Rotary Park.

The first activity presented is the Community Values Activity, which involves sticky notes and a board asking community members, 'What they love about White Cloud' and 'What could be improved in White Cloud.' DeOliveira explains that generally, community members expressed a love for the small-town character and the people in White Cloud. Additionally, people love the fact that White Cloud is in nature. What people want to see improved in White Cloud involved the physical appearance of the downtown, the housing stock, internet access, and increased flexibility in the zoning ordinance for businesses.

DeOliveira indicated that the Sesquicentennial pop-up event generated more feedback from the public and the August SBEI kickoff event received more data from community leaders and stakeholders.

The Second activity covered was the Penny jar voting activity. DeOliveira pointed out the results from the sesquicentennial celebration were protecting natural resources, better internet access, and more trail options.

DeOliveira points to the public's desire to increase housing and says that it is a good thing that housing is on the public's mind. DeOliveria was surprised that park improvements were so high, given all the work the city is doing to improve the parks.

Discussion follows, with Steffes and Johnson mentioning how surprised they were that park improvements were seen as a need by the public. However, Johnson mentions that he is happy to just see the community engaging and providing feedback.

Lori states that it did surprise her that internet access was such a high priority for community members. Additionally, she was happy to see that trails were a high priority but sad that housing

was not an even higher priority on the chart. Overall, Shears agrees with Johnson that just having community members engage and give feedback is amazing.

DeOliveira explains that housing is typically not on the community's mind, so having Storms and the community show some prioritization of housing is great and makes her happy. Normally means that the community will be more open to housing and other developments once the master plan is finished.

DeOliveira moves on to the Future Land Use Map Activity Results. DeOliveira Points out there was a consensus on a need for more mixed-used development in the traditional downtown and more housing by the school. DeOliveira asks Storms if the neighborhood by the school is built out or if there is room for more housing. Storms indicated it is not fully built out. DeOliveira wants to draw attention to the unplaced stickers and mentions that they provide a good indicator of what the community would like to see more of.

Storms indicated she found the unplaced dots interesting because data across activities are confirming the public's priorities.

DeOliveira moves to the results of the activities at the community dinner and points out that there is more interest in commercial/office/industrial development in these results. DeOliveira asks if anyone has heard interest in this type of development from the public. Storms indicate that she has not heard interest for commercial/industrial development amongst the public.

DeOliveira explains that the Community Engagement report should not be put aside but should guide decisions made throughout the Master Plan process.

DeOliveira quickly touches on the comment cards, with general topics being housing and improvements on Wilcox Ave.

Storms mentions the upcoming SBEI event and encourages all of the Planning Commission to show up to the event. DeOliveira asks Storms to forward drafts and designs that are received from MSU to Williams & Works to better improve their planning process and incorporate designs into the Master Plan. Storms indicate that she will do so.

DeOliveira asks for other thoughts on the Comment Cards.

Discussion was held on the topic of bringing business into town and how White Cloud needs residents to be able to spend money in White Cloud and not in surrounding towns. Fetterley says that development is harder to do along M-37 and sees the development of Wilcox Ave as the future.

DeOliveira asks if anyone ever mentions the County Campus and the people who work there needing lunch? Storms indicate that she has heard from county workers that they would like more options for food.

DeOliveira goes back to Fetterley point on having development being less likely/harder on M-37 and wants to know why he thinks that. Fetterley explains that the railroad limits the number of lots that can be developed and what kind of development can take place due to the proximity.

DeOliveira states that MDOT is now more willing to work with local communities and hear how communities want to develop their M-routes. By incorporating the desire to change M-37 in the Master Plan, White Cloud will have better footing to make a case to MDOT.

(Johnson leaves the Meeting) (6:42)

Shears makes several points about the city making big efforts towards the priorities that are expressed in the community engagement activities. The city has made many improvements the community is unaware of. There is a need for better communications. Storms mentioned that the city has started a quarterly newsletter that helps to increase communication. DeOliveira mentions that it takes a wow factor for the public to notice progress and improvements.

Wallace notes that the Community Engagement report lays a great foundation going forward because it gives the city 4 or 5 areas to focus on.

DeOliveira notes that Planning Commission will soon have homework to use the community engagement report to create the goals and priorities section of the Master Plan.

2. Review of Master Plan- Chapter 5: Community Facilities, Services, and Infrastructure

DeOliveira asks if anyone has anything they would like to share regarding Chapter 5. Shears indicates she would like to see photos. DeOliveira states that Williams & Works adds photos at the end of the progress. Drafts are simply a word document to get the content across.

Wallace shares several comments on Chapter 5: 1.) make sure the names of parks are accurate on maps. 2) the map for the White Cloud Connecting Loop was busy and could be better 3.) The water distribution was mapped but not the sewer lines, Wallace would like to see a sewer map included to better show where future housing development will best fit. DeOliveira notes that they can add a sewer map and where the most logical places to develop will be.

Wallace notes that it was surprising to see that 40% of the working population commutes 30 minutes or more. Inquires where these people work: Grand Rapids, Big Rapids?

DeOliveira highlights that there will be a zoning audit, which will help guide/encourage how best to change the zoning ordinance. In addition, Williams & Works will be creating a downtown corridor and economic development plan in the coming months.

H. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

I. Public Comment (For items discussed on this agenda/3 minutes)

Chuck Christensen:

- Indicated that both James St. and Pine Hill Ave are side streets that people use to bypass White Cloud's downtown. He would like the city to investigate changing the speed limit on Pine Hill Ave to decrease the number of people who use it as a bypass. (Comment was passed on to the Police Chief)

Dan Abid:

- Abid was disappointed that the Planning Commission did not know that there was a place in town that serves ice cream. It's hard doing business when the local community doesn't know what they have.

End of public comments

J. Correspondence

1. City Manager- Memo (Introducing the New Zoning Admin.)

Storms introduces Milan Nerad, the new Zoning Administrator. Explains John Wallace will remain with the city in a Planning Consultant role for planning commission and through the master plan process.

Storms mentions that the Fremont Area Community Foundation awarded Edward Allen Homes housing project \$150,000. Additionally, White Cloud will get \$4 million from EGLE to replace water lines within the city. Storms reminds Planning Commission of the SBEI event in October. Storms finishes by giving a brief update about the Charlie Family Grill site.

2. Zoning Administrator Report

K. Adjournment

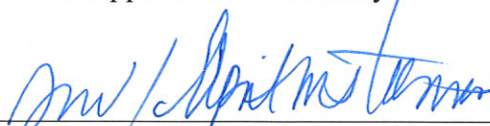
A motion was made by Steffes, supported by Fetterley, to adjourn the meeting at 7:11 p.m.

Ayes: 4

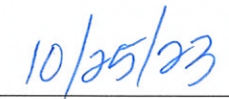
Nays: 0

Absent: Anthony Johnson

Motion approved unanimously.



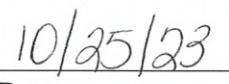
 John Wallace, Zoning Admin/Recorder



 Date



 Lori/Shears, Chairperson



 Date