

**WHITE CLOUD PLANNING COMMISSION**  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
White Cloud City Office, 12 N. Charles, White Cloud MI 49349  
November 28, 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)

Andrew Stafford took a roll call for attendance.

Members present: Anthony Johnson, Chad Fetterley, Lori Shears, Jamie Steffes

Members absent: Christine Tiernan

Staff present: April Storms (City Manager), Andrew Stafford (CEDAM Fellow), Milan Nerad (Zoning Administrator)

Others present: Damon Anuci (Public), John Wallace (Planning Consultant, via Zoom), Tanya DeOliveira (Williams & Works Consultant)

C. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

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

D. Set/Amend Agenda

Chairperson Shears requested an amendment to the agenda to add 'Subway review' to unfinished business. A motion was made by Steffes, supported by Johnson, to amend and set the agenda.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Motion approved unanimously.

E. Public Comment (Comments Limited to 2 minutes)

None.

F. Approval of Minutes

1. Regular Meeting Minutes of October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023

A motion was made by Johnson, supported by Steffes, to approve the regular meeting minutes of October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

The motion was approved unanimously.

G. New Business

1. Resolution 2023-01

Chairperson Shears explains the resolution is to set the regular meeting dates for Planning Commission in 2024.

A motion was made by Johnson, supported by Steffes, to approve resolution 2023-01

Ayes: 4

Nays:

The motion was approved unanimously

## 2. Master Plan Goals & Objectives Worksheet

DeOliveira explains that she wants this meeting to be a workshop. The worksheet is a first draft of Goals and Objectives for the new Master Plan. Expectations for the workshop are laid out by DeOliveira.

Discussion follows covering goal one: 'Promote a strong, diverse economy in line with the nature of the community.' A consensus is to keep goal one, but the word 'nature' should be revised to 'character.'

Johnson expresses that White Cloud does not have much to market currently but once White Cloud does, the city should absolutely market to nearby populations.

DeOliveira suggests working with regional economic development organizations to help form an economic identity.

Discussion followed regarding objectives one (1) through fifteen (15) of goal one.

A consensus was reached to combine objectives one (1) through four (4) under goal one (1). It is agreed that these objectives should become one tourism strategy objective.

DeOliveira moves on to objective seven (7); objective five (5) and six (6) were missing.

Shears is confused over objective seven: "develop a trail around the city", and inquired why the city would create a trail around the city. Consensus is reached to revise objective seven to "increase walkability."

Shears mentioned that the priority right now is to build on what White Cloud has, so there is more to market. Johnson agreed and wanted business attraction to be prioritized over marketing. Storms mentioned that there must be some element of marketing and getting tourists in White Cloud.

DeOliveira moves to objective eight (8): "Continue community events and work to promote them with weekend lodging packages, or event specials in local stores."

Shears says that objective eight (8) needs to be rewritten because it mentions amenities and items that White Cloud does not have to offer. A discussion follows on different events in White Cloud and how one big event could be better than many smaller events that only draw a specific demographic to White Cloud.

Objective nine (9): “Encourage the Chamber to develop an email list of visitors who routinely get information on special community events” is removed because it is too specific.

Objective ten (10): “explore opportunities to promote meaningful alternative energy” is removed. Storms states that there really is not an interest because it is so expensive and 80% of the population would not be able to afford it. Johnson agrees and points to his own experience looking into solar energy for his personal property.

DeOliveira moves on to objective eleven (11): “Develop a business retention program.” Discussion follows about business retention and how White Cloud can offer incentives and keep business.

Johnson expressed strong interest in keeping objective eleven (11) and mentions how important it is to attract business to White Cloud.

Shears mentions that White Cloud does not have a DDA. Shears states that if businesses wanted to create a small business association, this could help with business retention. A consensus is reached to keep objective eleven (11).

DeOliveira moves on to objective twelve (12): “Identify key specialty businesses that can reasonably be recruited to the downtown.” Shears states that objective twelve should be kept but with revisions. Shears mentions that the city is already doing actions that align with the objective.

DeOliveira moves to objective thirteen (13): “Consider redeveloping of vacant, obsolete properties on M-37 for a small-scale Inn with an upscale restaurant.” Storms mentions that White Cloud does have an OPRA district and can create more. A consensus is to keep objective 13.

DeOliveira quickly touches on objective fourteen (14) and fifteen (15), stating that they are too specific and should be removed. Agreement is reached to remove objective 14 and 15.

DeOliveira moves on to goal two (2): “Build a vibrant downtown that serves as a hub of community activity, providing a unique and beautiful backdrop for area events, social interaction, and commerce.” A consensus was reached to keep goal 2 but to remove all the objectives and create new ones.

Discussion moves to goal three (3): “Showcase a park and trail system that is laced through the community and recognized as a gem of the City.” Discussion around goal three is positive, with Shears stating that the city is already doing a lot that is in line with goal 3. Steffes agrees and wants to keep goal three.

Objective one (1) of goal 3, “develop way-finding signs to direct people”, was removed. Storms mentions that wayfinding signs are already designed and will be going into the ground next spring.

DeOliveira moves on to objective two (2): “developing a strong trail and sidewalks system” and gives some context as to what a non-motorized system may look like. Discussion follows with Shears stating Safe Routes is already helping White Cloud build a better sidewalk system.

Steffes and Johnson mention biking and how to incorporate bikes into a non-motorized system.

Fetterley expresses interest in a sidewalk system in some of the more heavily traveled areas in town like Webster or Pine Hill. Consensus is to keep objective two (2).

Objective three (3) and four (4) were removed

DeOliveira moves on to objective five (5): “Develop more facilities in existing parks to increase activity....”. Consensus is to keep the objective. Steffes points to all the improvements that will be coming to Smith Parks and feels it is important to keep the park improvements a priority.

DeOliveira points to objective six (6): “improve signage for visitor using regional amenities.” Steffes and Storms both state they would like to keep objective 6 because local ORV trails are a big pull for tourism and by adding more signs, more people will realize the trails are there.

DeOliveira moves on to goal four (4): “Protect natural resources within the City and enhance its natural setting.” There is consensus to combine most of the objectives for goal 4 because they seem to be saying the same thing. Storms notes that she does attend the White River Watershed Partnership meetings. Steffes points how that the city already has a recycling program.

DeOliveira turns attention to goal five (5): “Encourage City Government and City Residents to become a “green” community participating in recycling and environmental programs.”

DeOliveira asks if sustainability and environmentalism are priorities for the city. Storms states that she knows that these topics are important but does not think they are main goals right now. A consensus is reached to remove all of goal 5.

DeOliveira asks if there were any topics people believed were missing from the worksheet. Stafford points out that any conversation regarding housing stock was missing.

Johnson expresses the desire to provide resources to help educate people on real estate.

DeOliveira asks if a lot of the population in White cloud are at-risk for housing security. Shears and Storms state that White Cloud does have a large population of at-risk individuals and it goes beyond the topic of housing.

Wallace points out that goals and objectives in the Master Plan must have a timeline and be assigned to an entity so White Cloud can be in line with Redevelopment Ready Certified best practices. Discussion follows about how many goals and objectives the city wants in the masterplan.

Fetterley states that he would like to see some kind of goal for community engagement amongst the youth of White Cloud. Discussion follows about building better connections with the youth.

DeOliveira explains what the next steps will be.

## H. Unfinished Business

## 1. Subway site plan review

Wallace explains the new site plan and how the recent changes almost meet the conditions set by the Planning Commission and the ZBA. Wallace points out an unnecessary sign that could be removed and a pavement marking that needs to be reconsidered.

Storms mentions that the DPW supervisor had an idea of adding a center median to the exit onto M-37 that forces cars leaving Subway to turn right. Discussion follows regarding how this would affect traffic congestion.

Fetterley notes that changing the direction of the parking lines could be beneficial. Discussion follows about how changing the parking lines would encourage a circular traffic flow around the building.

Storms notes that she will reach out to Becky and consultants at Holland Engineering to discuss feedback on the new site plan and the possibility of changing the parking.

## I. Public Comment (Comments limited to 3 minutes)

None.

## J. Correspondence

### 1. Planning & Zoning Report

Shears asks what letter was referenced in the Zoning report that was related to the building of a storage shed by the county.

Storms says that the letter is from the county's legal team explaining why the county does not need to follow local zoning ordinance.

Shears express concern that going forward the county will keep taking more land from the city and use it however they like.

Storms notes that the city finally has a working relationship with the county and while she does not like the fact that the county does not need to follow the zoning ordinance, the county is selling the city land for \$1.

### 2. CEDAM-Joint Meeting Memo

Stafford gives a brief overview of why the meeting is happening and states that a reminder will be put into the December packets.

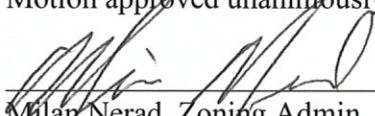
## K. Adjournment

A motion was made by Steffes, supported by Johnson, to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

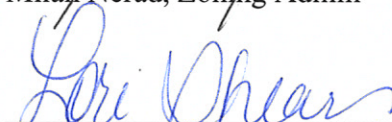
Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Motion approved unanimously.

  
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Milan Nerad, Zoning Admin

04/23/24  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lori Shears, Chairperson

4/23/24  
Date

THE CITY OF

WHITE CLOUD

A TRAIL FOR EVERY SEASON

MICHIGAN