

CITY OF AURORA  
OHIO  
**Master Plan Review Commission**  
Meeting Minutes  
April 11, 2017

The Master Plan Review Commission met in a scheduled meeting on Tuesday, April 11, 2017, in Council Chambers of City Hall. Laura Stith, Chairman called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:**

Present:	Matt Gilmore Shannon Keibler Dale Moravec, Vice Chairman Jennifer Stanley Laura Stith, Chairman Joan Tomko Evan Webster Lucy Zamar
Absent:	Nick Austin
Also Present:	Denise Januska, Director of Planning, Zoning, & Building Division Meredith Davis, Asst. Director of Planning, Zoning, & Building Division John Trew, Director of Public Services James Kraus, Director of Parks and Recreation Marie Lawrie, Secretary

**ADOPTION OF MINUTES:**

**Motion: To adopt the minutes of the February 14, 2017 meeting, as amended**

Mr. Webster moved; Ms. Stanley seconded and the motion carried, 8-0, on a voice vote.

Yeas: Mr. Webster, Ms. Stanley, Ms. Stith, Mr. Moravec, Mr. Gilmore, Ms. Keibler, Ms. Tomko,  
Ms. Zamar

Nays: None

**Motion: To adopt the minutes of the March 14, 2017 meeting, as submitted**

Mr. Moravec moved; Ms. Tomko seconded and the motion carried, 6-0-2, on a voice vote.

Yeas: Mr. Moravec, Ms. Tomko, Ms. Stith, Ms. Keibler, Ms. Stanley, Mr. Webster

Nays: None

Abstentions: Mr. Gilmore, Ms. Zamar

### **CONNECTIVITY HOMEWORK RESULTS:**

At the March meeting, the members were asked to take home maps of the City and draw lines where they would like to see non-motorized connections made. Emil Liszniansky of Envision had each member draw their connections on a large map and explain their ideas. Ideas included a walking path around Aurora Lake in Hawthorne, connecting the former Aurora golf course to Sunny Lake, and a Rails to Trails program to utilize the railroad tracks. Sidewalks were mentioned down Mennonite to Sunny Lake, and also from Geauga Lake to Town Center, as well as Cochran Road to Sherwood Drive and Robinhood Drive. Sidewalks were also mentioned from Eggleston to the Station District, connecting Shagbark Trail to East Garfield Road, and a safe connection for children to travel down Aurora-Hudson to the school campus. Many members would like to see the schools and parks connected for the children. Most members mentioned making connections between all the City-owned parks.

John Trew explained the plans for sidewalk connectivity and the challenges of obtaining easements from residents to bring this to fruition.

Ryan Smalley, of Envision spoke about the pathway along the railway that ends in Mantua. He stated that it would be beneficial to have a regional group, which might include Bainbridge, Solon, and Aurora working with the railroad.

Mr. Trew explained the challenges of getting the railroad to come to the bargaining table to try to get right of way to the tracks for paths. He has been involved in efforts to obtain this for the last 16 years.

Jim Kraus, Director of Parks and Recreation spoke about all the efforts of Aurora, Portage Parks, and the City of Solon to obtain rights to the tracks. The city has tried for many years to communicate with Norfolk Southern without much success. Most recently, the railroad has decided to retain their rights. Aurora is looking at alternative ways to connect to what has been accomplished in Mantua. Mr. Kraus has been involved in the effort for 12 years.

Mr. Webster asked about the possibility of bike or walking lanes along the roads. The issue here is still obtaining right of way from residents. An example of where this might be possible is Old Mill Road to Tinkers Creek Park. Mr. Smalley discussed the different levels of bike riders who might access these lanes. He agreed that obtaining right of way is the biggest challenge.

Safety with bike lanes was discussed. When cars and bike collide at 35 mph or higher, it typically results in death. Mr. Trew would not recommend bike traffic on roads above 35 mph. He would like to concentrate on separate paths.

Mr. Moravec asked about the possibility of paths along the Chagrin River. Ownership rights and setbacks would prevent a paved path along that river.

Mr. Kraus announced the purchase of some land that will connect the Hartman Farm and Novak Sanctuary to State Route 82. He also mentioned the possibility of connecting Aurora Wetlands and Tinkers Creek State Park. This would have potential to connect to Liberty Park and the work the Metro Parks is doing in the area.

### **INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITIZATION ACTIVITY:**

Mr. Liszniansky spoke to the commission about the infrastructure. A large print out broke the subject into 8 subcategories with illustrations. This included Fiber Optic/Public Wifi, Paths & Trails, Roadway, Sanitary, Sidewalks & Crosswalks, Stormwater Management, Streetscape, and Water Service.

Mr. Liszniansky explained that Fiber Optic/Public Wifi would be concentrated to Town Center and the Mixed-Use District. Paths and Trails were described as the off-road walking and biking areas. Roadways were described as the driven roadways. This includes pavement, signage, striping, lane markings, safety, and paving condition. Sanitary was described as waste water sewers and waste water treatment. Sidewalks were described as walking along and across the road. Stormwater Management was described as storm sewers, detention basins, ditches, and bioswales. Streetscape was described as decorative lighting, pavers on the crosswalks, landscaping and street trees, as well as wayfinding signage and banners. Water Service was described as potable water distribution.

The members were asked to place stickers labeled 1-4 on the subcategories of their choice, with number one being their highest priority and number four being their lowest priority.

Mr. Webster stated that he understood that administration would like the Commission to give their unbiased recommendation; however more information was needed to properly prioritize these categories. Without more understanding of the conditions and needs, people are more likely to choose Streetscaping and Paths & Trails. Everyone agreed.

Meredith Davis explained that the City has a budget. The City is obligated to maintain infrastructure. There are things that we might not think about daily, but we need to budget money towards. She described the budget as a pie that needs to be divided

between the things we would like to see in our city and the things we must maintain in our city.

John Trew explained how water service expands as development expands. He stated that water lines began in 1925. Almost all have been updated. The only need he could foresee is another storage tank in the future. He stated the plants are 20+ years old. He stated that updates would be needed in that category. The pump stations are near as old and will need maintenance.

Mr. Trew further explained how far the science has come and how the new filtration systems have a smaller footprint than in the 1980's. This improvement helps to keep costs down.

Mr. Moravec toured the sanitary plants. He felt that within the next 5-15 years, the systems would need major investments. He understood that we accept sanitary from the Marketplace in Bainbridge and hopes that we get paid for that service. He gave an example of a valley in Stow near Roses Run Country Club which has the odor of septic from a problem with their system. He stated that Sanitary was priority number one for him.

Mr. Smalley stated that the Commission should think about whether they want to share services with surrounding communities or keep it more isolated. The last master plan recommended sharing services where available.

Mr. Trew explained that with Stormwater Management, there is no utility to bring in funding. The only resource to expand and maintain this comes from the budget. He stated that storms are becoming more intense and more frequent. He asked the group to decide if this was a priority. He stated that there is no system that can be installed to contain 100 and 500 year storms. However; the effects can be minimized by bioswales and other techniques.

Mr. Smalley expanded on this thought. The more the city develops, the more impervious surface this creates. Without stormwater management in place, homes will flood more often. He offered that there should be a balance between developing the amenities residents want and preparing for stormwater accordingly. He gave an example of a Cleveland suburb that purchase a large parcel of land and constructed a retention basin to alleviate stormwater issues.

Mr. Moravec asked if new development has to include stormwater management in their plan. The answer from Mr. Trew was yes; however, there is development from before 1985 that did not include stormwater management.

The members placed their stickers on the board. Storm Management came in first place, followed by Paths & Trails. Tied for third place were Sanitary and Sidewalks & Crosswalks. In fourth place was Roadway. Streetscape received one 4<sup>th</sup> place sticker. Water Service and Fiber Optic did not receive any stickers.

Ivan Valentic, Landscape Architect, and Kevin Westbrook, Traffic Engineer, of GPD Group were in attendance. Mr. Westbrook asked the group to clarify their thoughts on the subjects dealing with transportation. Mr. Webster explained that his priority was well maintained streets. Mr. Moravec was concerned with street safety. Mr. Westbrook asked if members had any intersections they felt were dangerous. The intersection at Crackel Road and State Route 306 was mentioned. The intersection at Treat Road and State Route 43 was mentioned also. Mr. Moravec asked if all the lights could blink yellow after midnight like in Brecksville. Mr. Westbrook was not in favor of that after studying our city. He might suggest separate nighttime settings for safety reasons. Mr. Westbrook asked if there were places the commission would like crosswalks. Mr. Webster mentioned the Station District. He mentioned that as the district is developed crosswalks may need to be incorporated into the plans. Various types of crosswalks were touched on as they might pertain to trails crossing major streets. Mr. Westbrook will be studying this for Envision.

### **HOMEWORK:**

The members were given packets with pictures of structures in both the Town Center and the Station District. They were asked to rate their top 3 favorites from each and explain what they like about the structures. Also included in the packet was a questionnaire asking members to rank their top 5 desires for additional amenities within the Town Center. Items included boutique retail, office space, green space, etc. They were also asked to invite 5 neighbors or other residents to fill out a packet as well. This will lead us into the historic preservation meeting in May.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

There was no one present to make public comment.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Mr. Moravec moved to adjourn; Mr. Gilmore seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 5:19 p.m. on a unanimous voice vote.

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Laura Stith, Chairman

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Marie Lawrie, Secretary