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ROLL CALL:

The Plan Commission met in the Utilities Board Room at 600 E. Miller Drive at 5:30 p.m., members present: Hoffmann, Kappas, Cibor, Piedmont-Smith, Neher, and Stewart Gulyas.

REPORTS, RESOLUTIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

Hoffmann explained that the purpose of this meeting is to hear a presentation of the current draft of the new Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP) and to take public questions and input as well as commissioner questions and input.

STAFF PRESENTATION:

Scott Robinson, Planning Services Manager, said he would provide an overview of the organization of the document and an overview of each chapter. What is the purpose of a comprehensive plan? It means different things to different people throughout the country with different levels of detail and specificity. Indiana State Code provides guidance on what the minimum standards should be for comprehensive plans. Generally, you want to promote for the general health, safety, and welfare of the community; have an objective for future development; policies for land use; statement of policies for public ways; provide goals that are distinctive to the jurisdiction. If approved, this document is the first step into the journey of 2040. Our *Vision Statement* was adopted in January of 2013, which setup the big picture as to where we want to be in 2040. This document is the first step in how we actually get there and it will assist elected officials, community members, staff and others on how to make decisions. It also helps provide expectations on what Bloomington hopes to be in 2040 and create some level of certainty and expectation. It's important to understand that this creates an opportunity to create coordination and partnerships. This document organizes the major objectives around the vision statements. There are six (6) major objectives which reflect the 6 chapters in the plan. The last chapter—chapter 7 is looking at the land use or future land use of the community. Next, the document gets into a community profile regarding where Bloomington is today and providing projections into the future in terms of growth and economy. Each chapter will provide a narrative and context, goals, and policies. All of those are aimed to get back to the big picture. There are programs. These are examples of things the city or community could be doing to build upon in order to get to the overall vision within the community. Lastly, each chapter identifies outcomes and indicators. This gives us a tool to evaluate the plan or each chapter as a whole. The outcomes are the end result that we hope to get at. We then get into the land use chapter. This is a chapter that looks at the future land use of Bloomington; it's not a zoning map. A lot of people get the map confused with zoning. This is looking at future land uses. The plan identifies nine (9) distinct zoning districts and six (6) focus areas. The focus areas are the highlighted areas that we anticipate seeing the most change over the next decade. **Chapter 1**—Community Services and Economies, **Chapter 2**—Culture and Identity, **Chapter 3**—Environment, **Chapter 4**—Downtown, **Chapter 5**—Housing and Neighborhoods, **Chapter 6**—Transportation, **Chapter 7**—Land Use. Staff would be happy to answer any questions.

PLAN COMMISSION:

Neher asked if future CMP meetings would function the same as this one.

Hoffmann asked staff to go over the future CMP meeting schedule.

Robinson outlined the specific dates for upcoming hearings.

Neher wondered what type of input other PC members might have about the comprehensive plan who are not in attendance tonight.

Hoffmann added that all future meetings will be working meetings where amendments, by the public or the Plan Commission, will be considered. This meeting is not an amendment meeting; that will happen starting next week. If people have questions concerning the document they can call the Planning and Transportation Department.

Robinson said his office number is 812-349-3566.

Josh Desmond, Assistant Director, said his office number is 812-349-3531.

Hoffman said for questions or general comments, feel free to call either of these folks. When we gather on Monday, the commission will hopefully start the process of going one-by-one on whatever amendments and changes people want to make. We have at least three (3) meetings scheduled for that to happen before we get to the May 4th meeting.

Robinson said he would email all proposed amendments that staff has received thus far to the Plan Commission tomorrow, Friday 4/21/17. Eventually, staff will post all of the proposed amendments online as well as the amendments that have been sponsored and up for discussion.

Piedmont-Smith said there are several assertions in the document when talking about our downtown and employers. Basically, different data that's cited in the text that isn't footnoted anywhere. When I see statistics that isn't footnoted it bothers me. Can those be added? I can't propose it as an amendment because I don't know where the data came from but hopefully you do.

Robinson said I think we've noted whatever source we got the data from. One of our consultants provided some of the data and we've done our best to acknowledge where that information came from. If there is something specific just let me know and I'll see if we can track it down. I think we've identified all of our sources, but if you want to identify those we can deal with that on a staff amendment.

Hoffmann agreed with Piedmont-Smith's point. To the extent possible, I hope we can add whatever referencing might be useful. Not to say the statistics aren't important, but the Plan Commission's focus should be on the parts of the documents that we would like to see done in the future and getting those parts right. We are so far behind in getting a new comprehensive plan that reflects current reality. This whole process started six (6) years ago in 2011. We need to get this done. We can change it after we've done it. We can always go back and change it.

Piedmont-Smith said I understand what you're saying and it should've been done ten (10) years ago, but I don't appreciate you saying that my point is unimportant. If you're not going to cite the

points you're making in the document about creating age friendly businesses, etc., I think it's just bad writing.

Hoffmann: I didn't say it was unimportant. I said it's what we can do at these meetings.

Piedmont-Smith said you put us on this schedule of having two weeks before this meeting to read the document that's going to set the pace for the next 23 years. The very first question I ask you say, "Oh we don't have time for that." I don't appreciate it.

Hoffmann: It's what I think we can do at these meetings. I've asked staff to do what you asked. I don't think we can do it at the meeting.

Piedmont-Smith said I agree. It just seemed like what I asked wasn't important.

Hoffmann: No. I didn't mean that. I was talking about tonight's meeting and focusing on the things that we can change tonight.

Piedmont-Smith said this meeting schedule is overly ambitious and it doesn't leave us enough time. It's already set—it's done.

Hoffmann said it's done until we change it. That's not a decision that I make. If a majority of the commission wants to change the schedule that's a decision the commission makes. I think we can all agree with what Isabel (Piedmont-Smith) said about the need to reference sources for facts. Assuming that's non-controversial, we've already given staff one direction which is to do that. Whether they can do it between now and Monday I don't know, but I would like it done before the following Monday so we can see it as part of the version that we look at on May 1st. If there is anything else that we want done, as opposed to a specific amendment, we can give them direction about what we want them to do within the next week or so. I have a comment about the organization of the policies which I'll get to during the comment period. Regarding what we need to accomplish tonight; we need to hear from the public and we need to provide whatever guidance and comments that we have for staff. This isn't the marathon meeting to do all of the amendments.

Piedmont-Smith referred to (pg. 51) **Chapter 4—Downtown** and asked staff to clarify a couple of things regarding policies and goals in terms of historic character and downtown feel. There seems to be some sort of disconnect.

Robinson said I think you're looking at the public investments on infrastructure in the downtown and how it would help retain the historic character of a small town feel. How are we going to deal with technology? Technology is changing and how does that impact our community dealing with driverless vehicles, ride share, etc.? Looking at how our public investments are not going to change the characteristic of our downtown—the small town feel.

Piedmont-Smith said I don't see it and I think it needs to be rephrased. The goal is to maintain historic character and small town feel, encourage innovative redevelopment; complements and does not detract, etc. Then the policy talks about supporting a robust economy?

Robinson: For example, if we're going to do a public investment to widen College to a 5-lane road, would that be a public investment that would maintain the historic character of our

downtown? I think that gives us policy direction on how our public investments need to respect the historic character and feel of our downtown.

Piedmont-Smith said then why don't we just say, "Public investments should support and not detract from the historic character of downtown?" What is this about robust economy and regional economic tourist center? It doesn't relate.

Robinson said I think the idea is that investments also need to be mindful of how it can attract and retain businesses.

Piedmont-Smith: That's a different goal though. It's not under goal 4.1. I guess I'll just do an amendment.

Discussion ensued between commission members regarding the goal of 4.1.

Robinson explained there are interrelations between a lot of the goals and policies in the comprehensive plan, which creates challenges in terms of supporting economics versus the downtown aspect. If clarity is needed, please let us know and we'll work on an amendment.

Hoffmann said I think the programs that were previously organized in the document, were organized in a way that generated an artificial relationship between programs, goals, and policies. Precisely because of what you just said (Robinson); sometimes programs are serving multiple goals or multiple policies. That false correspondence was confusing in the way we previously had the document organized. You've now decoupled the programs from the goals and policies and left them in the chapter, but now it's swung the other way and become too unwieldy as a list of programs. Some chapters the program list is 50 programs long and it's hard to find a specific thing you're interested in. I've actually submitted to staff a way of simply organizing the programs in each chapter under headings. Not changing any of the content but just organizing them under each chapter as a way to simplify things. I think headings would be helpful.

Discussion ensued regarding the many items listed under "programs" and the fact that all of them would not be done.

Neher said in the section about affordability we address issues of programs. It doesn't address anything about supply in terms of using supply to impact the increase of affordability. We could affect this on the supply side by building more apartments and driving down occupancy rates, thus dropping rents. Is that by design or oversight?

Robinson said I don't think the City has a direct impact on supply because the City isn't in the business of building housing.

Neher: But the City does have the capacity to guide development and developers when they come in to talk about what kind of projects we want to see and don't want to see. There is something on the supply side that is absent. When we talk about affordability, I think we have to address it.

Piedmont-Smith: Isn't page 59 all about housing supply?

Hoffmann agreed with Neher's point about supply.

Neher referred to Section 1 of the document. I believe we talk about affordability. It's exclusively reflective of programs to increase affordability and there is no acknowledgment of the supply side. The other issue is that we still don't have anything on the policy side which speaks directly to issues of student housing and what our approach is going to be to managing it. It's talked about only in the narrative—one line in the program side. It would be beneficial for the Plan Commission to have some sort policy guidance. What is our approach to placing student housing within the community? What is our philosophical approach? We know that neighborhoods protest student housing coming near them time and time again. As a policy, we want compact urban form and we don't want student housing sprawl. Given that we have this tension, what do we want to envision for the community and how do we tackle this issue? Until we're willing to tackle that issue, we're going to continue having the same debate and discussion which concerns me especially when we're talking about the next 25 years.

Hoffmann said I think that's exactly the thing we need to address in a proposed amendment and then we can debate it.

Neher said we could read into this and say, "The distribution of housing types throughout the community is exactly that policy." If that's the case, this is the opportunity for neighborhoods to express their issues with that potential policy.

Public Comments:

Jim Shelton agreed with Piedmont-Smith in terms of the meeting schedule being too ambitious. Even though he appreciates the fact that this has been going on since 2011, the document was born to the public on the 7th with a deadline for changes by tomorrow at 4 p.m., which included Palm Sunday and Easter. He said the Commission on Aging really hasn't had the time to review the document or discuss it. In his opinion, other commissions and entities that are staffed by volunteers probably haven't had time to review or discuss it either, so more time should be given to digest the document and provide meaningful input.

Paul Ash said we need to be very careful about granny flats. Although we do want a more compact urban form that's going to be abused. Some of our core neighborhoods are just going to be stacked in with student housing using the granny flats.

Richard Martin reiterated the overall concern with regard to timing. This document has over 100+ pages which is tough to deal with in a short amount of time. It's critical that you understand that from the public's perspective, if you're representing an organization, you have an obligation to meet with the members of that organization to develop a position and those logistics take time. One month is no time at all for that to happen. I would like you to focus on how you're going to use this document in the decision making process. Not only in the development of a new Zoning Ordinance which will be the outcome of this, but in terms of how you're going to use it on those petitions where the comprehensive plan is part of the consideration in making your determination. I think the obligation we have when preparing a comprehensive plan is to provide the maximum amount of clarity we can for the people who are going to have to use that document. For a document like this, it isn't unusual for it to last 15-20 years. So the people who write the document, usually aren't the people who have to use the document over and over again in making decisions. I want to caution you in not hurrying through this to create ambiguity that somebody else is going to discuss for hours on end in the future. I want to make another observation that you probably know about. If you look at the map of the first comprehensive plan for Bloomington (1966 or 1967), you will notice neighborhoods on that map that are designated

as “student residential areas” (printed on the map) and now most of those areas are student residential areas. It’s easy to set aside areas to do a particular thing, it’s much more difficult to set aside areas not to do something. And in particular with housing, we have all kinds of laws that tell us what we can and can’t do in terms of discriminating who can own property, who can rent property, and what we can do in terms of guiding how that property is being used. You have to be very careful about those because you’re going to end up butting your heads against laws that are very difficult to do. The issue of student housing is a hard one for us to deal with and has been throughout the history of Bloomington. Renting to students in Bloomington has been going on since 1816.

Hoffmann said he isn’t opposed to slowing the process down but the sooner we get through this process and through the next part, which is getting a new Zoning Ordinance drafted, in some sense is a more manifestation of this document and one that’s more aimed at current conditions. There are costs to delay. One of those costs is that proposals come before us that we might like to respond to in a certain way, but we can’t because we have an old document that doesn’t actually reflect how we now think about things. This is happening on almost a monthly basis now (referring to the Plan Commission). That’s one of the hidden costs of continuing to kick the can down the road. Until we have the new ordinance, our hands are somewhat tied in terms of how we act on petitions on a monthly basis and that’s not going to get better.

Piedmont Smith said in general I don’t think there is enough mention about local food and the importance of that in a sustainable economy. We need to underline that it’s healthy for Bloomington as a whole community to have more local food sources. I am planning a couple of amendments.

Hoffmann agreed.

Kappas said there are a number of amendments I’m going to sponsor concerning environmental aspects. Understanding that land use is a beast of its own, there was a lack of the environmental structure throughout the document where it wasn’t as interconnected as it could’ve been, especially with local food and agriculture.

Hoffmann said if those are things in the text I would bring them directly to staff as soon as possible. I think the amendment process is mostly going to be focused on goals, programs, and policies. The text of document can be easily changed by staff.

Cibor said if changes to the meeting schedule does occur, what is the process for that and when will that decision be made?

Hoffmann said if it’s the sense of the commission that we need to change the schedule then the schedule will be changed. We could certainly do it on Monday since we barely have half of the commission present tonight. I think we’ll have a larger attendance on Monday than we have tonight.

Stewart Gulyas asked if it would make sense to send out a message to the full commission to see if other members have any reservations about the schedule.

Hoffmann: I would ask staff to do that. Scott, can you do that? The question is whether we can do an email canvassing of the commissioners to see if we should change the schedule.

Robinson: Sure, we can do that.

Neher asked Piedmont-Smith if the Common Council had issues with the current Plan Commission schedule.

Piedmont-Smith said I don't know if there is an issue with the way the Plan Commission schedule is. I know there is an issue with it coming to the City Council in May because we have annexation coming up and that's a huge issue. We probably couldn't deal with it until August. We have a recess in July.

Discussion ensued regarding the meeting schedule. The majority of commissioners present are in favor of re-examining the schedule.

Hoffmann directed staff to canvas the Plan Commission to see if the consensus is to revise the overall meeting schedule.

Neher said if the process is delayed we should offer the public another opportunity for amendments.

Hoffmann: I'm thinking at that point, two hearings on the amendments and then we go to the final hearing as opposed to an extra meeting.

Piedmont-Smith said she didn't understand one policy. It's under goal 6.4—Transportation, page 70. It's policy 6.4.3 (On-street parking spaces).

Robinson said accessibility is one thing we're looking at as far as how we manage our on-street parking spaces. We're looking at equity there and a variety of ways. Not just for the automobile but for other modes. You also have to look at environmentally conscious uses.

Hoffmann said so you're talking about using what today might be with a standard one-car parking space and have a bunch of shared bikes in it or have it reserved for car sharing?

Robinson: Yes.

Hoffmann said I think it makes sense as a policy but it could be rephrased in a way that's not quite as opaque.

Neher: If there are ambiguous policies as Isabel (Piedmont-Smith) pointed out can we just note those to staff and have those revisions made?

Hoffmann said yes. Send as much as you've got to staff including these kinds of questions. I think we should take this document and give as much feedback to staff as we can, and then we'll have formal amendment discussions next week on Monday and Tuesday—4/24/17 and 4/25/17. At that point, staff can take everything and produce an Adoption Draft and go forward from there.

Meeting adjourned.