

CITY OF HUDSONVILLE
Planning Commission Minutes – Joint Meeting

December 16th, 2024

Approved January 15th, 2025

Downtown Vision Maps - Discussion

Mayor Northrup called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

Present: **Planning Commission:** Altman, Bendert, Dotson, Kamp, Northrup, Schmuker, Staal, Van Der Laan **City Commission:** Bolhuis, Brandsen, DeVree, Groot, Kamp, Nyitray **DDA:** Cole-Meyer, Groot, Sorensen

Absent: **Planning Commission:** VanDenBerg **DDA:** Butterworth, Gemmen, Koning, Penning, Perschbacher **City Staff:** Hicks

Staff Present: Bigard, Dotson, Gruppen, Smith, Steffens, Strikwerda

1. Downtown Vision Maps - Discussion

Chris Khorey of McKenna presented the vision maps.

The city has created 5 year and 20-year downtown vision maps for the Master Plan. These will be a guiding vision for the boards and committees that work in the development sector.

The following discussion took place:

- Temporary Retail along Harvey Street.
 - This is an idea that has done great for Muskegon. It has good potential to offer unique opportunities now that would fill permanent buildings down the line.
 - Do we have support for these temporary buildings?
 - Water, restrooms, power, etc.
 - Maybe this will be done then after Village Green so that there are those facilities nearby.
 - Muskegon has bathrooms nearby that are available to them for those to walk to. We have Terra Square that would allow for that use in the meantime before Village Green is in.
 - This could be a rent the space option for smaller businesses. Then become more permanent later.
 - The Christkindl Markt in other communities have been very successful, could this work for us in the winter?
 - Will this run with the farmers market in the summers? What timeline would operations look like?

- Do we have the natural foot traffic pre-Village Green? Should we wait until there is more development built? Then what time would these be open? Weekends, most will work 9-5 during the day.
- Will it have the impact that we hope it has?
- There is a good amount of money into this half of Harvey Street, and it needs to have a destination.
- Test it with temp next year in all of our events, see if it has traction and then build on it from there.
- Could there be temporary closures and activate the roadway?
- Pedestrian connection from east Harvey Street to West is missing right now... solving that would be the installation of Village Green.
- Woonerf design on Kelly Street.
 - The expectation of the community is for a walkable downtown already.
 - The separation between new woonerf and parking for the plaza would be similar to what is along western Harvey Street, a parking lot 3' fence with landscaping running along it.
 - Creating pedestrian in front of the businesses where parking currently is would help with the flow of that traffic.
 - Access from Gemmens to DJs for example, could be adjusted and beautified from what it is now, and somewhat adjusting it to improve it.
 - The proposed fencing would have gaps in it to help with access through the parking lots and frequent at that.
 - Buttermilk Creek trail connects right across from Cherry Avenue. Tie into that with the downtown plan because it will be less intimidating for the average pedestrian.
- DDA Parking Lot Development.
 - Its hard to see a vision of this being anything else than parking, but this is a good idea.
 - L Building Layout/Architecture.
 - The design of an L shaped building should have the façade be of quality on both sides.
 - Will the existing strip mall feel like they are being cut off? Maybe tweak the proposed L shape building so you can see straight down Harvey Street? Adjust the pedestrian walkway to have better connection to the existing building.
 - If the aesthetics of this L shape building were done properly then it would make the view attractive.
 - Those who do not live in Hudsonville, may not know what Gemmens is... if the new building is attractive looking it will have businesses in it that would draw people in that would eventually end up in Gemmens.
 - The L shaped building will inherently have to be a destination already because it is not designed to be easily accessible via Chicago Drive. If there is more of a wide view along Cherry Avenue then that softens the feeling of all the walls along Chicago Drive.
 - Visual from Chicago Drive.
 - When heading east on Chicago Drive right now you can see into the downtown, this type of building may cut off the view because it would be

- 2-3 stories blocking the tree, the arch, the Christmas lights, etc. The tree would end up being moved into the Village Green in the long run.
- Could the arch be right up on Chicago Drive? Something else to draw people into the downtown?
- The downtown would be opened up around the Village Green area, if there is developable land down here in a DDA owned parcel isn't that more worthwhile vs a visual attraction driving on the road being the existing location of the fountain/Gemmens?
- If there was a wider opening along Cherry Avenue based on the angles of the buildings that would allow people to see deeper into it versus a blockade wall feel.
- Moving something like the Harvey Street Arch would help. Moving and turning a corner to see something else is the fun of it when you are walking around a downtown.
- There isn't as much of a draw from people driving along Chicago Drive to stop just because they saw a business.
- Holland thought of themselves as whole rather than in parts. So Holland's downtown is a destination as a whole, not just because of one specific business. We need to keep that in mind rather than being so focused on being able to see Gemmens from Chicago Drive.
- The more development, the slower drivers will be as they will be intrigued by what is going on in town.
- Green Space/Pedestrian Connection.
 - Some type of greenspace architectural feature would be interesting to see for a visual.
 - Have the pedestrian connection come in as a Y from Harvey Street, Kelly Street and then the stem of the Y runs towards the B2 building in the parking lot with a greenspace in the middle of it to help with the openness inside the downtown area.

2. Adjournment

Mayor Northrup adjourned the special meeting at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sarah Steffens
Deputy Planning & Zoning Director