

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes of the Meeting of [January 5, 2010](#)
Beginning at 2:30 p.m.

PRESENT OF THE COMMISSION: [Chairwoman Wrenna Watson,](#)
[Rabner, Reidbord, Burkley, Thomas,](#)
[Czuczman, Myers](#)

PRESENT OF THE STAFF: [Ismail, Tymoczko, Layman, Hanna, Rakus,](#)
[Kambitsis](#)

AGENDA ITEMS COVERED IN THESE MINUTES

<i>Item</i>	<i>Page No.</i>
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2. Peter J. Grady Shaler Street Plan of Lots (Shaler Street and Well Street), 19 th Ward	2
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4. Election of officers	

Ms. Watson chaired today's meeting and called the meeting to order.

A. ACTION ON THE MINUTES

No minutes available.

B. CORRESPONDENCE (See Attachment A for staff reports.)

Ms. Watson stated that the Commission was in receipt of [one piece of correspondence from the City Clerk concerning Council Bill #2009-2098.](#)

C. PLAN OF LOTS (See Attachment B.)

1. Consolidation, Priory Consolidation Plan (Pressley Street and Nash Street), 23rd Ward

Ms. Tymoczko made a presentation in accord with the attached staff report. Director Ismail stated that the subdivision committee had met and recommends approval of the plan. The Chairwoman called for a motion.

MOTION: That the Priory Consolidation Plan of Lots, 23rd Ward, City of Pittsburgh, County of Allegheny, prepared for John Graf by KAG Engineering dated November 20, 2009 and received by the Planning Commission January 5, 2010 BE APPROVED and the signatures of the proper officers of the Planning Commission be affixed thereto. (No improvements or monuments needed.)

MOVED BY Mr. Burkley;

SECONDED BY Mr. Czuczman.

IN FAVOR: Watson, Reidbord, Rabner, Burkley, Thomas, Czuczman, Myers

OPPOSED: None

CARRIED

2. Peter J. Gardy Shaler Street Plan of Lots (Shaler Street and Well Street), 19th Ward

Ms. Tymoczko made a presentation in accord with the attached staff report. Director Ismail stated that the subdivision committee had met and recommends approval of the plan. The Chairwoman called for a motion.

MOTION: That the Peter J. Gardy Shaler Street Plan of Lots, 19th Ward, City of Pittsburgh, County of Allegheny, prepared for Peter J. Gardy by Converse Surveying dated October 6, 2009 and received by the Planning Commission January 5, 2010 BE APPROVED and the signatures of the proper officers of the Planning Commission be affixed thereto. (No improvements or monuments needed.)

MOVED BY Mr. Czuczman;

SECONDED BY Mr. Burkley.

IN FAVOR: Watson, Reidbord, Rabner, Dick, Thomas, Burkley, Czuczman, Myers

OPPOSED: None

CARRIED

The Chairwoman advised the Commission that at the end of the meeting she would like to address the issue of electing a Vice Chairperson and a Secretary and welcomed Maelene Myers to the Commission.

D. DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Staff presentation of New Design Review Guidelines/Procedures – Ms. Rakus and Mr. Layman, Attachment C

Mr. Layman said this is an overview of our updated Design Review Process; the research for this was actually started several years and was benchmarked against thirty other cities best practices. Mr. Layman introduced Kate Rakus.

Ms. Rakus gave an overview of how design review was done using a PowerPoint presentation in the department and explained what CDAP (Contextual Design Advisory Panel) and that they review the larger projects. As Commission members you will receive letters from CDAP advising their recommendations of projects, CDAP advises the Department and the Department then works with the developer.

With the smaller projects, we will do staff design review and make recommendations of those projects. We have started what we are loosely calling the Baltimore model and is based on what they do there. Staff has also done workshops with developers to help bring better design to some of the smaller projects.

In our analysis, we have set goals for the process are having a clearer, more consistent process, and having more information available. The new website is up and running that details the process. The neighborhood planners will be sitting in on more of our design meetings for improved access within the department. We have started having bi-weekly meetings with the staff that has a design background to review projects. The procedures for CDAP have been formalized; this was not done in the past.

Director Ismail said she requested that staff review this about two years back to make the process more transparent with a workflow that is on the website, people will know what to do and what to look for. This will implement the transparency that is required of us. CDAP has been operating to date on an ad-hoc basis with no rules and Director Ismail said that she thought we needed some clarity.

Ms. Rakus referenced the flow chart in the packet distributed to the members. All applicants, no matter the size of the project, will have to fill out a Development Review Application. All of the larger developments have to go thru this process. First we will provide the information on our website and at the Zoning Counter and the information will be handed out at first meetings with the Zoning Administer. The applicant will be given a standardized list of the type of reviews that will be required. Staff will review the project as a group and will review based on a list of urban design targets. They will be broad based: make the project more down to the human scale; can it be more pedestrian friendly; less auto dominated. This will follow the project thru the process so that we always know what we are looking for.

Ms. Rakus said first she would talk about the staff design review process which is for the smaller projects that have less of an impact on the public realm. We will work with the applicant to insure that they are meeting the urban design targets. The process is complete when the applicant is meeting all of the design related zoning requirements, from that stage the project will go onto whatever the next approval process is for the project.

Ms. Rakus said it is generally the larger projects that more impact on the public realm. The projects will come in and will make they will make a presentation to CDAP, generally they come twice, recommendations are made the first time and then they return with what they have modified to address the issues. Staff will also have workshops for projects that want more input and in the earlier design stage.

CDAP will be comprised of eight members with two year terms. We have a recommended composition for the panel: four architects, one landscape architect, one construction and building materials expert, and two other members. CDAP has always been open to the public as a public meeting but it is not the right format for public comment. Ms. Rakus said they are now going to accept written comment on the design.

Mr. Reidbord said he has a question about that, isn't that what CDAP is not supposed to be, it was supposed to a professional review, I think the place for public comment is at the Planning Commission. Mr. Layman said that is correct. Mr. Reidbord said putting that in the process politizes it and gets it off track. Mr. Layman said unfortunately we have to do that; we will always encourage people to come to the Planning Commission for public comment. But because of Sunshine Laws and our policy of transparency we have to be open for comment. Discussion by the Commission concerning this. Ms. Tymoczko said that is on the advice of the Law Department, that they saw something in how this was set up that made them feel that the Sunshine Laws should apply. No notices of the meeting will be mailed out.

Ms. Watson said what you are doing today is just informing the Commission of what you have done and the Commission is not taking a vote on this. Mr. Layman said that the Commission is the audience for CDAP's recommendations and we wanted the Planning Commission to be comfortable with the process.

Mr. Reidbord said one other suggestion is concerning the timeline, the most asked question is how long does it take and if that could be added to the flowchart. Mr. Reidbord said that projects undergoing staff are generally smaller; I'm not certain what that means. Mr. Layman said that is something that we are still working on, there are a lot of different questions we ask ourselves, there is no way to have a specific based on context. Director Ismail used a parking structure as an example. Mr. Reidbord said a lot of it depends on the timeline, if CDAP is a three month process and the other one takes 30 day process, there is some concern there. Mr. Layman said the timeline also depends on the response from the architect and the applicant.

Ms. Watson said she knows from speaking to staff about some projects and known from staff that CDAP didn't really like the project either but didn't say anything, I think that we as a Commission, if CDAP had given a letter without saying anything, the developer then turns that around and states that CDAP likes the project. Ms. Watson said she hopes that CDAP and staff will provide guidance. Ms. Rakus said with having a procedure we

should be able to better present the projects. Mr. Layman said formerly CDAP had no written structure and this should help with responses and transparencies. Ms. Watson asked that a letter be provided with projects that it had been thru the process and state the status of the project with CDAP. Mr. Layman said CDAP is voluntary for the applicants and they can opt out of participation. We can provide a letter to that effect to the Commission.

Mr. Thomas asked if the design targets will come with every project and Ms. Rakus said they could do that.

Presentation end.

Director Ismail advised the Commission that the Planning Department is rolling out their SNAP database and sharing with the community. This is data that is programmed and designed in a way that is accessible to the public and should stimulate thought and questions to address community issues. Director Ismail is planning to schedule a presentation to the Planning Commission. Hoping to roll it out the end of January and we are testing it online.

Director Ismail distributed an organizational chart to the Commission members, Attachment D. Director Ismail said she shows the various divisions in City Planning. We have added a Permitting Manager to the Department which is a stand alone person, and this person has been hired to oversee the web-based permitting application that is going to be shared between City Planning, BBI, and Public Works. This person will oversee the management of the project as it goes thru as well as try to make sense of the overall permitting system for the city. We have operated in the, we have been compartmentalized for so long, with no regards to the public, sometimes they come to the zoning counter only to be told you need to go to Public Works, so we are trying to streamline our permitting process, so bare with us as we go thru that phase. If you have any questions, I'll be happy to answer them.

Ms. Watson said she wanted to bring up a couple of issues. It was mentioned last year that someone wanted the minutes available prior to Commission approval. There was a request made for the minutes to be on the website immediately after the conclusion of the meeting. Ms. Hanna advised that will be coming to the Commission as part of legislation from City Council. Ms. Watson said that her concern is that if we haven't had the opportunity to approve the minutes then they won't have corrections or be an official document. We will deal with that when it comes though.

Ms. Watson said that everyone has seen the screen that has the city emblem and the city scene behind it, and she said that she mentioned to Corey last year after that had been up that it would be nice to have that on display every time we have a Commission meeting or when there are Zoning Hearings. If someone walks into the room, they will know they are in the right place. It would give a nice presence.

Ms. Watson said that our Code allows us to elect a Vice Chairperson. I made an attempt to do this last year when Kyra left and at that time the Commission said that the Mayor made the appointments before, lets let them make the appointments again. We are still without a Vice Chairperson. Since Barbara Ernsberger is no longer on the Commission we no longer have a Secretary to sign off on the subdivision and consolidation plans.

Mr. Czuczman made a motion to nominate Todd Reidbord for Vice Chairperson and Kirk Burkley for Secretary. Mr. Rabner said he seconded both nominations. The Chairwoman asked Mr. Reidbord and Mr. Burkley if they accepted the nomination and both replied in the affirmative.

All were in favor of Todd Reidbord for Vice Chairperson and all were in favor of Kirk Burkley for secretary.

Director Ismail advised the Commission that Mary Lou Simon has also resigned due to her husband being in ill health.

Mr. Reidbord requested that name plates be ordered to the Commission members. Director Ismail said that they are also working on new microphones and new software to transfer audio to words to assist with the minutes.

E. **ADJOURNMENT:** 3:15 p.m.

APPROVED BY: Kirk Burkley
SECRETARY

Attachments

DISCLAIMER: The official records of the Planning Commission's meetings are the Minutes of the Meetings approved by the Commission's Secretary, Kirk Burkley. The Minutes are the ONLY official record.

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